

## **Proposed Revisions to the University of Scranton Governance Structure**

Governance is *a process of consultation, communication, and decision-making that produces institutional policies*. These policies are *general guidelines that inform decision-making and the development of procedures throughout the University*. The Board of Trustees approves or ratifies policies of the University or delegates this authority to the President and other administrators of the University. Within the University, our system of governance is composed of several different elements: the Administrators' Conference, whose members approve or decide policy; the representative governing bodies whose members recommend or advise on policy; and advisory groups whose members, as charged by the Vice President to whom they report, review material related to the development of policy and/or other University decision-making processes. The level and type of consultation with each of the groups in this system will vary based on 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 their ideas.

### *Governance Assessment & Review*

As a result of the University's assessment<sup>1</sup> of its current governance structure, several key concerns emerged:

- Communication between the governing bodies and their constituents needs improvement.
- Communication and collaboration between the governing bodies needs improvement.
- The University Council is widely viewed as ineffective; there is a perceived lack of clarity of the group's purpose and function.
- There is a perceived lack of clarity of the role of various committees in the governance process; some additional streamlining of committees could occur.
- A general lack of understanding regarding the nature of governance at the University and what the roles of the bodies involved in governance are exists.

In an effort to address some of these issues, a working group charged by the President looked carefully at the current governance structure to determine if any modifications of the structure could address some of these concerns. In its review, the group carefully reviewed materials related to the University's current governance structure (Statement of Principles, governing body constitutions and bylaws, others) and considered governance structures from other institutions of higher education, focusing specifically

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<sup>1</sup> See PAIRO report at <http://academic.scranton.edu/department/pairo/documents/Governance-Assessment-Final-Report.pdf>

on staff councils and councils representing all constituents of an institution. The group determined that:

1. the University's governance flow chart should better describe the flow of policy deliberations, and which groups are actually involved in the policy making process.
2. some modification to the governance structure, in the form of revising the University Council in both charge and membership, and the creation of a Staff Senate, may address concerns over the effectiveness of the Council and improve communication amongst the representative governing bodies, and between the governing bodies and Administrators' Conference.
3. a differentiation between *general functional policies* (that guide departmental work or processes) and *formal institutional policies* should be made .
4. the University identify the offices/departments with the responsibility to support the work of governance, including the revised University Council and the maintenance of a comprehensive governance web site and collective institutional policy materials.

These changes are intended to represent a shift in governance from its current issue and topic-based focus to a constituency-based structure; that is, ensuring that each constituency group on campus (faculty, staff, and students) has a representative group to address its unique stake in the deliberations of University governance, and that the group that is meant to represent all constituencies (the University Council) is reorganized such a way that it can more effectively do its work.

*Detail of Proposed Structural Changes:*

The University community is asked to carefully review and discuss the suggested modifications to the statement of governance principles and the following revisions. The proposed structure is built around the principle that governance at the institution is constituency-based – *all* members of the University community have a unique stake in, and should have equal chance to voice their ideas and concerns, related to policy creation at the institution. The representative groups are charged to review and advise on the creation, revision, or discontinuation of policy, and are not in and of themselves decision-making bodies. This proposal recognizes that not everything the representative governing bodies do is directly related to institutional policy decisions. The groups also function as a place for general discussion of issues and concerns related to each stakeholder group. For this purpose, a vice president will serve as administrative liaison to each group.

In effort to clarify its own purpose and functions, the University's Administrators' Conference (AC) has already taken steps to review and revise its charge. The revised document (*Appendix 1*) was endorsed by the AC on November 29, 2006.

To reconfirm the institution's commitment to shared governance, the Administrators' Conference has carefully reviewed the University's statement of governance principles to consider if changes should be made to both clarify the purpose and processes and to address concerns regarding governance that were shared by University constituencies during the governance assessment (*Appendix 3*)<sup>2</sup>. The University community is asked to review and discuss the following proposed revisions to the governance structure and process:

1. It is proposed that the attached flow chart (*Appendix 4*) be incorporated into governance materials in order to describe the flow of policy through the revised governance structure.
2. It is suggested that a representative staff senate be created in order to provide staff with a venue to, as a group, participate in University policy development, and to provide a forum for staff to discuss matters of unique concern to their constituency. This Senate will be convened by the Vice President for Finance/Treasurer.
3. In order to bring the three representative groups together to engage in collaborative discussion regarding policy development, members from each of these groups will form a University Governance Council. Membership will be comprised of equal representation from each of the three bodies; initially, this membership shall include the officers of each of the three representative governance groups or their designates. The University Governance Council (Council) will develop its constitution and bylaws to ensure that its charge reflects its role as liaison for the communication of policy and policy development between the representative governing bodies and the Administrators' Conference. The Council will be convened by the Vice President for Planning & CIO in effort to create a direct connection between the Council and the Administrators' Conference. The activities of the Routing Committee will be absorbed by the new University Governance Council, and the Routing Committee will be dissolved.
4. In addition to these structural/process changes, it is suggested that the University differentiate between *general functional policies* (that guide departmental work or processes) and *formal institutional policies* to help clarify the scope of governance. Offices create policies that guide their work and give order to their work systems on an as needed basis. However, it is those institutional policies that have University-wide impact that are the focus of governance deliberations. These institutional policies:

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<sup>2</sup> The current *Statement of Governance Principles* (2002) is included in Appendix 2, with proposed changes noted.

January 2007

- Apply to the University and the University community as a whole
- Describe ways in which the University or members of the community will comply to internal (or, in some cases external) regulations
- Must funnel through the governance process, ultimately being approved by the Administrators' Conference, President, and, as necessary, the Board of Trustees.
- Approved policies will be formally designated, and will be officially communicated to the University community

Appendix 1: *Revised Administrators' Conference Charge and Membership*

**The Administrators' Conference<sup>3</sup>**

Membership:

President  
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs  
Vice President for Finance and Treasurer  
Vice President for Planning and Chief Information Officer  
Vice President for Mission  
Vice President for Student Affairs  
Vice President for University Relations  
Associate Vice President for Administrative Services  
General Counsel and University Secretary

Functions:

The Administrators' Conference serves as:

- The Chief Administrative Body of the University.  
As such (and through the work of its members), it implements the actions and/or recommendations of the Board of Trustees and administers the work of the University in the following areas: academics, finance, planning, information resources, mission and ministries, student affairs, institutional advancement, and facilities. In partial fulfillment of this function, it is responsible for the University's annual budget, approves the University's strategic plans, and reviews the human resources policies of the University.
- The Chief Policy-Making Body of the University.  
As it goes about the work of setting policies for the University community it seeks input and recommendations from the various constituencies through the governing bodies and advisory groups. After receiving the recommendations of these bodies, the Conference finalizes the University's policies and, when necessary, recommends them to the Board of Trustees for approval.
- The President's Cabinet.  
As such, it advises the President on matters of importance to the University. In this capacity, it also serves as a forum at which issues that touch upon different areas of University life may be discussed and debated by the leadership team of the University.

Meeting Schedule:

The Administrators' Conference meets weekly.

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<sup>3</sup> Endorsed by the Administrators' Conference 11/29/2006.

### Statement of Governance Principles

Governance at The University of Scranton is rooted in the identity of The University as an American and Jesuit institution of higher education at the beginning of the twenty-first century. As our statement of mission articulates, “The University is a community of scholars whose ministry of education is informed by the vision of life contained in both the Gospel and the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius Loyola. The University is therefore dedicated to freedom of inquiry, the pursuit of wisdom, integrity and truth, and the personal growth and development of all who share in its life and ministry.” The University’s Governance Principles flow directly from this Statement of Mission and are informed also by the principles enunciated in the Joint Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities (1966) formulated by the American Association of University Professors, the American Council on Education, and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges.

An effective system of governance, therefore, appropriate to this institution at this time in its history, is essential to the fulfillment of the University’s goals, since it will allow all of the members of the University community to “share in its life and ministry.”

The Governance System at The University of Scranton:

- A. Seeks to ensure widespread communication, understanding, participation and ~~reasonable~~ *practical* 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. ~~Recognizes that the influence of stakeholders is directly dependent on their degree of responsibility for implementation of the policy being determined.~~
- F. Ensures regular, two-way communication between representatives of stakeholders participating in policy-making and those they represent.
- G. 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.
- H. 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 governing policies.

**REVISION NOTE:**

~~Strikethrough~~ indicates items that have been deleted.

*Italics* indicate items that have been added.

Appendix 3: *Proposed Revised Governance Principles*

**The University of Scranton *Statement of Governance Principles***

The University's Governance Principles flow directly from its Mission and are informed also by the principles enunciated in the Joint Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities (1966) formulated by the American Association of University Professors, the American Council on Education, and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges.

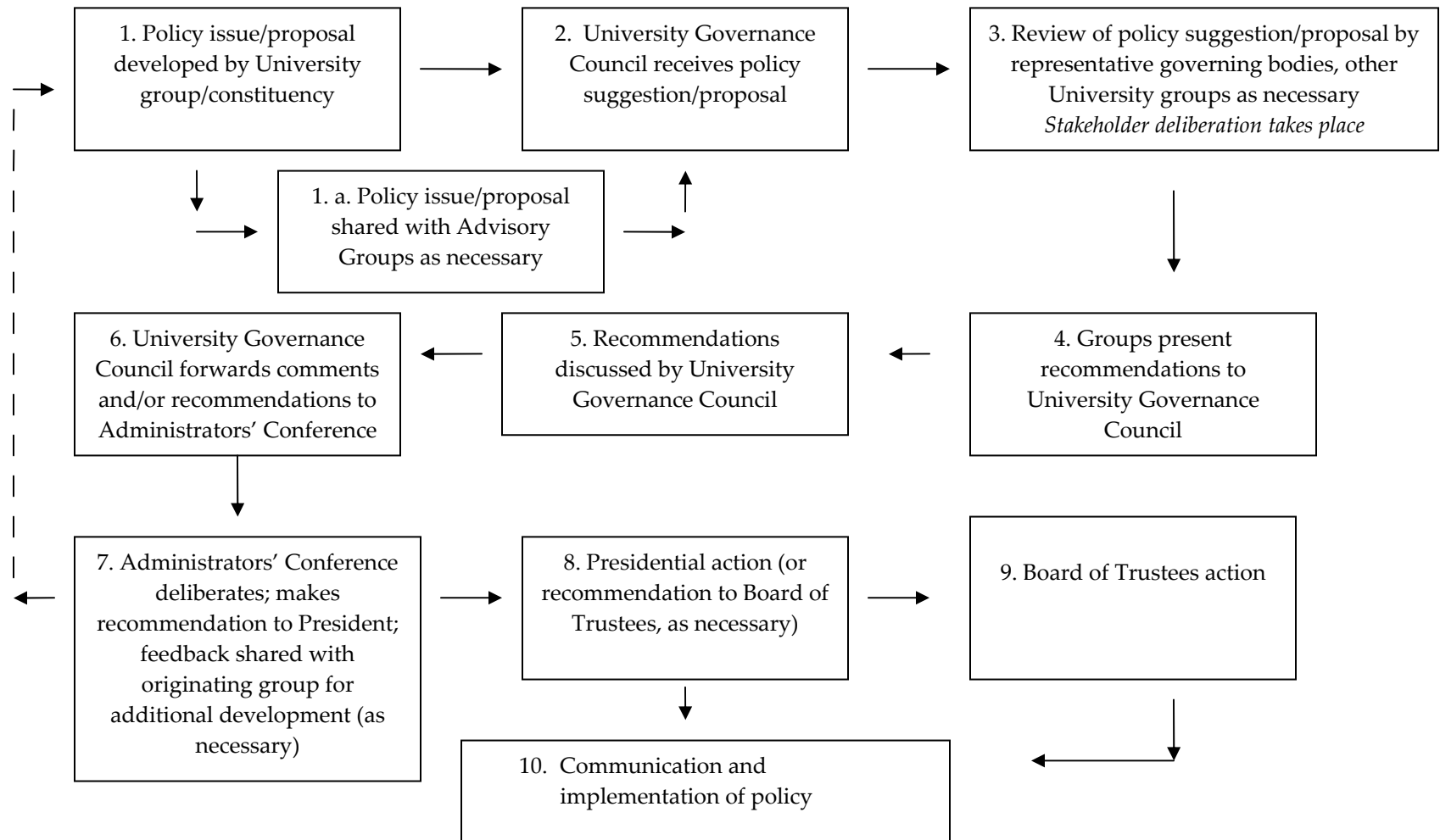
The Governance System at The University of Scranton:

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- 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.
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- G. Recognizes that the primary responsibility for policy-making and decision-making in each area of University life must be clearly designated.

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Established January 2000  
Revised May 2002  
Revised January 2007

Appendix 4: *Formal Institutional Policy Flow Chart (applies only to those policies/issues which are institutional in nature.)*



Appendix 5: *Formal Institutional Policy Flow Chart Description*

The following paragraphs provide a brief description of each step of the policy making process.

1. *Policy/issue developed by University group/constituency:* This is the step in the process during which the policy is originated. A policy can be proposed by any group or constituency at the University<sup>4</sup>. Vice presidents will determine which policies coming through their division need to go through the governance process.
  1. a.: *Policy/issue shared with advisory groups, as necessary:* Those originating a policy proposal, in particular vice presidents to whom advisory groups report, may wish to engage these groups in the development of their policy proposal and are encouraged to do so prior to the presentation of the proposal to the University Governance Council.
2. *University Governance Council receives policy suggestion/proposal:* In order to ensure that all University constituencies have opportunity to take part in the policy development process, any University group or constituency proposing a policy will submit the policy proposal to the University Governance Council (via the Council's convener). The members of the Council will then share the proposal with their respective body. The Council will agree upon a timeline for the proposal to be reviewed by their representative governing bodies (and other groups as necessary) and for this feedback to be reviewed by the Council.
3. *Review of policy proposal by bodies, other groups:* At this time, the policy proposal will be reviewed by the representative governing bodies, and other groups as necessary and appropriate, for the purpose of identifying possible stakeholder concerns with the policy and general feedback. The review should take place within the timeline agreed upon by the University Governance Council.
4. *Groups present recommendations to the University Governance Council:* Each of the representative governing bodies will, via their representation on the University Governance Council, will share their feedback on the policy being proposed.
5. *Recommendations discussed by University Governance Council:* The groups can at this time discuss together the concerns and/or suggestions expressed by each of constituency.

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<sup>4</sup> Note that the President, in his executive capacity, can enact or discontinue a policy upon his discretion. In an emergency situation, the President can enact a policy until such time as it can be reviewed through the representative governance system.

6. *University Governance Council forwards comments and or recommendations to Administrators' Conference:* The Council shares the reaction of each of the representative governing bodies to the policy proposal to the Administrators' Conference.
7. *Administrators' Conference deliberates:* The AC will take into consideration constituency feedback on the policy proposal as forwarded by the University Governance Council. If it deems necessary, the AC can send the proposal back to the person(s) and/or group(s) originating the proposal for additional development<sup>5</sup>. Alternatively, the AC can recommend to the President that the proposal be approved or not approved with such conditions or changes as it believes are necessary (if any).
8. *Presidential action or recommendation to Board of Trustees:* The President will decide upon a course of action for proposal in question. This action may include presentation of the proposal to the Board of Trustees, if the nature of the policy requires this step, the rejection of the proposal, or a decision to implement and communicate the policy if approved.
9. *Board of Trustees action:* If necessary, the Board of Trustees may be asked to review, deliberate, and decide up the approval or rejection of a policy proposal. The Board's decision will be communicated to the University community.
10. *Communication and implementation of policy:* If the policy proposal is approved, the policy will be formally recognized by the University and communicated to the community. The implementation process for the policy will then take place.

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<sup>5</sup> To ensure that changes made to the proposal based on this feedback are shared with the University community, the proposal must then be funneled back through the policy development process.