Shared Governance at Doane University

A Report for the Doane University Board of Trustees

Submitted by
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April 2021

Executive Summary

A team of four external consultants was hired by the Academic Affairs Committee of Doane University's Board of Trustees to study the status of shared governance at the University and make recommendations for ways it could be strengthened and improved. The team began its work in December 2020 and over the course of several months reviewed materials provided to them by University stakeholders and interviewed a cross section of University leadership, faculty and staff. This report contains the findings and recommendations.

The current demoralizing climate, non-functional governance system, and potential financial consequences require immediate action. A "business as usual" approach cannot be continued at Doane. Transformation is needed. This is an opportunity for the new President and the Board, in collaboration with the faculty, to use this report as a roadmap for rebuilding trust and creating effective governance.

The report addresses several critical issues which are summarized here.

- Doane University is unique with respect to its history of governance, particularly, because its formal governance structures and processes are relatively new.
- Traditional and typical principles and practices of shared governance are not well developed, understood, or implemented by the various stakeholder groups including the Board, the President, faculty and administration.
- Many recent major academic changes including expanding online learning; creating, evolving and growing the School of Innovative Learning; creating new academic positions and titles and hiring academic leadership positions; and initiating the Program Prioritization Project have taken place without appropriate faculty consultation or involvement.
- Based on our interviews and the 2019 Faculty Engagement Survey, we observed a climate of mistrust and low morale on the Doane campuses. We discovered multiple examples of blatant disregard for governance principles in decision making processes and the resulting negative effect this has had on faculty and staff.
- The climate at Doane is what we would categorize as in 'crisis' and requires immediate action. The number of staff, both at the senior leadership and director level that have left the University is nothing short of alarming. Issues have lingered and festered for too long and are now at a level where the question is not should actions be taken, but rather what actions will be taken and how quickly.
- There are many gaps between the stated shared governance principles and what has taken place, especially within the last 4 years. That is, the basic tenets of shared governance, as practiced in most universities, have been too often ignored at Doane.
- Most universities are facing challenges such as fiscal sustainability, affordability, diversity and inclusion, and demographic changes, not to mention the pandemic and its lasting effects. However, universities with effective shared governance systems have engaged stakeholders in finding solutions to these challenges. This is NOT what we found at Doane. Indeed, given the breadth of experience of our team, none of us has ever witnessed such abandon with respect to shared decision-making processes.
- There is much optimism about the future of Doane, but also widespread recognition that serious damage to governance has been done and will need to be repaired.

- One could focus on assessing blame for the dysfunction in Doane's shared governance practices, but such blame does not rest singly with the faculty, administration, staff, or the Board. There is work to do by the entire community, and the most productive path forward is to acknowledge the widespread deficiencies and to focus energies towards creating shared governance that leads to a stronger, unified Doane University.

The arrival of a new President offers an opportunity for the Doane University community to do a reset and to take seriously the recommendations offered in this report. We found community members ready to chart a new course for the University and we believe that the new President will receive full cooperation if he/she is sensitive, strategic, collaborative, responsive, transparent and outcomes oriented. In a word, the modus operandi needs to be 'carpe diem'--- change is sorely needed and change management leadership profoundly warranted.

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I.   Introduction and Background

Dr. Bill Pallett, on behalf of the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees of Doane University, invited Drs. Christine Licata, Linda Salchenberger, David Jackson, and Dan Wheeler to review shared governance at Doane University and make recommendations for its improvement. The Governance Review Team members hold positions in academic administration and consulting with experience in shared governance, accreditation, and board service. The report would be delivered to the Academic Affairs Committee in time for the Spring Board meeting.

The scope of the report is a review of shared governance at Donne, including the strengths and weaknesses in the principles and practice of shared governance, particularly as pertains to the roles and responsibilities of the Board, faculty, administration, and the President. Also included is a brief reference to role of staff in governance.

II.   Methodology

The Governance Review Team used interviews, Doane governance documents, and research on best practices to inform our recommendations. We reviewed Board governance documents, discussed the purpose and scope of our review with the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board and checked in with our Board contact periodically throughout the process. Administrative interviews conducted included the President, the Provost, the Vice President of Finance, Director of HR, the Registrar, the Director of Institutional Effectiveness, and the Vice President for Innovative Learning. We talked to all the Deans, the previous and current chairs of Faculty Council, Faculty Council Committee chairs and other faculty. We interviewed the current Chair of the Board to get her insights.

We were provided with Board Governance documents and Shared Governance documents, and we were given access to the Program Prioritization Portal. We reviewed the Fall 2019 Faculty Engagement Survey, and the Provost shared relevant correspondence. We reviewed local publications for pertinent articles. Books and articles on shared governance were included in our research.

Best practices examined included good governance structures and processes practices from various sources, including AGB, AAUP, peer and aspirational institutions, and other experts in Shared Governance. We held online meetings to discuss the issues from our different perspectives and experiences with shared governance.

III.   Current State of Governance at Doane University

We believe that we were provided with all the information needed to assess the current state of governance at Doane and to develop a set of feasible, responsive, and actionable recommendations. The individuals and groups that we interviewed were open and honest and expressed gratitude that we were undertaking this much-needed evaluation. There is much optimism about the future of Doane, but also widespread recognition that serious damage to governance has been done and will need to be repaired. Doane University is unique with respect to its history of governance, particularly, because formal governance structures and processes are relatively new. Additionally, there are many gaps between the

stated shared governance principles and what has taken place, especially within the last 4 years. That is, the basic tenets of shared governance, as practiced in most universities, have been too often ignored at Doane.

A. Assessment

A starting point for strengthening shared governance at Doane is to assess the state of governance compared to best practices associated with effective shared governance systems. We refer specifically to the work of Steven C. Bahls and the guidance he offers in his work entitled: *How to Make Shared Governance Work: Some Best Practices* (Steven C. Bahls // Volume 22, Number 2 // March/April 2014, AGB).

Bahls points out that*:*

> **"The commitment to shared governance is too often a mile wide and an inch deep. Board members, faculty leaders, and presidents extol the value of shared governance, but it frequently means something different to each of them. When that is the case, at the first bump in the road, participants can become frustrated, sometimes walking away from a commitment to do the hard work of good governance. Worse yet, when that happens, there may be mutual recriminations that can cripple the institution for years." (p. 1)**

From our interviews and review of materials, we believe this is exactly the situation at Doane.
In examining the health of shared governance at Doane, we outline below some key questions that Bahls suggests being queried as part of a shared governance assessment.

We provide our assessment and some suggestions for improving Doane's current implementation of shared governance.

1. **What does each constituency expect from effective shared governance?**

Across higher education, shared governance has come to connote two complementary and sometimes overlapping concepts: giving various stakeholders groups a share in key decision-making processes, often through elected representation; and allowing certain groups to exercise primary responsibility for specific areas of decision making.   These concepts are outlined in Doane's Principles of Shared Governance.   However, consistent application of the principles and deep understanding about the difference between consultation, collaboration and defined decision making are not universally understood nor followed.

2. **What are the benchmarks of good governance?**

Doane's Principles of Shared Governance outline some of these benchmarks in the Preamble section of that document.   These include expected action outcomes in the form of: 'stakeholders act inclusively, transparently and responsibly in a spirit of dialogue and consultation.'   The challenge here is that these results are not always realized as intended.

3. **Do faculty members believe that the board and administration are transparent about important college matters?**

Faculty reported feeling removed from the Board and do not see a level of transparency when major decisions from either the Board or administration are made.

4. **Do the faculty and board believe they receive sufficient information from the administration to participate in making good decisions?**

Both the Board and the faculty pointed out that information exchange is often lacking. Some Board members recounted that there have been times when administrative leadership has failed to consistently provide sufficient information to the Board, and they were not sure what was accurate or whose voices members should be listening to. It is their impression that some important decisions have been made by university administrators without sufficient consultation with faculty and without appropriate preparation of the Board.

5. **Do faculty members believe that the structure of faculty governance will facilitate shared governance?**

Very few faculty that we interviewed think that the current Faculty Council structure is facilitating shared governance in a meaningful way. The reasons given include the perception that Faculty Council has little power, is not accompanied by responsibility and accountability, and has not been able to establish a collaborative *modus operandi* with administration to promote information sharing and positive communication channels. Because of this, Faculty Council meetings are focused on providing faculty with a forum to raise faculty issues and concerns. The council is seen as a mouthpiece for faculty, yet no substantive decisions are made by this council.

Faculty representation on Faculty Council surfaced repeatedly as a source of discontent. Substantive issues are voted on in the full Faculty Assembly. There are members of the Doane community [adjunct faculty, non-Crete faculty, School of Innovative Learning (SIL) faculty] who feel marginalized by the model because the majority of Assembly faculty come from the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) and therefore CAS is able to dominate the Assembly discussion and vote. Staff administrators told us that given the mistrust in the Doane environment, they view going in front of the Faculty Assembly to discuss a topic as unproductive and disconcerting. The recent 'voice/vote' document (still awaiting action/approval) was prepared in response to some of the concerns that have been raised. It is unlikely this document, in its current form, will adequately mitigate the mistrust and marginalization felt within the Doane community.

6. **Does the board believe that its own structure encourages sharing governance with faculty?**

From what we were able to learn, the Board is interested in examining its structure to better understand if there are barriers in place to encouraging sharing governance with faculty. It was reported that the Board is not sure what Faculty Council does. To them, the council doesn't seem to be a body that represents the faculty as a whole or in any way governs the faculty. The perception is that the Council explains what the faculty feels to the Board but doesn't have any ability to get faculty to develop policy

and make decisions. Some on Board meet with Faculty Council two - three times a year, and based on this outreach perceive the faculty council as raising concerns but not making decisions on part of faculty. They take "the temperature but are not a thermostat."

The chair of the Board meets twice a year with the Faculty Council, and the Board has two faculty liaisons who serve on each of the Board committees and attend those meetings. These practices support good governance and demonstrate the Board's commitment. There is a breakdown, however, in the communication back to the faculty, as a whole, following these interactions with the Board. Faculty reported feeling out of touch with the Board. It was relayed by some faculty and administrators that there have been breaches of confidentiality between members of the Board and certain faculty which, in turn, have cast aspersions on the transparency of the communication from the Board to the administration and faculty. A case in point was the recent Program Prioritization process. The Executive Committee of the Board reviewed the report before it was made public. Within two days, several individuals (faculty and other board members) outside of this review group were aware of key details. We were told that this type of confidentiality violation is not unusual.

The Board granted faculty an extension in the Program Prioritization process in order for them to have more time to develop strategies and action plans for the 18 programs slated to be discontinued. On the one hand, this demonstrates the Board's attempt to honor shared governance processes. On the other hand, a similar extension was not granted to staff units; this caused further division between faculty and staff.

7. Do faculty members understand how board decisions are made and vice versa?

From the discussions we had with faculty, greater clarity is needed around how the board functions, including how decisions are made. The Principles of Shared Governance Document is a reasonable starting place, but this document hasn't been internalized by faculty and should be revised.

8.   Is there shared agreement on the strategic priorities of the university?

The Board and administration believe there is shared agreement vis a vis the approved Strategic Plan which was developed with faculty and staff involvement and input. The faculty and staff we interviewed, however, frequently asked where Doane was headed and did not seem clear about the University's priorities. They pointed to recent decisions around on-line programming, DoaneX, SIL, and the Program Prioritization process and commented that there was confusion around how these initiatives fit together with the mission, vision, and pillars of the strategic plan.

B. History of Shared Governance at Doane
The history of a formal shared governance system at Doane is quite recent. We gained perspective on this from almost everyone with whom we spoke.   Prior to 2015, shared governance "seemed to work" and was based on mutual trust and open communication between the administration and faculty. This preceded the establishment of the Provost position and the establishment of a Faculty Council. When Doane moved from a College to a University and controversial decisions began to be made (e.g., creation of SIL), mistrust and a 'we versus them' environment emerged.

C. Strengths

1. Receptive to Improving Governance

The Doane faculty has begun the process of discussing, recognizing, and incorporating good governance practices, although formal structures and processes are still relatively new at Doane. Further, there has been some progress in creating bridges across campuses and programs and designing governance processes that are inclusive.

2. Commitment to Students

All stakeholders – the Board, the President, the faculty and administration – share a strong commitment to Doane students and academic excellence.

3. Loyalty and Change

All stakeholders are trying to cope with and respond to the many external changes, while retaining loyalty to their history and tradition.

4. Openness to New Course Modalities

Many faculty are becoming more open to embracing new modes of instruction, particularly after the steep learning curve caused by the pandemic.

D. Weaknesses and Areas for Improvement

1. Mistrust

The environment of mistrust has resulted in a lack of engagement on the part of faculty, staff and administration (as demonstrated by the engagement survey). Other consequences include recent efforts directed toward building defensive strategies (such as new faculty grievance processes). Too much time and energy has been focused on "protecting" faculty against administration. Mistrust and lack of transparency has led to behaviors such as not inviting administrators to Faculty Assembly and bringing another, supporting faculty member to meetings with Human Resources. The number of administrators and staff who have left Doane in recent months is at a much higher level than other universities, even considering the impact of the pandemic.

Some of the mistrust that currently exists has resulted from the lack of collaborative leadership skills on the part of administrators, but mistrust has also been caused by a lack of clarity around roles and responsibilities. Recent events have also resulted in mistrust of leadership. Ten faculty sought a vote of no-confidence in the President in fall 2017 and response of the Board was confidence in the President. The Board considered the letter and then renewed the President's contract for two years.

Despite an attempt at articulating principles of shared governance, agreement has not been reached on how faculty input and ownership of academic processes should be implemented nor is there evidence of inviting faculty to understand and share in university wide governance and decision-making. For example, there is no faculty or academic leadership representation on a budget committee. The established academic program approval processes are followed by some colleges

but not by all. It is unclear what the role of the Faculty Council is in decision-making or consultation on academic issues.

Though an attempt to share information during the Program Prioritization process was made, it led to more mistrust when the results were announced. Since previous program review processes seemed to lack any outcomes assessment or financial analysis, faculty said they were unaware of the impact of individual programs on the university's financial position. This "too little, too late" approach led to a deeper rift between the programs offered at Crete and SIL and other online programs. Providing data without definition, context, and analysis in the absence of regular on-going education or historical baseline has created misunderstandings.

Mistrust also has been caused by lack of on-going communication and information about the financial status of the University and the impact of external trends. Administration believes that faculty understood the financial / enrollment situation of the University and the reasons for introducing SIL and online programs, but faculty claim they do not.

To bring faculty along in the decision-making process, they need to be educated on external trends and the impact of those trends on their own University long before a major intervention is needed. An example of this would be current student recruitment strategies, including discounting. Faculty are less likely to offer meaningful solutions to problems without understanding their cause. A solution to a sudden, unsustainable, spiral in discount rates can't be provided if student recruitment and University finances are poorly understood. Faculty should have been involved in coming up with strategies to address this enrollment shortfall (e.g., program review and innovation, how to reach new audiences, reaching out to the local community and employers, transfer strategies, student outcomes, career support, alumni engagement, etc.) rather than being suddenly immersed in the Program Prioritization process without sufficient context.

2.   Poor Communication

We were repeatedly told that major decisions that impact stakeholders were not communicated to those who needed to implement the decisions prior to a public announcement or edict. One of several examples was that the formation of the School of Innovative Learning (SIL) was discovered by some faculty and administrators through an article in the alumni magazine. In fact, multiple decisions and announcements have and are being made regarding new positions, hires and reporting structures without the advice and consent of governing bodies, including the full Board. The lack of explanation for why new positions are created and moving individuals into these positions without any type of input or valid search process is a most egregious lack of transparency and adequate communication.

As a case in point, a new academic leadership position (although subsequently vacated), Vice President of Innovation, Digital and Global Strategy, was created and filled without any obvious consultation or advice and without a search for the new position.

3. Lack of Alignment Between Mission, Vision and Performance

Although we heard the phrase "One Doane" and the published literature describes "a new kind of comprehensive university" there was no sense of unanimity about what that is or how people would get there together. From our interviews, our sense was it depended upon what College faculty we were talking with and that most were concentrating on their own day-to-day tasks and did not have a collective perspective. We see value in the substantive meaning of "One Doane," with respect to uniting programs and units under a singular mission and vision.

Some statements from interviewees that suggest a lack of understanding of how vision and mission are central to success include: we do not know who we are right now- it is pivotal for a new president to be successful; looking for some cover from the President or Board to tell us where we are and make the case for why. These examples suggest that without clarity of purpose and future, people will expect authorities to totally provide the direction.

4. Shared Governance Issues: Faculty and Decision-Making

The faculty, administration and Board of Trustees of Doane University have created several structures to facilitate shared governance. The faculty-oriented structures include numerous committees, a Faculty Council, and the Faculty Assembly. These structures are described in the Faculty Handbook (2020 version) as being "…for coordination, communication, and oversight (Faculty Council and Faculty Assembly); …for communicating and collaborating with stakeholders outside the faculty (liaisons to the Board of Trustees and the liaison to the President's Leadership Team); …for regulating faculty affairs (e.g., the Promotion and Tenure Committee and the Faculty Development Committee); and…for regulating academic and curricular affairs (other faculty standing committees)." In their current form, Doane's faculty governance structures are relatively young. In addition, recently proposed modifications in "voice" and "vote" have sparked disagreement between administrators and faculty.

The faculty handbook outlines a series of key shared governance principles. Principle 1 highlights the importance of student academic achievement as the overarching priority of all stakeholders. Principle 2, acknowledges another essential component of shared governance:

> *"A culture of communication nurtures an environment in which discussion occurs among all relevant stakeholders that is regular, meaningful, comprehensive, and constructive. Faculty, administration, and the Board all pledge a commitment to open, honest, inclusive, and respectful dialogue while maintaining appropriate confidentiality."*

Regardless of intended or actual policy and practice, all stakeholders expressed disappointment and frustration regarding many elements of the approved governance structures, including critical failures associated with transparent communication outlined in Principle 2. Besides and interwoven with communication failures, members of the university community expressed disappointment with a lack of inclusivity among faculty of different statuses, unclear roles and responsibilities, failure to follow established or actual shared governance policies, lack of transparency, inconsistent application of rules/procedures, and a lack of nimble decision-making. While such frustrations are not unique to Doane, the universality of distrust and dissatisfaction are unique and troubling.

Faculty are tasked with primary governance of curricular content, programs (degrees) and requirements, and assessing faculty credentials (promotion and tenure). Effective decision-making, however, doesn't occur in a vacuum. All stakeholders must share a common institutional vision and mission, understand strategic directions – especially relating to programs – understand changing student demographics/preferences/workforce needs, and understand an institution's financial position and enrollment trends. This essential understanding only occurs when there is robust multi-way communication between administrators, faculty, and governance boards.

One issue that came up repeatedly with faculty, as an example of a major academic decision that was made without appropriate input from faculty, was the creation of the School of Integrative (now Innovative) Learning. Our report discusses SIL in greater depth because so many faculty (and staff) brought it to our attention as a failure of shared governance; there is clear frustration and suspicion between faculty involved in SIL and those in other units.

Doane University formed the School of Integrated learning (SIL) in 2019 as an expansion to the scope and reach of its online Open Learning Academy. The School has both degree and non-degree offerings, with a primary focus on healthcare topics. While many of its programs are online, some offerings (for example, Exercise Science and Health Sciences) are offered in-person or both online and in-person. In the formal documents asking for Board approval, it was stated that SIL would be created to contain "…programs and efforts that do not fit the traditional academic model," "…expand…and explore new, innovative, and diverse revenue streams for the University…," and "…elevate the importance of the work and also better align it to support the academic mission of the university."

In our discussions with faculty, SIL was universally highlighted as an area of concern. It was reported that its mission and contribution to the University has been poorly communicated. Specifically, faculty did not have an understanding of how its financial contribution is being leveraged for its own and other programs, coursework offerings and curricula have not consistently been approved by faculty (and either bypassed traditional approval processes *or* had been unreasonably subject to higher standards all depending upon viewpoint), the School and its leadership had unequal (greater) access to senior leadership and institutional resources, and students were confused as to why "identical" online coursework offered by SIL would not universally transfer into their in-person academic majors. Several Doane administrators and staff shared some of these concerns. Other administrators suggested that the faculty were hostile to the aim and mission of the School (including online education), and that to operate successfully in an online environment Doane needed to create a structure that would be innovative and nimble in its offerings.

Frustrations associated with the School are symptomatic of Doane's core deficiencies in shared governance structures, communication pathways, and trust. Broadly speaking, regardless of original intent, attention must be paid to evaluating SIL's status (and its academic programs) within Doane University. While some SIL offerings are clearly outside the "traditional academic model," such as non-degree programs, its degree offerings are not especially unique. SIL's healthcare and exercise

science degrees are programs in recognized disciplines. At most US institutions, these degrees are offered by correspondingly named academic departments found within traditional college structures.

SIL (and the Open Learning Academy) were developed from a perceived administrative need to rapidly/nimbly create new online degrees and specialty programs. With the proliferation and student expectation for the availability of online course delivery (for both residential and non-traditional students), there is little justification for aligning mode of course delivery (online vs. face-to-face) to a specific organizational structure (many universities put online learning in an adult learning school or college). Learning objectives and curricular content should be the same regardless of delivery-type, only pedagogical approaches might differ. There is also no inherent reason why traditional semester calendars can't be re-worked to allow for 8-week or other "novel" course schedules. While some Doane colleges have embraced online delivery, others have not. Doane needs to be flexible enough to offer online offerings in courses and colleges where there is student demand. More generally, colleges and universities must be nimble enough to develop new programs and coursework that meet learner needs. Such new programs also can be a financial "driver" and help stabilize enrollments and provide resources to traditional residential programs. The development of new programs and degrees, however, should be collaborative. When a shared institutional vision and transparency are the norm, both faculty and administrators are empowered to discuss and propose new programs, degrees, and primary modes of instruction. A shared vision for the SIL structure and its academic programs was not developed at Doane, nor does it exist today.

5. Governance Issues: Staff
While not as well defined or developed within higher education, the role of staff in the governance ecosystem is an important component to consider, especially when an institution is interested in strengthening its model of shared governance. Our interviews revealed that some Doane staff feel like second-class citizens and view decisions as having negative effects on them—being done "to them." This, in combination with the number of staff leadership positions that have been vacated recently, leads us to recommend that a more inclusive governance approach be embraced and as a result, some form of a staff governance body be established.

There is a lack of clarity on the role of staff in governance and yet they are often critical to the implementation of strategic goals. When discussing mistrust and poor communication between stakeholder groups, the relationship between staff and faculty came up in the interviews. There are many issues that relate specifically to staff and when these issues are not addressed, there can be a lack of employee engagement. We learned that there has recently been a high attrition rate among staff.

6. Governance Issues: The Board
Based on our interviews and analysis of Board governance documents, we believe that there are several fundamental governance issues faced by the Board. First, there appears to be a lack of clarity on the part of the faculty and the Board with respect to the roles and responsibilities of each. Many faculty indicated that they did not know what the Board did and there was opportunity for the Board to learn more about the challenges faculty face. Secondly, many expressed concern about personal connections between Board members and faculty that have resulted in the leaking of information through informal channels. Also, meetings between Board members and faculty without

any administrators present was identified as an issue. Several faculty wondered about the effectiveness of the assessment process used by the Board to evaluate the performance of the President and other key administrators. Finally, while the Board has engaged in some discussions about governance, there is an opportunity for the Board membership to further review best governance practices and to discuss how best to apply them within the Doane community.

IV.   Recommendations

A. Rebuild Trust: New President Must Lead the Way

While new leadership brings opportunities to rebuild trust, current feelings of disappointment, discouragement and disengagement must be addressed honestly, yet without focusing too much on the past. A culture of trust begins with senior leadership and the new President will need to build trust through openness, authenticity, and transparency.

1. Create a Culture of Trust and Openness

a. The new President and his or her new leadership team should consider holding listening sessions (e.g., luncheons, coffee hours, carefully planned university town halls, etc.) to hear how faculty, administration and staff view the future of Doane and its greatest challenges.

b. The new administration, in partnership with the Board, should develop strategies to invest in people. The lack of faculty and staff raises for two years along with a program-investment strategy that appears to be biased toward SIL and non-Crete programs has led to disengagement that needs to be reversed.

c. The President, Provost, Deans, and Office of Finance should continue the work of Program Prioritization by developing opportunities and providing incentives for new programming ideas that come from the faculty. A regular academic and administrative program review process should be established to avoid future program prioritization in crisis mode.

2. Promote Faculty Partnership

a. The faculty should open its meetings to administrators, staff and the President to foster information exchange between the stakeholder groups.

b. Faculty should determine how to be more inclusive with respect to faculty voices from the different campuses and programs.

c. As they share a common purpose, faculty and staff need to work on building trust, and assuring responsibility and accountability.

3. Develop Stakeholder Accountability for Doane Goals

a. Performance evaluation at all levels for all stakeholders should be aligned with University goals.

B. Foster Open and Transparent Communication

1. Focus on Active Listening and Providing Feedback

Active listening and providing feedback are behaviors that should be incorporated into the organizational culture. Currently, there appears to be a lack of feedback when input is solicited. The President and his or her new leadership team must be intentional in including faculty and staff representation in university wide discussions on big issues and responding to their input in a proactive way. The President's messages need to be simple, consistent, and continuous about the strategic direction of Doane and the importance of the role of the faculty.

2. Provide Information, Context and Analysis

Data and information require context, analysis, and sufficient time for consideration to help individuals become acquainted with benchmarks and trends so they can make meaningful contributions to solving problems. On-going communication about administrative and financial issues to faculty and about academic issues to administration and Board members requires a thoughtful and systematic communication plan. For example, the impact of programs on the University bottom line, external demographic trends and changes such as the rising discount rate are ultimately important to faculty, but are not part of the typical faculty member's traditional role and responsibilities. Providing consistent data and information with the appropriate level of detail is a first step in educating and engaging faculty to help provide solutions. As the challenges in higher ed increase, it is increasingly important to gain faculty support, to seek their input and to respond to their ideas and recommendations.

3. Give faculty leaders increased opportunities to discuss their views with the President's Cabinet /Team

This can be accomplished by regular meetings between the President and the duly constituted faculty representative body or that body's executive committee.

4. Post and Present Agendas / Minutes / Annual Report

The agendas of academic governing bodies (e.g., Faculty Council) and University governing bodies (e.g., President's Leadership Team) should be shared with the University community when possible. Agendas and minutes should include those in attendance including guests, topics discussed, key points of discussions and any votes taken. Confidential or closed sessions do not need to post minutes.

The practice of sharing discussions and votes with the Deans, faculty and staff should be regularized. For example, the Provost might send out regular reports on academic issues. In addition, the President should meet with faculty, administration and staff to discuss progress toward the strategic plan and present the annual report each year. Faculty Council and Faculty Assembly should establish formal communication channels to avoid duplication and inconsistencies.

1. **Integrate Doane's Mission and Vision into All Aspects of the University**
    Some in-depth discussions across colleges and units are required to develop consensus and help make meaning of how mission and vision align with outcomes. In the process, more people will get to know one another and find commonality the basis of building community which we heard frequently was the basis of the "old Doane". As one member of the Doane community said *"we know it can be done but not if people remain isolated."*

2. **Institute Cross-College Initiatives to Build One Doane and Commitment to All Doane Students**
    These consensus-building efforts should address how Colleges can work together (e.g., SIL and Arts & Sciences) to accomplish important Doane goals (integrating liberal arts in all programs) or how to increase course transferability across all programs. Across all interviews we heard a passion and commitment to educating students. We also heard confusion about where Doane is headed. Often in different Colleges the sense was that this is about 'our' students not about 'all' Doane students whether they are of traditional college age or adult, in person or online. Nothing seemed to pull all these disparate parts into one and many academic processes seem to separate rather than unify.

3. **Clarify the Essentials in the Mission and Vision Statements**
    In the Doane Strategic Plan the guiding mission statement asserts that: "Doane University *creates distinctive educational experiences, rooted in liberal arts, to prepare students for careers and lives grounded in inquiry, ethics and a commitment to lead and serve in a global community*." For the consensus-building in #1 and #2 (above) to be successful, it must be clear how this guiding philosophy is operationalized across units and functions. If one were to evaluate all the curricula and courses would these elements appear? If not, there are serious negative implications for being successful at achieving "One Doane."

4. **Make the Doane Vision for the Future a Motivator for Everyone**
    A vision for the future should be a north star which allows people to see themselves in Doane's future. The present mission statement indicates the Doane will be a comprehensive university with the rest of the statement a recitation of the present mission statement. What aspects will provide transformation into a new inclusive vision statement?

D. Strengthen Governance Processes and Practices: Faculty

Understanding where gaps exist in governance helps guide improvement. We offer concrete suggestions to bridge some of these gaps. Each of these recommendations recognizes the importance of rebuilding trust and fostering open and transparent communication. As Bahls points out:

*"The faculty can't adequately participate in governance if they do not have the information from which to develop informed positions. Board members can't appropriately exercise their general oversight… if the faculty withholds important facts …. And presidents who withhold information from either of the other constituencies as a way of consolidating their power or dividing and conquering are not integral leaders." (p. 8). W*hile specific recommendations follow, many of which would be considered commonplace or best practices in higher education, the culture and governance structures of Doane University must ultimately be determined by Doane faculty, administrators, and staff, with the consent of the Board of Trustees. The recommended structures promote nimble decision-making and frequent communication among stakeholders; faculty governance and communication structures that are responsive and facilitate the faculty's ability to share viewpoints with administrators and more easily synchronized with administrative decision-making timeframes.

1. **Revisit the Doane Shared Governance Principles and work towards a shared understanding of what consultation, decision-making and accountability mean.**
   This might take the form of a working group or could also be accomplished through a governance summit. In either case the goal should be to review the principles in light of this report and in consideration of the gaps noted in the previous shared governance assessment section. Regardless of the strategy chosen, the Board, faculty and administration should discuss concrete examples of when shared governance has worked at Doane and why. Likewise, examples of when it didn't work should analyzed. Examples might include how the SIL was established and announced; the objective here is to norm the constituent groups to what good governance looks like in practice.

2. **Re-examine the role of the Faculty Council and Faculty Assembly.**
   In many universities, the faculty council or faculty senate is empowered to act on behalf of the full faculty. In this way the full faculty does not vote on curriculum proposals or other academic matters that fall under the charter of the faculty council or faculty senate. The council or senate as the duly authorized and representative body of the full faculty takes action on matters that fall within the faculty's purview. Within this type of context:
   - Elected faculty represent their constituency and not themselves
   - Subcommittees of the faculty council or faculty senate are empowered to make recommendations to the elected representative body on areas under their purview. The elected body, in turn, makes a recommendation to the Provost or equivalent and the final decision rests with the Provost or depending on the area, the President. In this type of

shared governance model, the Provost typically sits on the body ex officio and in some settings, a representative of the deans also sits on the group as a non-voting member.

- A full faculty assembly would be invoked on a special or exceptional basis.

It is recommended that the roles of the Faculty Council and Faculty Assembly be reassessed with these ideas on mind and that the following actions be taken:

a. Transfer more decision-making power to the Faculty Council. This would include:
   o Consent of new programs (degrees/majors) after they have been developed and approved by Colleges and their Departments.
   o Consenting of proposals to create new courses and modifications to existing courses/curriculum
   o Approval of curricular content directly impacting multiple colleges (including General Education and interdisciplinary programs).

b. The Faculty Council should encourage and allow attendance of Deans, key administrators (Vice President for Finance, admissions officer, etc.), and the Provost. These individuals should have an opportunity to present information and address questions posed by faculty.

c. The members of the Faculty Council (or the Executive Committee of the Faculty Council) should have routine and regular (bi-weekly) meetings with the President and Provost (and Deans/Financial Officers as appropriate) to discuss matters of critical importance to all stakeholders.
   o If such meetings represent an excessive workload for the full Council, consider creating a smaller working group/executive committee (officers and a few rotating members) to interact with administrators on a regular basis. Such a working group could also focus on developing strategic priorities for the faculty for eventual consideration by the Council.

d. Various campus-wide committees (academic affairs, general education, etc.) should screen proposals prior to presentation to the Council. Screening should enforce uniformity of practice, alignment with campus' strategic goals, and ensure issues impacting multiple colleges are addressed.

e. Use the Faculty Assembly as a body for broad, inclusive discussion and communication open to all faculty at Doane. The Faculty Assembly should
   o Elect members of the Faculty Council
   o Have the opportunity, in extraordinary cases, to overturn a decision of the Faculty Council
   o Should have at least one regular meeting each semester. [Many institutions have found a periodic "State of the University" address by the President at such meetings, followed by open Q&A, fosters and promotes communication to faculty not regularly engaged in shared governance.]
   o Should allow all academics to attend, including administrators with faculty appointments

o   Should consider and err on the side of inclusivity regarding voting eligibility, including faculty with responsibilities for graduate programs and adjuncts

3. **Establish a Faculty Grievance Process.**
   A strong faculty governance system should include a separate faculty grievance process. We, therefore, recommend that such process be created and based on best practice including agreement and detail in policy about:
   a. **What constitutes a bona fide faculty grievance?**
      What constitutes a faculty grievance can vary by institution. Not every complaint is a grievance. Grievable matters can be defined generally or defined narrowly. For example, some grievance policies may indicate that all alleged policy violations affecting faculty can be appealed to a grievance committee and other institutions specifically designate that matters concerning academic freedom, tenure, promotion, contracts, and evaluation fall under the purview of the faculty grievance process.
      Typically, though, all grievance policies indicate that grievable matters are those that have an adverse effect on an individual in his/her professional capacity and that the alleged grievable action violated policy, was unfair or improperly administered. Further, grievance committees never substitute their judgment for the judgment resulting from another duly constituted university faculty committee; for example, the tenure committee or promotion committee. In this way, when personnel matters are the basis of a grievance, grievance bodies are usually limited to recommending a reassessment of the particular decision if it is believed that the initial decision was reached improperly.
   b. **Who is eligible to invoke the faculty grievance process?**
      An institution must take care in defining who is eligible to invoke a grievance process. Generally, such processes apply to full time or regular faculty as defined in the faculty handbook.
   c. **What timelines are followed for filing a grievance and reaching a conclusion?**
      Most policies stipulate that all avenues to informal resolution must be exhausted prior to filing a grievance. Equally important to sound policy is the principle of timely resolution. Because of this, a timeline is typically included in policy that respects the need to fully investigate as well as the need to bring such matters to timely conclusion.
   d. **What the specific responsibilities are for those in a recommending and decision-making role?**
      There are two ways that institutions typically handle this. In some places, the faculty grievance committee handles all issues related to faculty terms of employment. In other places, there are sometimes separate specialized committees that handle such things as dismissal for cause, salary disputes, financial exigency, etc. Many times the size and complexity of an institution drives this type of specialization.

      The other important aspect of grievance committee responsibilities centers on the expected end results. Rarely does a grievance committee have decision making authority. It is a recommending body with the final decision resting, typically, with the President.

E. Strengthen Governance Processes and Practices: Staff

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1. **Establish a Staff Governance Body**
   The current attrition rate among staff and the number of staff leadership positions that have been vacated recently leads us to recommend that a more inclusive governance approach be embraced and as a result, some form of a staff governance body be established.

   This type of body fills the following roles:
   - Gives voice to a staff perspective within Doane's shared governance process
   - Serves as an advisory body to the President or his/her representative(s).
   - Serves as a communication conduit between staff, the Doane administration and the Board

   And responds to the following objectives:
   - Addresses staff concerns as identified by staff and/or SC.
   - Provides staff perspective on university committees.
   - Communicates information to staff.

   Such bodies typically elect representatives from different functional areas or divisions and elect their own chair, vice chair and other executive committee members. In larger universities, subcommittees are established that focus on areas such as budget and resource allocation; university policies and issues; diversity, equity and inclusion; events, etc.

F. Strengthen the Role of the Board in Governance

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1. **Reassess Communication Between the Board and Faculty**
   During many interviews, administrators and faculty indicated that they felt that there was too much informal communication between faculty and Board during which no administrators were present. While engaging with faculty helps the Board members to better understand faculty roles and responsibilities, when it takes place without administrators present, there is a fear that certain faculty can influence Board decisions. On the other hand, building in more informal opportunities for faculty, administration and staff to socialize is encouraged.

   a. Share Board and Board Committee agendas with faculty and other members of the Doane community before meetings. When possible, indicate the extent of the faculty's opportunity to participate in the decision-making process. Provide follow-up information after the Board summarizes action taken.

b. Encourage faculty members to observe full Board meetings (and Committee meetings) and report back to their constituencies. It is the reporting back that is critical to improving communication and transparency.

c. Increase opportunities for faculty leaders to discuss their views with the Board. This can be accomplished by regular meetings of the leadership of the representative faculty body with the Chair of the Board and the President.

d. Review the Conflict of Interest policy to identify appropriate forms of communication and relationships between Board members and faculty, avoid family or personal friendship relationships between Board members and faculty, staff or administration.

e. Include administrators in all meetings between Board members and faculty.

f. Create more social opportunities for Board members to engage with faculty, staff and administrators in groups

2. Integrate Governance in Board Agenda

The role of boards in Higher Education has been rapidly changing and it has become increasingly difficult to manage the delicate balance between too little oversight and micro-managing. We commend the Board for its past engagements with AGB and for its current on-boarding process. To supplement this, we recommend that the Board look for additional opportunities for Board members to remain current on the many broad changes in the higher education landscape so they can anticipate future challenges.

a. Work with the new President on a Governance Steering Committee

b. Devote at least part of one meeting per year to topics such as trends in higher education, governance models, enrollment and financial aid strategies, diversity and inclusion, academic portfolio design, online education, etc.

c. Examine and strengthen the Presidential assessment processes to help anticipate leadership and communication issues

d. Ensure that regular assessments of academic and administrative leadership are conducted, and the results reported to the Board

e. Add the topic of shared governance at Doane to the on-boarding process

3. Balance Micro-managing with Process Oversight
In its oversight role, the Board must trust the President and the administration to implement the vision and the goals of the University in collaboration with the faculty and staff. However, it must remain diligent regarding both what is being done and *how* it is being done.

  a. Establish cultural values (how things are done) and include these when assessing the performance of the President (that is, assess processes as well as outcomes)

  b. Align the performance goals of the President with the University vision

  c. Regularly assess the engagement level and morale of the faculty, administration and staff

  d. Create a process for periodic 360 review of the President and Vice Presidents and ensure feedback is delivered and corrective action taken, when needed

4. Establish Transition Team for New President
Based on our interviews and general understanding of the many changes that Doane University has experienced and the importance of shared governance going forward, we recommend that a transition team be established to support the new President in his or her first 90 days.

  a. Establish a Transition Team chaired by the Board Chair or a Board member and possibly including the Chief of Staff, Vice President for Finance, Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion, Chief Marketing Officer, Vice President of Institutional Advancement, one of the Deans (since the Provost is new) and the Chair of Faculty Council representative of the faculty, a staff representative (since the HR Director is new), a member of the Search Committee

  b. The Transition Team should coordinate their work with the Chief of Staff, align the work of the Transition Team with the Introduction of the President to the Campus Plan

  c. The Transition Team should create opportunities for the President to learn about the University financial and enrollment status and trends, the state of shared governance, the culture, impact of Program Prioritization, history of recent changes, etc.

5. Work with the New President on Governance
Success going forward will require a more cohesive, collaborative campus environment (e.g., One Doane). Decisions will not be effective if they are "announced" without the opportunity for faculty and administration to be engaged in the issue, at least understanding the rationale and implications. This means conversations and discussion take place before major decisions are announced.

  a. Work with the new President on including faculty in the decision-making process on academic and administrative issues

b. Ensure that appropriate faculty and academic representation is included on University committees responsible for managing resources (e.g., University Budget Committee)

c. When a new strategic plan is developed, the process should seek input from faculty, staff and administration and its goals should be woven into measurable outcomes for faculty, staff and administration

d. Work with President and new leadership team on an organizational structure that includes the voice of stakeholders in relevant issues and incorporates the input of all stakeholders in decision-making where feasible

e. Create a learning culture by offering on-going development opportunities for the Board, faculty, administration, and staff around relevant issues

f. Create consistent and on-going opportunities to understand faculty concerns on big issues and ensure that the faculty receive feedback on decisions through the administration or other appropriate venue (meetings)

V. Next Steps for the Board

In terms of priority, we recommend the Board take the following next steps.

A. Create a Governance Steering Committee

To maintain momentum and facilitate progress in developing shared governance principles and implementation strategies, a Governance Steering Committee that embraces the notion of "One Doane" should be established by the Board. This committee would be charged with the coordination, communication, and stakeholder engagement necessary to implement the recommendations provided in this report. The committee would derive its authority from the Board and provide the President and his/her cabinet with regular updates. The Board should communicate their support for the work of this group and expect all personnel to cooperate in achieving "One Doane".

We recommend that the committee be comprised of a small group of well respected, action-oriented administrators, faculty and staff whose mandate is to move the Board's recommendations forward. Members should include the chair of the faculty governance group, a dean, full time and adjunct faculty representatives from the various campuses as well as staff representation. Given the need to rebuild trust at Doane, appointing a faculty member and an administrator as co-chairs would be symbolic and model good collegiality.

We note that this group is stepping up to a particularly important and challenging responsibility. This effort will be time intensive, require collaboration across stakeholder groups and is potentially full of frustrations. The Committee will need support and at times reinforcement. A Board member should be assigned as a liaison and the co-chairs should provide periodic written updates to the Board and in person reports when the Board meets. The Board should be prepared to do whatever is necessary to make the Steering Committee successful. The group should complete its work within a year's time.

This committee will develop a plan that outlines the accepted recommendations to be implemented, who is responsible for giving the recommendations 'legs' and a timeline for completion. The chair(s) of the steering committee will serve as a liaison to the President and the Board.

The following initial steps are recommended for the Governance Steering Committee.
- **Review and update the Shared Governance statement and infrastructure with campus-wide involvement of stakeholders**
  There is a lack of clarity in the current statement, especially regarding definitions, implementation strategies and accountability and responsibility for applying the principles of the policy.

- **Convert the updated Principles of Shared Governance into a matrix which displays the key decisions / issues, the stakeholders (e.g., Board, President, Provost, Faculty Council etc.) and their roles (e.g., be informed, consulted, review, collaborate, decide, implement).**
  Include definitions and examples of best practice for each role type. When the governance roles and responsibilities of stakeholders is understood, then communication can be effective. For example, faculty need to be educated about the specific responsibilities of the Board. The Board needs to better understand the role of the faculty.

B. Provide Leadership Development Opportunities for Faculty and Staff

Using the updated Principles of Shared Governance matrix, academics will need to be prepared to play leadership roles in decision-making. This type of development might take the form of an internal emerging leaders workshop held four-six times a year and could be led by the President's team, the Provost or through the Faculty Development unit. Such development can improve an individual's capacity to be informed about the operations, challenges and strategic priorities of the university. It is a strategy to develop future governance leaders and serves as a powerful team building and networking strategy. Resources should be channeled to support this type of organizational development.

C. Support and Reward Good Governance.

Provide incentives to those taking on governance leadership responsibilities. This can take many shapes and forms including public recognition of the counsel received from the governance bodies; providing financial incentives or course release time for the chair of the faculty council/faculty senate to perform responsibilities; etc.

D. Determine Ways for the Staff to Participate in Governance (e.g., Staff Council)

V. Appendices

A. School of Innovative Learning (SIL)

When there is organizational dysfunction, an event or situation is often cited by stakeholders that serves as an example for the dysfunction. At Doane, SIL is that example. It was noted by all interviewed faculty and many administrators as a key element of concern. While the preceding recommendations are general in nature, addressing the specific concerns expressed regarding SIL will help Doane transition to a more trusting and collaborative educational community.

The recommendations that follow are designed to encourage open conversations regarding the vision, mission, and financial benefits associated with the School of Innovative Learning and its academic programs. In addition, we recommend that the School be more closely aligned with standard governance and oversight structures so that it becomes incorporated within and fosters the principle of "One Doane."

Recommendations
1. Key administrators, faculty, and the Board should discuss and build consensus around a clear vision for programs offered under the SIL umbrella. The vision must include the financial expectations associated with such offerings – especially if SIL programs are expected to be income generators. The benefits of income generating programs should be clearly articulated so that such value is apparent to the entire university community. The academic departments, as applicable, should be encouraged to offer applicable coursework required of SIL programs. This would potentially improve their course enrollments and reduce redundance/duplication of effort.
2. Faculty responsible for SIL programs and instruction should be integrated into existing academic units or form new academic units. When there is no existing applicable academic unit, the "new" academic unit could be the School. In such cases, however, the School should have equivalency in governance to a college or department depending on size. Faculty and any new units should follow accepted norms for governance — regardless of if the faculty are considered adjuncts or full-time.
3. Both faculty and administrators should be empowered to propose new programs and degrees; approval of such degrees should follow normal shared governance practices. The criteria for placement within or outside the SIL umbrella should be clear.
4. Coursework that is unique to SIL programs should be offered under the auspices of SIL faculty and their academic unit(s); approval of such coursework should follow Doane's accepted shared governance process.
5. Coursework, essential to SIL programs but otherwise offered by non-SIL disciplines (for example, Biology, Mathematics, etc.), should be offered by the applicable unit and approved by faculty in that unit. Faculty responsible for SIL/online instruction should be considered faculty in their applicable discipline, even if hired only to instruct within the SIL program.
6. Whenever possible coursework, intended for SIL programs with a matching in-person equivalent, should be offered to resident students so as to improve access, time-to-degree and retention.

B. Bibliographic Materials and Resources

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C. Sample Language for Faculty Senate from Rochester Institute of Technology

PREAMBLE

The task of university governance must be apportioned and delegated among the board of trustees, administration, faculty, staff, and students of the university. The interdependence of these members of the university community and their delegated responsibilities establishes the basis for effective shared governance.

It is the faculty's responsibility to lead in the formulation of recommendations relating to academic matters. The academic governance of the university provides for the exercise of the faculty's role in academic decisions, the protection of legitimate faculty aspirations, the implementation and preservation of academic standards, and the promotion of the academic welfare of students. It is the obligation of each member of the faculty to participate in these governance activities to the fullest extent possible.

It is the faculty's responsibility to organize itself effectively to carry out its governance responsibilities in an efficient manner. This document establishes the framework for the academic governance of xxx University through the creation of a Faculty Senate, standing committees of the Senate, and a Faculty Assembly. It is intended that, in normal circumstances, matters will come before the Senate for discussion and recommendation after scrutiny by the standing committees. In exceptional circumstances, matters may come before the Senate from an individual college, another university governance body, an administrative officer, or a submission by ten percent of the voting members of the faculty.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE FACULTY

The voting faculty has primary responsibility to formulate all educational policies subject to final approval by the president and where appropriate by the board of trustees. The faculty in accordance with their responsibilities as defined in xxx must identify issues of academic concern, discuss and formulate recommendations, and recommend approval for implementation. Academic issues include such matters as the establishment or dissolution of all degree programs; faculty hiring, retention, promotion, tenure, development, and dismissal; curriculum; admission standards; scholastic standards; examination and testing programs; the award of honors; the approval of candidates for earned degrees; and the establishment or dissolution of all colleges, departments, or independent centers or institutes. The process associated with certain educational policies may fall to non-faculty members of the university community for implementation and revision. In such cases, faculty will provide input as noted in section 3.2 of the charter.

Advice and Recommendations: In addition, the faculty in accordance with their responsibilities as defined in xxx has a responsibility to advise and make recommendations to the appropriate persons or bodies concerning other policies and decisions affecting university development and welfare. The faculty's advice and recommendations in such matters are offered to the deans, vice presidents, provost, or president as appropriate or as specified in university policy. The subjects of the advice and recommendations include, for example, the appointment, retention, promotion, and tenure of individual faculty; the appointment of administrative and academic officers; faculty personnel policies; student responsibilities and discipline; the academic calendar; the setting of fund-raising

priorities; the formulation of priorities for and review of the annual operating budget of the university; the development and expansion of the campus; and the expression of university views on matters of public concern.

THE FACULTY SENATE

4.1 The Senate shall be the legislative and representative agency of the faculty.

4.2 The Senate is empowered to formulate legislation in areas of academic policy affecting more than one college of the university). The legislative decisions of the Senate are submitted to the provost for further action.

4.3 The Senate shall also offer advice and recommendation covering other matters of university welfare). Its advice and recommendations are submitted to the relevant vice president, the provost, the president.

4.4 The Senate shall act upon other resolutions, recommendations, or proposals submitted by the faculty of any college, department, or committee of the Senate and pertaining to the academic governance or the general welfare of the university.

4.5 The Senate may enact and amend its own bylaws.

COMPOSITION OF THE FACULTY SENATE

The Senate shall be composed of:

- voting members of the faculty who have been elected by the voting members of the constituent faculties in accordance with approved voting procedures (cf. Article II),
- the provost or designee (ex-officio, non-voting),
- the chair of Staff Council or designee (ex-officio, non-voting),
- the president of Student Government or designee (ex-officio, non-voting).

THE FACULTY ASSEMBLY

The Faculty Assembly is the assembled body of the faculty. The president of the university is the presiding officer of the Assembly. The president shall preside at all meetings of the Faculty Assembly. In the absence of the president, the provost shall preside. The president shall plan and arrange the agenda for the Faculty Assembly meeting in collaboration with the Senate chair. The Assembly normally will be convened by the president at the beginning of the academic year to hear the president's report on the state of the university and plans for university development. The president shall also convene the Assembly on matters of university-wide concern at the request of the Senate, the executive committee acting in the Senate's behalf, or ten percent of the voting members of the faculty. At each meeting of the Assembly, the chair of the Senate shall give account to the Assembly of matters referred to the Senate. The meetings shall normally be open to all members of the RIT community.