

Dear Faculty and Staff Colleagues,

There has been much conversation over the past few months about shared governance and creating a more effective model going forward. As you will recall, in recognition of shared governance challenges, in Fall 2020 the Board of Trustees engaged a team of four external academic experts to assess the current status of shared governance at Doane and to make recommendations on improved policies, practices and processes. The team was charged with providing a report based on their findings that was thorough, candid and forward facing with tangible recommendations for improvement.

To recap, the team gathered information from December 2020-April 2021 and shared their report with the Academic Affairs Chair and Vice Chair on May 3rd. A summary of the key findings was presented to the board at the May meeting and a decision was made to immediately engage the new President and the Academic Affairs Committee board members in further discussions regarding next steps. The full report was reviewed and discussed by President Hughes and the Academic Affairs board members, and it was recommended that the full report be shared with the Executive Committee, followed by the board, President's leadership team and Faculty Council. Following the formation of the Staff Council, the report was also shared with them.

At their request, the full report was provided to HLC site visit team during the visit, and we believe it is important to also share the report more broadly with Doane faculty and staff. In the spirit of transparency, the full report is attached with no edits or omissions. As you will see from the report, the team strongly concluded that traditional and typical principles and practices of shared governance were not well developed, understood, or implemented by the administration, the faculty, or the Board. They cited several examples where the basic tenets of shared governance were not followed. However, the team also observed much optimism about the future of Doane with new leadership coming on board and the report outlined a number of opportunities and recommendations for improvements.

Finally, the team stressed the importance of acknowledging mistakes while focusing efforts and energies on correcting those mistakes and reshaping our future. The report noted that this is an opportunity for a reset and we couldn't agree more. Change was sorely needed. As a board, we began working collaboratively with our new President and his leadership team and are committed to also working with our faculty and our staff to create a model shared governance system that ensures Doane is an outstanding place to work and to learn.

Initial steps involved creating a broad based and inclusive Shared Governance Steering Committee with representatives from the President's Cabinet, Deans, Faculty, Staff and Board members. This committee was charged by President Hughes to develop a plan that outlines specific recommendations to be implemented and a timeline for completion. Membership of the committee is listed below:

Committee Members

Lori Cook Benjamin, Chief Academic Officer

Tim Frey, Dean of the College of Education

Amanda Irions, faculty member and Chair of the Undergraduate Academic Affairs Committee

Brian Pauwels, faculty member and Chair of Faculty Council

Chris Brady, Director the Omaha Campus

Denise Ellis, Registrar

Toni Ganzel, Board Member and Chair of Academic Affairs Committee

Susan Fritz, Board Member at large

Bill Pallett, alternate board member to serve in the absence of either Toni Ganzel or Susan Fritz

We are hearing feedback from faculty, staff and cabinet members that they sense things are moving in a positive direction and we see a bright and thriving future for our beloved Doane. Your active engagement as valued members of our faculty and staff will be key to that success. Thank you for your dedication and we look forward to working with you in creating a model system of shared governance.

Paul Schelstraete

Chair, Doane Board of Trustees

Toni Ganzel, MD

Chair, Academic Affairs Committee

Roger Hughes, PhD

President, Doane University