The University of Scranton
Guide to Governance

January 2018

As defined by The University of Scranton, **governance** is *a process of consultation, communication and decision-making that produces institutional policies*. These policies are *the general guidelines that inform decision-making and the development of procedures throughout the University.* This guide describes both the structure and the processes of governance. It addresses the University's:

- Governance history
- Governance principles
- Governance structure: groups involved
- The governance process
- The definition/roles of committees
- The role/place of other affinity groups (such as advisory groups)

Key governance terms are defined in Appendix 1 of this guide. Policy definitions are included in Appendix 2. The University's policy development flowchart is included as Attachment A.

Additional governance materials can be found at the University's governance Web site, www.matrix.scranton.edu/governance.

Background

The University of Scranton has a long history of shared governance, a process which seeks to involve various campus groups in the administrative and academic decision making. One application of shared governance is our approach to formal, representative governance, in which various groups engage with one another to advise on University decision-making. Though the formal governance process can engage groups in discussion of a myriad of campus issues, its key function is the review, development, and revision of policies. Policies are the general guidelines that inform decision-making and the development of related procedures.

In 1999, the University, prompted by findings from its 1998 Middle States Self Study for regional accreditation, undertook a comprehensive review of its internal governance structure, which included the Faculty Senate, the Student Government, and University Council. A number of changes designed to clarify the roles and operations of the governance bodies, and improve communication between and among these groups, were put in place. And, as part of this study, a list of governance principles were developed; these principles continue to lay the foundation for the University's governance practices. These changes and improvements were approved by the University's Board of Trustees in 2002, who committed the University to review its newly-adopted governance in the 2005-06 academic year; a Middle States Periodic Review in 2003 also requested a follow-up review. Shortly after, the Middle States accreditation region released revised standards for accreditation, which in part address elements of effective institutional governance.

In spring 2006, the University proceeded with a follow-up assessment of its governance reforms. The assessment was intended to measure to what extent the University's governance system was improved by previous efforts, measuring perceptions of and levels of satisfaction with the current system. Conducted by the Office of Planning & Institutional Effectiveness, the assessment identified a number of areas for improvement in the governance system and its processes.

Upon review of these results by the President, a subcommittee of the Cabinet prepared a *Proposal for Governance Revisions*, outlining several steps designed to improve the governance system. Following review by the University community, including the three governance groups, recommendations for changes to governance were presented the Board of Trustees and approved in December 2007. Key among these changes was the creation of a Staff Senate, the dissolution of the University Council, and the creation of a University Governance Council. The roles and responsibilities of these groups, in addition to the Faculty Senate and Student Government, are described later in this document.

Governance Principles

As described in its *Statement of Governance Principles*, the governance system at The University of Scranton:

A. Seeks to ensure widespread communication, understanding, participation and reasonable consensus.
B. Addresses pressing issues in a streamlined, adaptive, flexible way and encourages the appropriate use of sunset rules for committees and task forces.
C. Attempts to generate widespread understanding throughout the University community of the differences among policy-making, implementation of defined policy, and consultation regarding policy.
D. Allows stakeholders in the policy-making process to express their views and suggestions when policies affecting them are being reviewed and when the best solutions are being considered.
E. Ensures regular, two-way communication between representatives of stakeholders participating in policy-making and those they represent.
F. Seeks to guarantee that participants in the policy-making process are provided with the appropriate resources and information so that they may participate in a timely fashion.
G. Recognizes that the primary responsibility for policy-making and decision-making in each area of University life must be clearly designated.

Each governance body of The University of Scranton is responsible for ensuring that these principles are reflected in their constitutions and bylaws and otherwise upheld by their operations.

Governance Structure

At the University of Scranton, governance is an internal process of policy development sanctioned by the University's Board, which holds overall authority for the activities of the institution. The President's Cabinet is the University's chief decision- and policy-making body. Three representative groups - the Faculty Senate, the Staff Senate, and the Student Government – and the University Governance Council form the remainder of the governance model. The officers of each of the three groups are elected by their peers; the elected members of these three groups (or their designates) serve on the University Governance Council. The following chart describes the formal, representative governance structure:

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                    │   Board of Trustees  │
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                    │      President       │
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                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │  President's Cabinet │
                    └─────────────────────┘
                               ▲
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                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │ University Governance│
                    │       Council        │
                    └─────────────────────┘
              ┆                ┆                ┆
    ┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────┐
    │ Faculty Senate│  │ Staff Senate │  │   Student     │
    └──────────────┘  └──────────────┘  │  Government   │
                                         └──────────────┘
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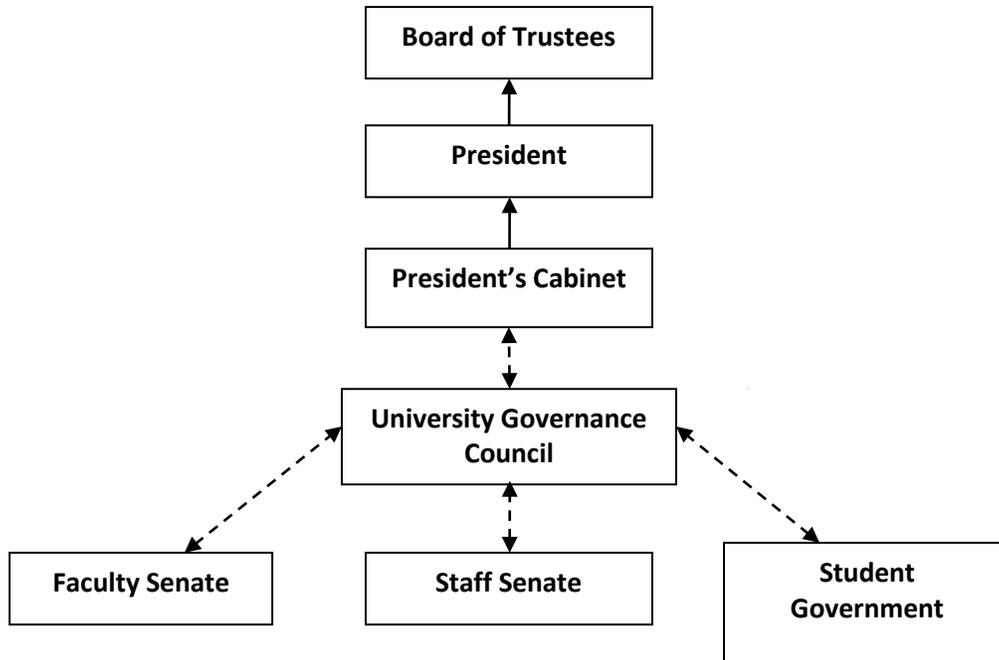
Each of the three representative governance bodies has an administrative liaison to the Cabinet for non-policy issues. A dotted line/arrow indicates an indirect relationship between groups. A solid line/arrow indicates a direct relationship.

As described in this chart, the President's Cabinet, the President, and the Board of Trustees have a *direct* reporting relationship; that is, the President's Cabinet is charged by and advisory to the President, and the President to the Board of Trustees, and so on.

The representative governing bodies have *indirect* relationships with one another as they take part in dialogue related to governance issues within the governance structure. They come together formally through the University Governance Council. As described their respective constitutions and bylaws, the senates are *directly* advisory to one or more administrators. To facilitate this relationship and ensure that each of the respective representative groups have an advocate at the administrative level, each has an administrative liaison, to the Cabinet for non-policy (or non-governance) issues. The responsibilities of these liaisons are further described in Appendix 3.

The president of each senate also serves as a constituent representative to the Board of Trustees.

The Representative Governance Bodies
Within the University, our internal governance system is comprised of several different groups: the Presidents' Cabinet, whose members approve or decide policy; the representative governing bodies whose members consult on policy; and the University Governance Council,

which also consults on policy. In addition to these, other committees or advisory groups whose members, as charged by the Vice President/Provost to whom they report, review material related to the development of policy and/or other University decision-making processes, can be engaged. The level and type of consultation within each group will vary based upon the nature of the policy item that is being reviewed, created, or discontinued. Communication among all the groups is expected to flow in both directions and be timely, providing adequate opportunity for constituents to both receive information and share ideas.

The representative governing bodies and the University Governance Council are charged to review and advise on the creation, revision, or discontinuation of institutional policy; the groups are consultative, and are not in an of themselves decision-making groups. The roles of the representative governing bodies are described below:

The University Governance Council (UGC)[1]
The University Governance Council plays an important role in governance. The University Governance Council was created in order to create a forum for the leadership of each of the three representative governing bodies to come together to discuss policy development in a collaborative way, and a venue to forward their feedback and reactions to the President's Cabinet. The UGC also serves as the primary coordinating structure and conduit for the receipt and distribution of institutional policy (*see:* Appendix 2, policy definitions) proposals to and from each of the representative governance groups[2].

The UGC is comprised of representatives from each of the three representative bodies. The group is convened by the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, its administrative liaison to the President's Cabinet, whose job description includes administrative responsibility for governance. This liaison is charged with carrying UGC feedback on policy deliberations to the Cabinet, and conveying information from the Cabinet to the UGC. The President of the University may also participate in meetings of the UGC. The UGC is directly supported by the Office of Planning & Institutional Effectiveness, which reports to the Provost and has responsibility for institutional policy management and UGC support.

The Faculty Senate
As described in its constitution, the Faculty Senate is:
> the representative body that develops and articulates clear and informed faculty positions on matters of concern to the faculty, including but not limited to curriculum, academic policy and support of academic endeavors, except where the Collective Bargaining Agreement reduces, modifies, or redirects that responsibility. In order that the Faculty

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[1] The UGC replaces, in some ways, the dissolved University Council. The University Council was a group designed to serve as a forum for all three constituencies – faculty, staff, and students – to come together to discuss governance issues; the group also served as the only representative group of which staff could be part. However, concerns about the ineffectiveness of the University Council as constituted and the lack of a representative group for staff led to the creation of the UGC and the dissolution of the University Council.

[2] In this way, the UGC takes on the duties of the now-defunct Routing Committee, a structure in the previous governance system that handled the dissemination of governance materials and information.

Senate might provide informed opinions on such matters, the administration will provide the Faculty Senate, in a timely fashion, with all pertinent information prior to instituting policies or invoking changes that affect them. The Faculty senate represents the Voting Faculty as specified in the Faculty senate Bylaws.

The Senate's bylaws describe its membership as the Voting Faculty, consisting of all persons who hold full-time academic appointment at the University who do not also hold an administrative appointment; Faculty Senators, elected by and from the various Voting Faculty Units; and officers, consisting of a President, a President-elect or Vice President, Secretary, and Coordinator of Committees and Elections.   The Senate's bylaws describe the standing committees of the Faculty Senate: the Executive Committee, the Curriculum Committee, the Academic Policy Committee, the Academic Support Committee, and the Shared Governance and Leadership Committee.

The Staff Senate

Created in response to concerns shared by the University community as part of its 2006 governance assessment, the Staff Senate is designed to provide staff members with equal opportunity to participate in the University's governance system. The Senate's constitution describes its purpose:

> The University Staff Senate, a representative body of full-time and part-time staff employees is organized to assist in the realization of the officially approved objectives of The University of Scranton in accordance with the functions assigned to it by the Board of Trustees:

> The Staff Senate exists to contribute to the success of The University of Scranton by fully supporting the Mission of the University. As a constituent organization, the Staff Senate, along with the Faculty Senate and Student Senate, operates as a part of the University governance system to provide a forum for open communication and ongoing dialogue among staff and between staff and the administration, faculty, students, and the University community. The Staff Senate shall be a consultative and deliberative body with authority to make recommendations on matters which have a significant bearing on The University of Scranton. The Staff Senate shall promote the growth and welfare of its staff employees, and a positive and supportive work environment.

> The Staff Senate, through its elected representatives, shall serve as the official nominating body for staff appointments to committees and task forces as requested.

> The Staff Senate is not a decision making body with regard to wages and conditions of employment, although it may provide a forum where certain aspects of these items may be discussed for the purpose of making appropriate recommendations.

The Senate is comprised of elected members from the various staff categories: Clerical, Maintenance, Technical, Trades, and Police, Professional, and Para-professional. Staff representatives can be either full-time or part-time employees, but must have completed at least one year of contiguous service. The Senate's bylaws describe its operating processes.

The Student Senate (Student Government)
As described in its constitution, the University's Student Senate was formed by and with the intent of the student body in:

> desiring to support the Ignatian mission of The University of Scranton by promoting the teachings and examples of Jesus Christ in all aspects of student involvement through a commitment to leadership and service to others; to provide a means for responsible and effective student participation in the organization and in the operation of student affairs; to provide a forum for the expression of student views and interests; to maintain academic freedom, academic responsibility, and student rights; to improve student culture, social, and physical welfare; to develop better student educational standards, facilities, and teaching methods; to help promote national and international understanding and fellowship at the student level; to organize and mobilize student involvement in seeking solutions to the serious problems facing the community, the nation, and humankind; and to promote the recognition of students' rights and responsibilities to the university, the community, and humanity; do hereby establish this Constitution of the Student Government at The University of Scranton.

The Student Government's Constitution and Bylaws describe its operational processes and internal regulations. The organization serves undergraduate students. It is comprised of an Executive Branch consisting of a President, Vice President, Chief of Staff, Treasurer, Secretary, Director of Communications, and Director of Technology, and a Legislative Branch comprised of elected representatives from each of the four undergraduate classes and representatives from commuting, residential, off-campus, and international students. The Student Government is moderated by the University's Associate Vice Provost & Dean of Students.

Committees and Other Affinity and Advisory Groups
At the University of Scranton, there are a number of committees, taskforces, and advisory groups that contribute to campus dialogue, deal with special issues, and support the day-to-day operations of the institution. These groups, though not an official part of the University's governance system[3], can at various times be called to take part in the development of policy. With respect to institutional policies, their role in the policy process is described in boxes 1 and 1.a. of the Policy Flow Chart.   Within each administrative division of the University, there are a number of advisory groups and other staff positions that play an important role in the development and vetting of policy.

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[3] Except for those that are committees or subgroups of the representative governance bodies.

The Flow of Policy

The core function of governance is the development of policy. The University of Scranton's governance system is designed to create a process for the effective flow of policy, from its origin to its implementation, and, if necessary, its dissolution. To guide this work, the University Governance Council worked to develop a set of **policy definitions**, a **standard template for institutional policies**, and **a flowchart to illustrate the steps of the policy approval process**. The policy definitions and template for the University were developed through thorough analysis of best practices in higher education policy management. The University's governance web site has a section dedicated to the collation and communication of institutional policies.

The type of policy (in particular, to whom and what groups it applies) determines if, and where, it enters formal governance process. The office of Planning & Institutional Effectiveness is on hand to offer expertise and guidance about policy development, and to assist members of the University community in navigating the 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)
- External mandates – some "compliance" polices are mandatory based on legislative or other requirements

Standard 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

A standard Policy template helps us to
- Ensure that policies have the same structure and required;
- Identify who/what office owns the policy and is responsible for its content, review, and promulgation
- Create a standard process for review and approval of policy, including set revision/sunset dates

The University Policy website helps us to
- Coordinate location of institutional policies
- Ensure access to policies & help communicate their content
- The University's Policy Definitions and Policy Flowchart are included as appendices to this guide. To view the University's policy template and other resources, visit www.scranton.edu/governance.

Appendix 1: Key Terms

Administrative Liaison: an individual member of the Administrators' Conference who serves as a conduit between and advocate for one or more representative governing bodies and the Administrators' Conference for non-policy issues.

Presidents' Cabinet: the chief policy- and decision-making body of the University.

Articles of Incorporation: a document describing the University's role and purpose as a nonprofit, charitable, educational organization and its authorization to conduct business in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Describes the various powers to be exercised by the University's Board of Trustees.

Board of Trustees: The University's chief governing body. Holds and exercises, either directly or through delegation, the powers identified by the University's *Articles of Incorporation.*

Deliberate: to consult with others as a process of reaching a decision.

Direct relationship: a relationship of administrative report.

Faculty Senate: a representative governing body constituted by members of the University's faculty.

Governance: a process of consultation, communication and decision-making that produces institutional policies.

Indirect relationship: a relationship of a consultative, non-reporting nature.

Policy: a general guideline that informs decision-making and the development of procedures throughout the University.

Recommend: to council or advise that something be done.

Staff Senate: a representative governing body constituted by members of the University's staff.

Student Government: a representative governing body constituted by members of the University's student body. Moderated by the Dean of Students.

University Governance Council: a representative group comprised of the elected officers of the Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, and Student Government that serves as a forum for collaborative discussion of policy issues between the three groups.

Appendix 2: Policy[4] Definitions for the University of Scranton:

Policy[5] Definitions for the University of Scranton:

Institutional Policies: the general guidelines that inform decision-making and the development of procedures throughout the University. Includes policies that are required of the University by way of federal legislation or other mandates.
- Govern institutional procedures
- Widespread application: guides work of the campus as a whole
- Changes less frequently, and then only through formal policy review process (University Governance Council review). Approval rests with President's Cabinet and/or the University President.
- Expressed in broad terms

Inter-divisional Policies: guidelines that inform practices and procedures created by a particular division that relate to, guide, or mandate operations in one or more other divisions.

- Govern the procedures of more than one division
- Developed/approved/changed through divisional policy development and in consultation with other division heads as needed; does not need to be vetted or approved through formal University policy review process
- Changes at discretion of the division head, with consultation as needed

Divisional Policies: the general guidelines that inform decision-making and the development of procedures within a specific division of the University. Student conduct and academic policies are divisional policies within Academic Affairs.

- Govern divisional procedures or processes
- Has application only within the division
- Changes less frequently, and then only through the division's policy review process. Approval rests with division head.

Administrative[6] Departmental Policies: the general guidelines that inform decision-making and the development of procedures within a specific department of the University.

- Govern the procedures or processes of the department
- Has application only within the department
- Departmental manager has discretion to change. Approval rests with department head.

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[4] These definitions apply to all policies enacted by or within the University of Scranton, excepting those that are developed under the auspices of the Faculty Collective Bargaining Agreement.
[5] These definitions apply to all policies enacted by or within the University of Scranton, excepting those that are developed under the auspices of the Faculty Collective Bargaining Agreement.
Note that the President of the University, in his or her executive capacity, can enact or suspend a policy in the event of an emergency situation until such time as it can be reviewed by the University Governance Council or other groups.

Procedures: those documents describing the operational processes required to implement institutional, divisional, or departmental policies.

- Describe the process by which a policy is implemented, or in the case of SOPs (see below), the standard practice that is to be followed. Describe process in specific detail.
- Narrow application; adopted by those with job requirements to follow or manage processes. If procedure supports a divisional or departmental policy, the procedure may guide how members of the functional area respond to others outside of the division or department.
- Can be changed at the operational level, approval rests with department or division head.
- Prone to change, and do not need to go through a formal policy review process. However, policy owners for policies that the procedure impacts must be notified. Policy owners and/or the department(s) responsible for implementation of the procedures are responsible for identifying and consulting relevant advisory or other groups which the procedures may impact.

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs): those documents describing or guiding regular processes, practices, or responsibilities that may not necessarily be related to a particular policy, but which requires a consistently applied approach.

Guidelines: documents that outline suggestions for best practice and appropriate standards; although these do not present requirements to be met, they are strongly recommended.

Standards: Required specifications, regulations, or rules. Outline minimal degree of compliance. Create consistency and uniformity of a process or activity. Differ from guidelines, which are recommended best practices.

Appendix 3: University of Scranton Cabinet[7] Liaisons: Roles and Responsibilities

The role of Cabinet Liaison was created in 2006 in response to a need for better communication between the President's Cabinet and general administration and the individual representative senates; in addition, as part of the creation of the University Governance Council (UGC), the convener of that group was charged with serving as liaison for the UGC to the cabinet. All appointments to the role of Cabinet Liaison are made by the President of the University. The following positions currently serve as liaisons:

- Provost & Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs – Convener, UGC; Cabinet Liaison for the UGC
- Provost & Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs – Cabinet Liaison for the Faculty Senate
- Vice Provost for Student Formation & Campus Life – Cabinet Liaison for the Student Senate
- Associate Vice President for Human Resources – Cabinet Liaison for the Staff Senate

The role and responsibilities for each Cabinet Liaison is as follows:
- Serve as primary conduit for information flow from the President's Cabinet to the respective senate/governance body. Determine what information from Cabinet is relevant to the discussions of the senate/governance body.
- Serve as primary conduit for information flow from the senate/governance body to the Cabinet. Determine what information from senate/governance body is relevant to Cabinet discussions. Apprise the Cabinet of current topics and issues on the agenda of the senate/governance body that may impact current or future planning and policy discussions. Present questions that may emerge in senate/governance discussions to the Cabinet for clarification or response. Serve as an advocate for the senate constituency to the Cabinet.
- Present/deliver requests from offices or groups on campus for senate/governance body review or consultation on policy or relevant topical issues.
- Observe the progress of the senate/governance body toward meeting goals and objectives. Assists senate/governance group leadership, upon their request, in resolving issues that may arise.
- Supports senate/governance group leadership and in maintaining knowledge about campus governance and act as a resource for senate/governance group on the role and functions of the University's governance system, in consultation with the Provost and the AVP Planning & Institutional Effectiveness Office, which provides governance and policy support.

For more information, contact (570) 941-6567, or email governance@scranton.edu.

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[7] Prior to 2011, the Cabinet was referred to as the Administrators' Conference. Governance documents prior to that year may refer to the Administrators' Conference as a group, and liaisons may be referred to as AC Liaisons. This document updated in 2016 to reflect the transition of governance oversight from the VP Planning & CIO to the Provost & Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs.