



GOVERNANCE CHARTER

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June 16, 2020

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Definition of 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 even though these are not generally regarded as governance activities *per se*.

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.

Principles of Shared Governance

Shared Governance is best demonstrated when the College, as a whole, is committed to a common vision of the institution's mission. 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.

The following elements foster dynamic and cooperative interaction and are necessary for effective governance:

Integration: Garrett College is a complex institution comprised of several separate but interrelated units. Each unit has distinct functional responsibilities and does its own part in enabling the College to achieve its mission and goals. However, these units depend on

each other for the successful performance of their jobs and for the College to advance its mission. Frequently, decisions made by one individual, department, or division will influence the effectiveness of others. Consequently, good governance should view decision-making organically. Each part of the institution must function harmoniously and in balance with the others. Otherwise, bad decisions, discord, and inefficiency are likely to occur.

Inclusiveness: An effective governance system should recognize the legitimacy of the diverse perspectives of the various constituencies comprising the college community. Each perspective contributes to the collective wisdom. Members of the college community provide input so that all have a stake in the decisions and outcomes.

Open Communication: A good governance system will incorporate a communications network that enables and promotes dialogue, understanding, joint investigation, and creative collaboration. The free, unimpeded flow of information throughout the college community is essential if shared governance is to operate effectively.

Impartiality: Individuals and groups in the college community are treated in an equitable, just, respectful, and caring manner.

Efficiency and Effectiveness: Priorities and decisions are examined and validated with an open system providing timelines and feedback.

Values: Decisions are consistent with the mission, vision, and values of the College and the campus community.

Responsibility: Garrett College is a public community college. Statute vests responsibility with the Board of Trustees to hold in trust and good custody the interests of the county, the state, and the citizenry. These are responsibilities for which the Board is accountable and which neither it nor the President, who is an agent of the Board, can delegate. Therefore, all decision-making must be in the form of recommendations to the President or the Board as appropriate. Nevertheless, as members of the college community, the Board and the President have a moral obligation to support college governance procedures so long as they do not result in recommendations contrary to statute, fundamental principles or mission, or the vital interests of the College or the larger community.

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, and 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.

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.

The following examples may help to clarify the differences between policies, procedures, processes, and practices:

- A policy statement, which explains what the institution wants to happen, is normally accompanied by a procedure which explains how that policy is to be carried out. For example, the College may have a travel expense reimbursement policy that states that employees traveling on college business will be paid a *per diem* to cover their expenses for meals and incidentals and that the *per diem* amount paid will be based on the *per diem* amounts listed for various locations as found on the U.S. General Services Administration website.
- The procedure which accompanies this policy would outline the steps involved in carrying out this policy: e.g., (1) Determine the allowable *per diem* for the travel location from the General Services website. (2) Complete a travel/*per diem* request form and submit it for approval (in advance). (3) Receive a check for the *per diem* amount. With respect to processes and procedures:
- The College's purchasing process involves the use of purchase orders, but recently, the practice in many areas has been to make purchases with credit cards.

Governance Structure

Garrett College's Governance System is comprised of seven principal bodies: College Council, Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, and four standing committees: The Curriculum and Academic Standards Committee (CASC); the Student Life and Services Committee (SL&SC); the Human Resources Committee (HRC); and the Finance, Facilities, Safety and Technology Committee (FFS&TC).

The College Council is comprised of senior administrators; department heads, most of whom are at the "director" level; and representatives from the Faculty Senate and the Staff Senate. All members of the College Council serve *ex officio*, with the exception of the Faculty and the Staff Senate representatives.

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

The membership of the Faculty Senate includes all permanent, full-time faculty members.

The membership of the Staff Senate includes all permanent, full-time non-faculty employees who do not report directly to the President.

A complete listing of the membership of the College Council and for each of the four governance committees can be found in Appendix A.

Governance Function

Individual Governance Committee Responsibilities/Functions:

CURRICULUM AND ACADEMIC STANDARDS COMMITTEE (CASC)

The Curriculum and Academic Standards 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 to the academic and strategic plans 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.

STUDENT LIFE AND SERVICES COMMITTEE (SLSC)

The Student Life and Services 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 academic and strategic plans 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.

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE (HRC)

The Human Resources 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 to the academic and strategic plans 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.

FINANCE, FACILITIES, SAFETY & TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE (FFSTC)

The Finance, Facilities, Safety & Technology 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 to the academic and strategic plans on matters relating to fiscal and physical resources, including information technology.
- Reviews and recommends policies and procedures pertaining to compliance with Title IX, the 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.

FACULTY SENATE

The Faculty Senate performs the following functions:

- Provides review and advice on new policies along with the 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.

STAFF SENATE

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.

Governance Process

The governance committees are responsible for developing policies and procedures and for conducting regular reviews of existing policies and procedures and revising them if needed. Requests for policy development or review may come through the College Council, Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, or committee member, or the President. Governance committees may request assistance from other individuals or groups who have expertise with or an interest in the topic under study, and governance committee meetings (except for the Faculty Senate and Staff Senate meetings - that are open to members only) are open to other members of the College community.

Governance committees are expected to publish their meeting schedules and agendas in advance (normally at least a week ahead) and to publish the minutes from their meeting within a reasonable amount of time (usually within one week after a meeting) on the governance website. 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 in advance of each monthly meeting to be distributed as part of the monthly College Council Agenda.

At a minimum, governance committees are required to meet at least three 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. A governance committee may form a subcommittee to handle special tasks and report back to the committee as a whole.

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 Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, and College Council for review. 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.

As mentioned earlier, 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, and in some cases, they may even draft a revised policy or procedure or propose a new policy for consideration. In such

cases, these items are passed on to the appropriate governance committee for its consideration *(See the governance flow chart on Page 12)*.

Guidelines for Shared Governance

The information necessary for revising or developing policies and procedures or for making recommendations should be made available to all who request it.

All recommendations from committees should be accompanied by an explanation regarding the process and rationale that led to the recommendations.

No committee should make recommendations without consultation with its constituents and departments that would be impacted by the new policy, and without notifying its constituents and affected departments of its recommendation. (Note: Committee meetings are open to anyone who has an interest in attending.) Committees considering developing new policies should first check with the Director of Equity and Compliance or the Executive Assistant, President/Board/Event Operations, to ensure no existing college policy addresses this issue.

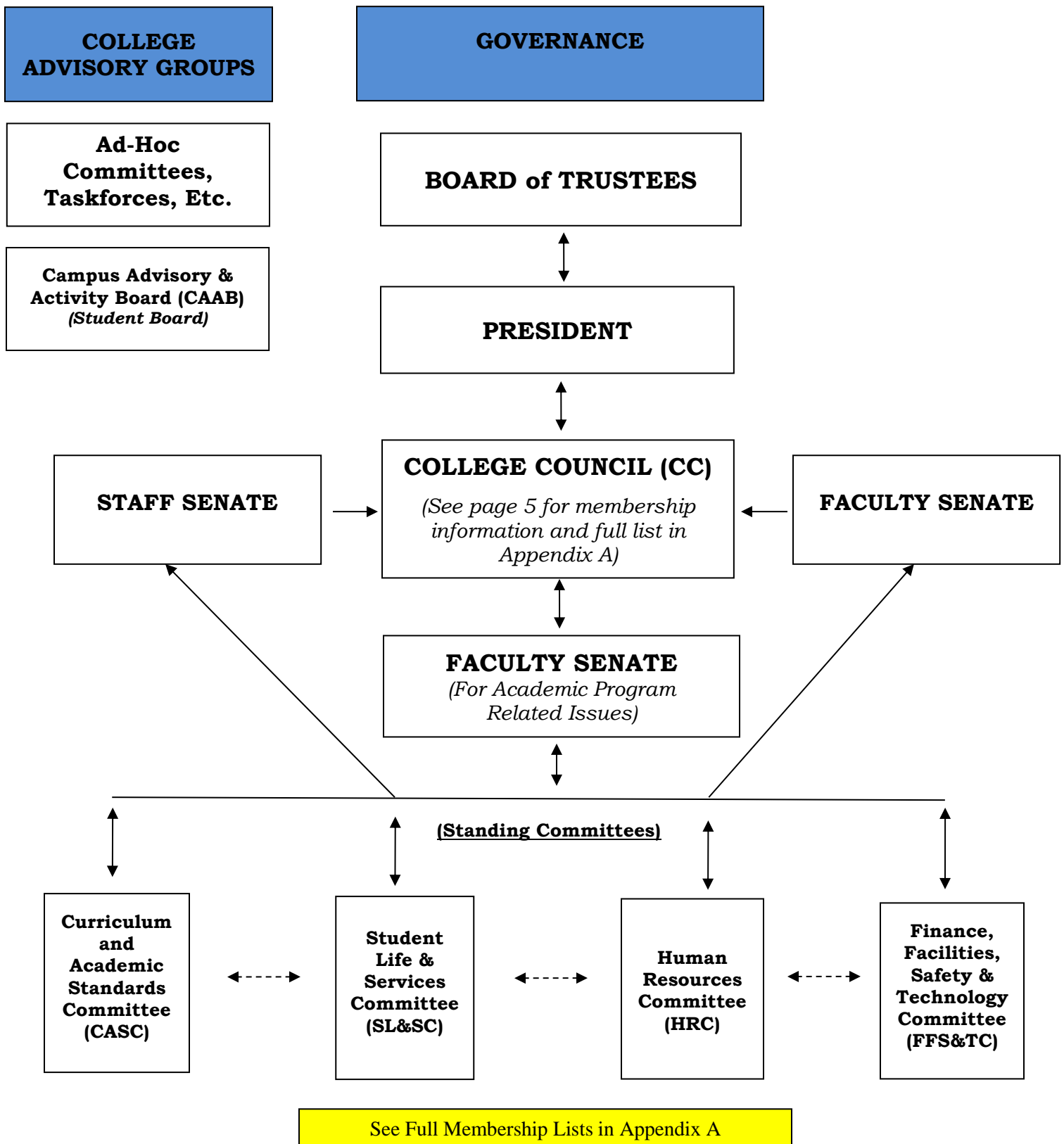
Also, before a policy or procedure is sent forward, the originating committee or College Council must ensure that (1) it is consistent with the College's mission and goals, (2) it is sufficiently supported by data or other relevant information, (3) it does not violate a Board by-law, and (4) when appropriate, it incorporates a process for evaluating its effectiveness.

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

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.

GARRETT COLLEGE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE



Council and Committee Member Selection Process

All members of the College Council serve *ex officio*, with the exception of the Faculty Senate and Staff Senate representatives, who are elected by their respective constituencies. Faculty and staff representatives who serve on the Curriculum and Academic Standards Committee; Student Life and Services Committee; Human Resources Committee; or Finance, Facilities, Safety and Technology Committee are either elected by their respective constituencies (i.e., the Staff Senate or Faculty Senate) or they may volunteer when there is no nominee for a particular position. It should be noted that employees who are in probationary or disciplinary status are not be 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, the appointment being made by the appropriate senior administrator.) Faculty and staff governance committee representatives normally serve for a term of two years and are eligible to serve for more than one term. All other governance committee members serve *ex officio*.

College Council and Governance Committee Operations

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 a month in advance. Minutes from College Council meeting are normally to be published within seven working days following the meeting.

The Curriculum and Academic Standards Committee; Student Life and Services Committee; Human Resources Committee; and Finance, Facilities, Safety and Technology Committee meet at least three times per regular (fall and spring) semester during the academic year and more frequently if 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. These 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 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 within seven

working days following a meeting. The meeting minutes should include a record of the persons in attendance.

Faculty Senate and Staff Senate adhere to the meeting requirements within their respective bylaws or formally agreed to by their respective memberships.

Evaluation of the Governance Process

Responsibility for oversight of the College's shared governance process is assigned to the Office of Analytics, Institutional Research, and Assessment, who regularly monitors 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.

The College's shared governance model was initially adopted in 2009 and subsequently evaluated during the 2010-2011 academic year. Based on the results of that evaluation, significant changes were made both to the governance structure and process in AY2011-2012. Prior to being implemented, these changes were discussed and approved through the governance process. The Governance Charter was subsequently revised to reflect these changes and was approved by the Board of Trustees in March 2014. At the request of then Acting President Coviello, further revisions were made to the Charter in fall 2016 and these were approved by the Board of Trustees in November 2016.

April/May 2020 Revision: Updates made after the Middle States Commission on Higher Education Self-Study Evaluation Team Visit March 8-11, 2020 and final report. The team provided the following "Collegial Advice" under Standard VII-Governance, Leadership, and Administration: The team suggests that the institution consider removing the Executive Council from the formal governance structure currently in use. Executive members serve on College Council and often serve as chairs of the standing committees central to the governance structure. Also, the Chair of the Evaluation Team recommended more formal roles in the governance process for Faculty Senate and Staff Senate.

October/November 2021 Revision: Update to frequency of Council and Committee Meetings held each semester during the academic year (i.e. meet 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 work, and review/propose policy changes, and only as needed in July and August). Removed "monthly" meeting requirement which has been a challenge for some time, but especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.