GOVERNANCE:
DECISION MAKING IN HIGHER
EDUCATION:

A Look at University of Scranton Governance Processes
Decision Making in Higher Ed

- Governance describes the processes we use in higher ed to engage multiple groups in the policy and decision making process.

- Key participants:
  - Board of Trustees, Regents, other governing boards depending on type of institution
  - Administrative Leadership
  - Faculty
  - Others (students, staff, external stakeholders)

- Key questions:
  - Who’s in charge – authority, degree of centralization
  - Who has a say in what – not everyone is involved all the time; some groups have primary responsibility for some decisions, other decisions call on representative structures for input
  - Balance of collegial (more informal, consensus building) vs. managerial approach (top down decision making); quality of conversation & procedural justice (perceived fairness of process) vs. expedience
Core Purpose: Governance

- Governance takes place at institutional and other levels to place structure around decision making.
- Desired product is a collaborative decision related to the institution, often in the form of policy or practice, “collaborative responsibility.”
- Effective governance:
  - Provides institutional purpose
  - Clarifies strategic direction
  - Identifies priorities
  - Exerts sufficient control to manage outcomes
- Even good governance has its challenges – “authority and responsibility [are a] source of tension, even in well-functioning systems” (Heaney, 71).
  - Conflict is a natural part of decision making – healthy institutions have a place to put it
  - Group dynamics
Governance at Scranton

- Broad term for the processes involved in informed, engaged advisory relationships and decision making (often strategic). Used specifically in relationship to policy development:
  - “A process of consultation, communication, and decision making that produces institutional policies.”
Toward our Current State: University of Scranton Governance Revisions

- Long history of shared governance
- Numerous reviews and assessments over the years, most recent in this past year (2010-11).
- Following 2008 governance assessment
  - Creation of Staff Senate
  - Dissolution of University Council
  - Creation of University Governance Council
  - Other modifications:
    - Definitions/principles of governance clarified to emphasize its role as primarily policy-making
    - Cabinet charge revised
    - Policy processes codified and coordinated
    - Governance Web site and materials: [http://matrix.scranton.edu/governance/](http://matrix.scranton.edu/governance/)
Each of the three representative governance bodies will have an administrative liaison (direct relationship) to the AC for non-policy issues.
Governance Groups: UGC

- University Governance Council (UGC): coordination and communication between and amongst groups; conduit for centralized distribution & review of institutional policy.

  - Membership: representatives from each of the three senates. Convened by VP Planning/CIO; supported by Planning & IE Office
Governance Groups: Senates

Each senate has a role in (1) policy development and (2) constituency issues

- **Student Senate**
  - President: Oliver Strickland
  - Cabinet Liaison: Dr. Vince Carilli

- **Faculty Senate**
  - President: Dr. Rebecca Mikesell
  - Cabinet Liaison: Dr. Hal Baillie

- **Staff Senate**
  - President: Meg Cullen Brown
  - Cabinet Liaison: Tricia Day
Staff Senate Role in Governance

- Staff Voice in University Governance, and specifically policy-making
- Staff contributions to an effective university: peer support and comradeship (Cura Personalis); inspiration and knowledge transfer (Magis); communications; raising issues and potential solutions on issues germane to staff—but not compensation; marshaling resources to benefit the institution (Rei Solicitudo)
Policy Process

- Policies can originate from several places:
  - Board, Cabinet (top down)
  - Individual offices, departments, divisions, constituency groups (bottom up)
  - Governance bodies, UGC (in the middle)
- Type of policy determines if, and where, it enters formal governance process
  - Institutional policies entering into the formal process
  - Other Policy Definitions @ www.scranton.edu/governance
1. Policy issue/proposal developed by University group/constituency

2. University Governance Council receives policy suggestion/proposal

3. Review of policy suggestion/proposal by representative governing bodies, other University groups as necessary

4. Groups present feedback and/or recommendations to University Governance Council

5. Feedback and/or recommendations discussed by University Governance Council

6. University Governance Council forwards comments and/or recommendations to President’s Cabinet

7. President’s Cabinet deliberates; makes recommendation to President; feedback shared with University Governance Council and/or with originating group for additional development (as necessary)

8. Presidential action (or recommendation to Board of Trustees, as necessary)

9. Board of Trustees action, if required.

10. Communication and implementation of policy.
Growth of Policy Coordination: A Key Goal

- We need to have a better grasp of what policies we have, which ones we need that we don’t have, and which ones we have that should go away
- Development of policy definitions help us to
  - Identify different types of policies (and procedures)
  - Identify which things need to be reviewed within which level(s) of governance
- Development of policy template helps us to
  - Ensure that policies have the same structure and required elements (and if what a group or individual is seeking to produce doesn’t have those elements, we can say it probably isn’t a policy).
  - Create a standard process for review and approval of policy, including set revision/sunset dates
- Development of policy website helps us to
  - Coordinate location of institutional policies
  - Ensure access to policies & help communicate their content
- PIR divisional policies have been critical test bed
  - Has impact on institutional governance/policy development
  - Led to examination of IT governance process
Questions

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