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History and Charge

Shared governance has existed at Ithaca College in disparate forms for years, essentially giving faculty, staff, and students their own governing bodies with varied levels of institutional input and access. In the fall of 2015 the following needs were identified regarding shared governance at Ithaca College:

- Processes of governance need to be better explained and shared more equitably.
- Each constituency needs clear mechanisms to be involved in governance and decision making.
- Proposals and recommendations need to be tracked and communicated in transparent ways.

At the direction of the Ithaca College Board of Trustees, the Provost assembled a group of faculty, staff, students, and administrators called the "Shared Governance Task Force." A charter of shared governance was developed in careful consideration of the Ithaca College Faculty Council report on models of shared governance, the Student Government Association bill on shared governance, and other books, articles, and websites on practices of shared governance in higher education. In addition, interviews with faculty and staff at Ithaca College were conducted. The task force sought feedback from all constituencies on campus by holding open sessions and attending meetings throughout the spring of 2016. The task force has created a charter and flow chart outlining shared governance processes and practices.

The Shared Governance Task Force thanks all community members for their time and thoughtful contributions to this process.

[Revision of Policy Manual Section 1.6 noted in red]

Governance at Ithaca College provides adequate communication and full opportunity for appropriate joint planning and effort. The governing process should provide the broadest possible exchange of information and opinion and include, where appropriate, the advice of and consultation with appropriate constituencies, **including faculty, students, staff, and administrators.**

The Board of Trustees of Ithaca College is the final institutional authority. The Board of Trustees, while maintaining a general overview, entrusts the conduct of administration to the administrative officers: the President, Vice Presidents and Deans.

The President, as the chief executive officer of the institution, has ultimate managerial responsibility and authority.

The faculty has primary responsibility for such fundamental areas as curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction, research, faculty status, and those aspects of academic student life which relate to the educational process. The faculty sets the requirements for the degrees offered, determines when the requirements have been met, and requests the President and Trustees to grant the degrees thus achieved.

Faculty, students, staff, and administrators have the responsibility to share their perspectives on a wide range of issues through the committees in which they participate and through their governance councils.

Section 1 Preamble

The following principles are foundational to the charter of shared governance:

- **Representation:** All faculty, students, staff, and administrators are represented in shared governance.
- **Empowerment:** All faculty, students, staff, and administrators are empowered to make suggestions and proposals for the benefit of the community.
- **Responsibility:** All faculty, students, staff, and administrators have a responsibility to engage in consultation and provide input. Decision-makers have a responsibility to consider input provided.
- **Transparency:** Community members will be informed which person or body has the authority to make decisions and who should expect to be consulted. At the same time, some decisions and processes must unfold confidentially for the benefit of the College.
- **Accountability:** Decision-makers must explain and justify their decisions and are accountable for them.
- **Respect:** All faculty, students, staff, and administrators show respect for one another and for the input they are providing for the shared governance process, regardless of campus constituency.

Community members trust one another to consider diverse points of view and experiences in a civil manner and act within our system of shared governance with integrity. Community members must act in accordance with the highest ethical standards that reflect the values of Ithaca College. These principles are the foundation for each of the governance committees.

Section 2 Governance Councils

Section 2.1 Definitions of Committees, Councils, and Task Forces

In this document, the following definitions are used to clarify working relationships:

- **Shared Governance:** A set of processes and practices that distribute responsibility for creating and approving policy, setting strategic agendas, and recommending institutional changes.
- **Cross-Constituent:** Representation including each college constituency (faculty, students, staff, and administrators).

- **Governance Council:** A democratically elected group that is consulted, makes proposals, recommendations, and decisions on behalf of a constituency.
- **Committee:** A standing group charged with a particular purpose that is to be consulted on matters related to this purpose, make recommendations and decisions regarding their charge, consisting of representatives of the relevant stakeholder groups.
- **Advisory Council or Advisory Group:** A group that is called upon to make recommendations to a specific person or group on a particular topic or area of expertise.
- **Task Force, Working Group, Ad-Hoc:** A temporary group with the purpose of accomplishing a specific and finite objective.
- **Executive Committee:** A committee for each of the constituency governance councils that leads the given governance council and sets agendas.

Section 2.2 The College Governance Council (CGC)

The purpose of the College Governance Council is to ensure that policy proposal, review, decision making, and implementation processes follow the principles of shared governance. This council consists of individuals elected by their respective governance councils.

- 4 faculty members (staggered 2-year terms), one of the faculty members serves as Associate Chair
- 3 students (one-year terms with possibility of renewal)
- 3 staff members - 2 staff, 1 administrator (staggered 2-year terms)
- Provost (as chair)
- VP for Finance and Administration (ex-officio)

The Provost, as chair of the College Governance Council, only votes in the case of a tie. One of the faculty members serves as the Associate Chair of the College Governance Council and votes in all cases, even when chairing a meeting in the Provost's absence. The Vice President for Finance and Administration or his/her designee is a non-voting ex officio member of the College Governance Council.

The College Governance Council sets its own processes and procedures and is expected to follow the six principles of shared governance.

Section 2.3 The Constituency Governance Councils

There are four constituency governance councils: Faculty Governance Council, Staff Governance Council, Student Governance Council, and Administrative Governance Council. The functions of these constituency governance councils are:

1. To identify their own officers and executive committee members
2. To pass resolutions (or bills) to be sent to the College Governance Council for consideration
3. To set and codify their processes for assigning or electing members to standing committees, task forces, and advisory councils

4. To conduct discussions of policy recommendations brought forward by the standing committees, task forces, and advisory councils as part of the review process
5. To solicit names of individuals willing to serve as campus based trustees, and recommend the appropriate number to submit to the Board of Trustees – for the relevant constituency governance councils.

Each governance council sets its own processes and procedures and is expected to follow the six principles of shared governance.

Section 3 Proposals

Section 3.1 What May be Proposed

Throughout this charter the word ‘policy’ is being used with the understanding that it has a broader meaning: it envelopes policy, processes, and procedures. Proposals may be submitted for changes in policies, changes in college-wide processes, and changes in procedures.

Section 3.2 Who May Propose New Policies or Revisions to Existing Policies

- Any faculty, student, staff, or administrator of the Ithaca College community may submit a proposal for a new policy or the revision of an existing policy to:
 - the appropriate person responsible for the policy in question,
 - the relevant committee or constituency council, or
 - the College Governance Council
- The governance councils may pass resolutions or bills and may make requests to develop new policies or revise existing policies that also go directly to the College Governance Council.
- The College Governance Council itself may be the originator of a proposal.

Section 3.3 Submission, Review and Implementation Process (Figure 1)

Proposals submitted to the College Governance Council should reflect the following:

- Consideration given to the perspectives of multiple campus constituencies.
- Consultation with appropriate experts on and/or off campus.
- Consultation with the appropriate Dean, Vice President or President’s Council if appropriate
- Consideration of the priorities that are articulated in the College’s adopted strategic plan.

Upon receipt of a proposal the College Governance Council may:

- Accept the proposal, endorse it, and recommend it for approval by the relevant Vice President, the President's Council, or the President.

- Implementation plans, budgets and timelines will be developed for all accepted proposals in collaboration with the proposer(s).
- Deny the proposal, returning it to the relevant committee with an explanation as to why it is not acceptable.
 - The President's Council has the right to determine that the given proposal does warrant further investigation.
- Defer consideration of the proposal when it is determined that a decision on this matter must wait until another issue is resolved.
- Refer the proposal back to the proposer(s) to solicit input from the appropriate committee, council, group, and/or member(s) of the campus community.
- Refer the proposal to an existing group or individual(s) for review and consideration.

Section 3.4 Transparency

The proposal, decision, and implementation processes as outlined in section 3.3 must be made transparent and readily accessible to the campus community.

Section 4 Departmental, School, and Divisional Decision-Making

Nothing in this charter shall be interpreted to indicate changes to decision-making processes or decision-making bodies located solely within units or departments, schools, or divisions within the College. This charter of Shared Governance is focused only on college-wide decision making processes, recognizing that in many cases, proposals coming from one level must be combined with other proposals as they move up through a college-wide process.

Section 5 Authority and Responsibility of the Board of Trustees

Nothing in this charter shall be interpreted to indicate changes to the ultimate decision-making authority or responsibility of the Ithaca College Board of Trustees, as provided for by the board's by-laws. This charter of shared governance is focused on the internal college-wide decision making processes, recognizing that in many cases, proposals coming from the internal college-wide decision-making process must ultimately come to the Board of Trustees for final approval.

Section 6 Charter Revision Process

Any individual, council, or committee may request revision of this charter by proposing a revision to the College Governance Committee which has the authority to determine if the revision warrants consideration. If revision is warranted, the College Governance Council will appoint an ad hoc task force to consider such a change in accordance with the process outlined in Section 3 of this charter.

If any two of the four constituency councils (Faculty Governance Council, Student Governance Council, Staff Governance Council, and Administrator Governance Council) endorse a proposed revision of this charter, the College Governance Council will appoint an ad hoc task force to consider this change in accordance with the process outlined in Section 3 of this charter.

Section 7 College Governance Council Review

The College Governance Council will complete an annual internal self-review that will inform the periodic review.

No later than the beginning of the third year of the operation of this charter, the College Governance Council will appoint an ad hoc task force to conduct a review of its function. The ad hoc task force will submit its report to the College Governance Council by the end of year three.

At the beginning of year four, the College Governance Council will consider changes recommended by the ad hoc task force, vetting possible changes with the campus community and submitting any recommendations for change to the President in time for consideration by the Board at its annual May meeting.

After the first review, a periodic review will take place no later than every five years.

Appendix A Shared Governance Flow Chart

Shared Governance Process

