



GOVERNANCE CHARTER

A Guide to Shared Governance at Garrett College

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SECTION I: Defining Shared Governance

According to the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, an effective governance structure and process is one that enables the institution "...to realize its stated mission and goals in a way that effectively benefits the institution, its students, and the other constituencies it serves. Institutional governance provides the means through which authority and responsibility are assigned, delegated, and shared in a climate of mutual support and trust."

Shared Governance at Garrett College involves the structure and process for developing, reviewing, recommending, and evaluating policies and procedures. However, for the sake of efficiency due to its small size, Garrett College also uses the governance framework to aid in institutional decision-making in relation to planning and assessment, resource allocation, and program development/evaluation.

The foundation of a successful shared governance system is built upon communication and trust.

Shared Governance is not . . .

- A replacement for administrative functions.
- A process to supersede the authority of the President or the Board of Trustees.
- A platform to promote the interest of individual constituencies.
- An arena to address all the concerns of the campus community.

Shared Governance is . . .

- Best demonstrated when the College, as a whole, is committed to a common vision of the institution's mission.
- **Participative** - Because participants in the shared governance process will be empowered with the responsibility to **influence** decisions that affect the College as a whole, they will operate in a consensus-building fashion where open communication and accountability are paramount.
 - Communication must be clear, frequent, consistent, and timely, both within governance groups and between groups and the wider college community.
 - Participants in shared governance also have the responsibility to facilitate and support decisions that are well-informed, realistic, and unbiased.

Shared governance uses the collective intelligence of the college community in planning and decision-making, and involves joint effort and support in the decision-making process. This process fosters a shared confidence that is extended to all other areas of responsibility within the institution, e.g., divisions, departments, and programs. However, it is important to recognize that not all decisions are part of the shared governance process. Many decisions fall within the authority of one's job description or role at the College, or within the daily operational jurisdiction of a division, department, or unit. Such decisions frequently relate to areas such as financial resources, personnel, resource allocation, teaching, and the administration of college operations. Shared governance committees do not address these administrative areas.

Also, no person should fear retaliation for expressing his or her views and opinions about an issue or topic under review as long as one is not attacking, defaming, or slandering another.

A Glossary of Governance

Definitions:

- Policy** - a definite course of action adopted for the sake of prudence, expediency, or facility (must be approved by the Board of Trustees)
- Procedure** - the particular mode of action involved with respect to implementing and executing a policy, i.e., instructions for executing policy
- Process** - the series of actions, operations, or motions involved in the accomplishment of an end; i.e., the actual steps involved in carrying out a procedure, i.e., operational guidelines
- Practice** - habitual or customary course of action or way of doing something

By law, the Garrett College Board of Trustees has the responsibility to establish and periodically evaluate policies regarding the governance and operations of the College, including instruction, organization, physical resources, finances, faculty, staff, administrative personnel, students, and external relations. Responsibility for the administration of these policies is delegated to the President and the President's Senior Staff.

While the policies of the College require Board of Trustees' approval, the authority for developing procedures to implement these policies is delegated to the President and the President's Senior Staff.

Specifications for processes to guide the College's operations may be developed by various administrative units as needed after appropriate consultation with affected offices. Process specifications (operational guidelines) may then be enforced within the discretionary limits defined within those specifications. All administrative officers have the authority to develop practices that allow for effective and efficient operations within their units after appropriate consultation with their constituents as long as the practices do not violate official college policies, procedures, or processes nor interfere with the efficient operations of other departments.

While the President has the authority to develop procedures, processes, and practices for the sound operations of the College, in a shared governance system, the President is also expected to solicit and receive advice on the development of such procedures, processes, and practices from the President's Senior Staff, the faculty, operational staff, other administrators, students, and the College's legal counsel as needed. To this end, the President will confer/consult with the Faculty Senate, the Staff Senate, and the President's Senior Staff as appropriate.

When deciding the appropriate course of action to follow, policies supersede procedures, procedures supersede processes, and processes supersede practices.

If a College employee has questions related to a policy, procedure, process, or practice, please contact the Director of Compliance at: equitycompliance@garrettcollege.edu.

SECTION II: Governance Structure and Function

Garrett College's Governance System is comprised of seven principal bodies:

College Council:

- The College Council membership includes representation from all College constituencies and includes all senior administrators (ex-officio); department heads (ex-officio), most of whom are at the “director” level; and elected representatives from the Faculty Senate and the Staff Senate (See Appendix A – Governance Charter-Council and Committee Configurations Spreadsheet for individual names and titles).
- College Council performs the following functions:
 - Cross-divisional support and information sharing.
 - Provides review and advice on governance-related proposals (including new policies, policy revisions, and deletions) from standing committees or senates, recommending action to the President (and, when appropriate, to the Board through the President).
 - Proposes, through appropriate standing committees, new policies along with policy revisions and deletions.
- College Council meets at least three times per regular (fall and spring) semester during the academic year, including a meeting within the first month of each semester to respond to requests, set their meeting schedule, plan their work, and review/propose policy changes, and only as needed in July and August.
 - Items for the meeting agenda, which is normally published at least two days in advance of the meeting, are submitted by committee chairs and/or solicited from Council members.
 - College Council meetings are conducted by moderators (Council members) who volunteer for the task a month in advance.
 - Meeting minutes are taken by recorders (Council members) who likewise volunteer for the task at least a month in advance. Minutes from College Council meetings are normally to be published/posted to the College Intranet within seven working days following the meeting.

Faculty Senate:

- The membership of the Faculty Senate includes all permanent, full-time faculty members. A current list of members can be found on the College Global Email Address Distribution List titled “Faculty Senate”.
- Faculty Senate adheres to the meeting requirements within their respective bylaws or formally agreed to by their respective memberships.
- The Faculty Senate performs the following functions:
 - Provides review and advice on new policies along with policy revisions and deletions;
 - Proposes, through appropriate standing committees, new policies along with policy revisions and deletions;
 - Provides review and advice on new academic programs and courses along with program and course revisions;
 - Raises concerns and offers advice to the President through the elected Faculty Senate leadership.

Note: According to Middle States Commission on Higher Education standards (i.e., the Characteristics of Excellence), the faculty is expected to have a significant voice in the development, evaluation, and recommendation of both policies and procedures, especially in all matters related to the educational program of the institution); and in the development, evaluation, recommendation, and implementation of processes, therein.

Staff Senate:

- The membership of the Staff Senate includes all permanent, full-time non-faculty employees who do not report directly to the President. A current list of members can be found on the College Global Email Address Distribution List titled “Staff Senate”.
- Staff Senate adheres to the meeting requirements within their respective bylaws or formally agreed to by their respective memberships.
- The Staff Senate performs the following functions:
 - Provides review and advice on new policies along with policy revisions and deletions;
 - Proposes, through appropriate standing committees, new policies along with policy revisions and deletions;
 - Raises concerns and offers advice to the President through the elected Staff Senate Leadership.

Four (4) standing committees (includes membership information and related functions):

The membership of the four standing committees (The Curriculum and Academic Standards Committee (CASC); Student Life and Services Committee (SL&SC); Human Resources Committee (HRC); and Finance, Facilities, Safety and Technology Committee (FFS&TC) is comprised of elected/volunteer staff and faculty representatives as well as senior administrators and professional staff (Additional details related to each committee can be found on the next few pages).

The staff and faculty representatives are either elected by their respective constituencies (i.e., the Staff Senate or Faculty Senate) or eligible employees volunteer and serve for the duration of their respective terms of office, which are normally two years. Senior administrators and professional staff serve *ex officio*. (See term dates listed beside member names on each committee/council in Appendix A).

Employees who are in probationary or disciplinary status are not eligible to serve as governance representatives.

In the event that no governance representative is identified for a given position, (i.e. no one was nominated or has volunteered) that position will be filled by appointment, with the appointment being made by the appropriate senior administrator.

The four standing committees are chaired either by a senior administrator or his or her designee, or by an individual elected by the committee members. Elected chairs serve for a term of one year and may serve for more than one term.

Agendas are developed by the committee chair and are to be published/posted to the College Intranet at least three days in advance of the meeting. Meeting minutes are to be recorded, either by a volunteer recorder or

someone appointed for the purpose, and are to be published/posted to the College Intranet within seven working days following a meeting. The meeting minutes should include a record of the persons in attendance.

1) The Curriculum and Academic Standards Committee (CASC)

This committee performs the following functions:

- Reviews, and recommends for adoption, non-adoption, or resubmission after revision proposals for new courses; course syllabi; and degree and certificate program curriculum changes including changes in degree and general education requirements.
- Reviews, recommends, and mediates policies, standards, and guidelines pertaining to student learning assessment and program review.
- Reviews assessments of academic programs and makes recommendations/suggestions for continuance, discontinuance, and/or modifications.
- Reviews and recommends for adoption, non-adoption, or resubmission after revision proposals for new degree and (credit) certificate programs.
- Reviews, recommends, and mediates academic policies related to admissions, academic performance and/or progress, and graduation.
- Reviews academic policies to ensure compliance with state, regional, or federal guidelines and/or regulations, and in cases of non-compliance, recommends changes necessary to ensure compliance.
- Reviews, recommends, and mediates policies, standards, and guidelines for distance learning (on-line) courses/programs, whether originating from Garrett College or from another postsecondary institution or contractor.
- Reviews and makes recommendations pertaining to the strategic plan on matters relating to curriculum, academic standards, and student learning assessment.
- Ensures that members of the campus community are well-informed about academic policies as well as academic standards.

2) The Student Life and Services Committee (SL&SC)

This committee performs the following functions:

- Establishes and assesses educational outcomes for student life programs and activities.
- Reviews and recommends for adoption, non-adoption, or resubmission after revision proposals relating to the Campus Advisory & Activity Board roles and responsibilities to assure compliance with standards of practice and any applicable College policies.
- Reviews, recommends, and mediates policies, procedures, and guidelines pertaining to student conduct and behavior, including those pertaining to alcohol, drug, and tobacco use.
- Reviews and makes recommendations to the strategic plan on matters relating to student services and student life.
- Reviews the scope of student services and recreational/leisure activities and offers recommendations to the Dean.
- Ensures that members of the campus community are well-informed about student services and student life policies and procedures.

3) The Human Resources Committee (HRC)

This committee performs the following functions:

- Reviews, recommends, and mediates personnel policies and procedures pertaining to recruiting and hiring practices, conditions of employment, compensation and benefits, evaluation and promotion, probation and termination, grievances, and all other matters pertaining to human resources.
- Reviews and recommends changes to the position classification system.
- Reviews and makes recommendations pertaining to the strategic plan on matters relating to human resources.
- Recommends and evaluates areas of needed training with respect to sexual harassment, drug/alcohol abuse, workplace and domestic violence, FERPA, and other issues affecting the broader workplace.
- Ensures that members of the campus community are well-informed about human resources policies and procedures.

4) The Finance, Facilities, Safety and Technology Committee (FFS&TC)

This committee performs the following functions:

- Reviews, recommends, and mediates policies and procedures pertaining to the allocation and use of fiscal and physical resources at the institutional level.
- Reviews and recommends policies and procedures pertaining to risk management and financial controls.
- Reviews, recommends, and mediates policies and procedures pertaining to campus safety.
- Reviews and makes recommendations pertaining to the strategic plan on matters relating to fiscal and physical resources, including information technology.
- Reviews and recommends policies and procedures pertaining to compliance with Title IX, the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA), and other regulatory requirements.
- Ensures that members of the campus community are well-informed about policies and procedures pertaining to the budget, financial controls, facilities use and management, campus safety, and information technology use.
- Reviews, recommends, and mediates information technology policies and procedures.

The President or a senior administrator may appoint an *ad hoc* committee to address a particular issue when the need arises. The College also recognizes certain standing committees that serve non-governance functions. In the course of their work, these committees sometimes identify the need for revisions to an existing policy or procedure, or the need for development of a new policy. In such cases, these items are passed on to the appropriate governance committee for its consideration (*See the governance flow chart on the last page of this document*).

Meeting Requirements:

- Governance committee meetings (except for the Faculty Senate and Staff Senate meetings – which are only open to their membership) are open to other members of the College community.
- At a minimum, governance committees are required to meet at least three (3) times per regular (fall and spring) semester during the academic year or more often as needed, including a meeting within the first month of each semester to respond to requests, set their meeting schedule, plan their work, and review/propose policy changes (see details listed under each respective council, committee or senate on previous pages of this document).
- Elected or appointed representatives to committees have an obligation to participate in 67 percent of the meetings (on an annual basis) unless excused. If their schedules do not permit such attendance, they have an obligation to resign so a replacement can be selected (by a vote of the Faculty Senate or Staff Senate, or by appointment by the President, as appropriate). If the representative does not willingly resign, procedures for replacing the representative should be articulated and enforced.
 - Because shared governance requires a commitment of time, effort, and sometimes resources from individuals and departments, the College shall provide them with an adequate level of support to enable them to carry out their shared governance responsibilities.
- Governance committees are also expected to send a representative to the monthly College Council Meetings and/or provide updates/summaries to the Executive Assistant to the President/Board in advance of each monthly meeting to be distributed as part of the monthly College Council Agenda.
- A governance committee may also form a subcommittee to handle special tasks and report back to the committee as a whole.

SECTION III: Governance Process and Related Guidelines

- The Director of Institutional Compliance, with support from the Executive Assistant to the President/Board, is responsible for the oversight of Garrett College's policies and procedures.
 - Any individual or governance committee considering the development of a new policy, should first check with the Director to ensure that no existing College policy addresses the particular issue or subject. This will also ensure that individuals/groups are working with the most-recent version of the policy/procedures and allow the Director/Assistant to track appropriately and provide support as needed.
- Governance committees are responsible to form well-reasoned recommendations regarding College policies and procedures, for conducting regular reviews of existing policies and procedures (especially those pertaining to the standing committee), and to propose revisions as needed.
- Requests for policy development or review may come through the College Council, Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, standing committee member, or the President.
- No updates/recommendations should be made without consultation with constituents and departments that would be impacted by the new policy.
 - Governance committees may request assistance from other College personnel or standing committees who have expertise with or an interest in the topic under study.
 - Also, before a policy or procedure is sent forward, the originating committee or College Council must ensure that (1) it is consistent with the College's mission and goals, (2) it is sufficiently supported by data or other relevant information, (3) it does not violate a Board by-law, and (4) when appropriate, it incorporates a process for evaluating its effectiveness.
- In most cases, once a governance committee has drafted a new policy or procedure or revised an existing policy or procedure, it is sent simultaneously to the other standing committees, Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, and College Council for review.
 - All recommendations should be accompanied by an explanation regarding the process and rationale that led to the recommendations.
- After receiving input from Faculty Senate and Staff Senate, the College Council may:
 - (1) send the policy or procedure to the President and Board of Trustees with or without suggested revisions or a recommendation for approval,
 - (2) return the policy or procedure to the originating committee for modification, or
 - (3) recommend disapproval.

Final approval normally rests with the President and/or the Board of Trustees, as appropriate. However, there are cases in which only the approval of the governance committee is required. For example, certain academic requirements need approval only from the Curriculum and Academic Standards Committee.

SECTION IV: Evaluation and Amendment of Governance Charter

Evaluation of the Governance Process

Responsibility for oversight of the College's shared governance process is assigned to the Office of Institutional Compliance and the Office of Analytics, Institutional Research, and Assessment, with assistance from the Executive Assistant to the President/Board, who regularly monitor the process as to its effectiveness.

A formal evaluation of the governance structure and process is to be conducted at least once every three years.

Amendment of the Governance Charter

This governance charter may be amended at any time by recommendation of the College Council and subsequent approval of the President and the Board of Trustees. Otherwise, this charter shall be evaluated and either amended or renewed at least every three years.

GARRETT COLLEGE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE FLOW CHART

