Minnesota State Community and Technical College serves the needs of industries and communities in west central Minnesota and the Red River Valley through the combination of strong technical programs and a comprehensive community college curriculum.

The college, which offers more than 70 career and liberal arts programs, was created in 2003 through the merger of Fergus Falls Community College and campuses of Northwest Technical College located in Detroit Lakes, Moorhead and Wadena. M State’s eCampus provides students with the option of online education for individual courses or complete degree programs.

M State offers six degrees and awards for program completion:

- The Associate in Arts degree is designed for transfer and prepares students to enter a four-year institution at the junior level.
- The Associate in Science degree is designed for transfer to a four-year institution at the junior level for study in a scientific or technical major field of study.
- The Associate in Fine Arts degree provides a means for fine arts students to transfer to a four-year fine arts program at the junior level.
- The Associate in Applied Science degree prepares students for a career requiring just two years of college.
- The diploma is a vocational degree awarded for completion of a technical program, which is typically between 31 and 72 credits.
- The certificate is awarded for completion of a program requiring 30 or fewer credits.

For a list of current M State programs and related information, visit minnesota.edu.
Advisory Committees

Minnesota State Community and Technical College relies on more than 50 committees to advise educators on the quality and value of its academic programs, with the focus on program improvement. M State seeks program advisory committee members who have experience and expertise in the occupational fields served by each of its programs and who can offer professional expertise on the design, development, implementation, evaluation, maintenance and revision of the college’s technical and occupational education programs.

Member responsibilities

A successful advisory committee plans and carries out a program of work that aligns the technical/occupational program with the needs of employers. Committees may recommend ways to support program viability, relevancy and growth. The advisory committee program of work will most likely include these broad areas:

- Identifying specific subject areas for inclusion in the program
- Prioritizing recommended subject areas
- Specifying appropriate program content level
- Reviewing program outcomes on an ongoing basis
- Assessing program quality
- Specifying appropriate foundational skill standards to meet local needs
- Identifying general education and related technical skills needed by graduates
- Recommending equipment needed to support program content
- Maintaining currency by advising on cutting edge technologies, changes and trends in the industry to ensure graduates have the skills needed to succeed in today’s technical/career environment.

Program advisory committees are created to assist in program improvement. Each committee has the opportunity to determine goals and to create a plan to achieve those goals.

Characteristics of Successful Advisory Committees

Commitment. That’s the key to the success of any advisory committee – commitment on the part of both the members and the participating college administrators and faculty members.

Critical review. The role of an advisory committee is not to rubber stamp existing programs but to offer suggestions for improvements to help programs expand and improve.

Assistance. Advisory committees assist programs by helping instructors and administrators secure mentors and internships for students. The committees also assist with placement of graduates.

Promotion and advocacy. Advisory committees promote technical/occupational education programs in their community. This can mean communicating with lawmakers, arranging publicity, presenting programs to civic groups and writing articles for publication.

Organization, Membership and Committee Size

Each advisory committee should select an industry representative to serve as chair and appoint a recorder to take meeting minutes. Effective committees are generally comprised of 6-12 members, most of them employers. Committee members need a clear sense of industry trends in order to keep programs current. Members should be committed leaders who seek others with sincere interest in the program, who have the confidence of others in the community and who are dedicated to the occupation and the community. Advisory committee membership may also include currently registered students or program graduates.

Terms of Office

The recommended term for advisory committee members is three years. Members should not be appointed to successive terms, and there should be a break of at least one year between terms. A rotating three-year term allows for both continuity and change, with one-third of the membership changing each year. New members should be appointed as terms expire.

The suggested term of office for the chair is one to two years, with the term beginning July 1 and ending June 30. The chair should be allowed to serve more than one term.

Committee membership should be reviewed and updated annually to ensure both broad-based industry representation and continuing work of the committee.