

# SHARED GOVERNANCE TASK FORCE REPORT

AUGUST 2025



ROANOKE  
COLLEGE®



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# INTRODUCTION

## CHARGE AND SCOPE OF WORK

In spring 2024, President Shushok convened the Shared Governance Task Force and charged it with recommending a shared governance framework for Roanoke College that is **deliberative, clear, inclusive, transparent, agile, and conducive to rapid innovation**. In addition to this core charge, the Task Force was asked to explore the creation of a staff council to represent staff interests in governance, and to coordinate with faculty and administrators engaged in a comprehensive revision of the Faculty Handbook, as tasked by the Board of Trustees.

## MEMBERSHIP AND REPRESENTATION

From the outset, the Task Force was intentionally designed to be representative, including members from each major constituency: the Board of Trustees, senior leadership, faculty, staff, and students. This diverse composition was meant to model the collaborative, inclusive, and deliberative culture that the College's new shared governance structure aims to embody. While some members of the task force stepped away during the year due to changing roles, personal obligations, or employment outside Roanoke College, the work continued with strong engagement and a consistent commitment from the remaining members.

## PROCESS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Task Force met weekly or biweekly throughout the 2024–2025 academic year, with 90-minute time blocks reserved on Friday afternoons. Some sessions convened the full group, while others were dedicated to subcommittees working on targeted aspects of the charge. To promote transparency and campus-wide engagement, the Task Force also shared regular updates in faculty meetings, board meetings, and other forums.

The work unfolded in two key phases, beginning in fall 2024 and continuing into spring 2025.

### — FALL 2024: LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

In the fall, the Task Force concentrated on building a strong foundation for its work. Members began by reflecting on the purpose of the charge and establishing ground rules for engagement. They explored definitions of key terms, reviewed literature on shared governance, and shared insights into how governance currently functions across different areas of the College.

Much of the semester was devoted to drafting a shared definition of governance and developing an initial version of a decision-making diagram, which later evolved into a more refined flowchart. Progress at times felt slow, as members navigated the challenges of working together effectively while also grappling with the complexity of governance structures and processes.

Time spent refining foundational documents—such as principles, definitions, and frameworks—proved essential. Reaching consensus on terminology helped establish a common language and



shared understanding, laying the groundwork for the more technical and structural efforts that would follow in the spring.

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## **SPRING 2025: FOCUSED SUBCOMMITTEE WORK**

In the spring, the Task Force transitioned to more focused and tangible efforts. Four subcommittees were formed to tackle specific parts of the charge:

- 1 — Roles and Responsibilities
- 2 — Processes and Best Practices
- 3 — Communication
- 4 — Staff Council Development

These subcommittees produced a series of recommendations and tools aimed at strengthening governance clarity and practice across the College, as summarized in the deliverables below.

Concurrently, faculty advanced significant revisions to Section 2 of the Faculty Handbook to align faculty development and personnel processes with the new School structure. The Vice President for Academic Affairs also worked with constituents across campus to revise all reportable (non-voteable) sections of the Faculty Handbook (parts 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6). In the upcoming year, the faculty will pilot some of the processes developed in the task force as they consider further revisions to Section 2, having to do with employment policies.

## **REFLECTIONS**

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### **RELATIONSHIP-CENTERED WORK**

Throughout this process, we came to understand one another—and the College—more deeply. We learned about each other’s roles, expertise, and perspectives, and gained a clearer view of how governance currently works—often in isolation—across the various constituencies. Building trust and camaraderie took time, especially amid the many competing demands we all face. Early conversations were often halting and awkward, but as members adjusted to different communication styles and viewpoints, perceived hierarchies and assumptions began to fade. The result was a deep appreciation for the value of sustained, relationship-centered work.

These cross-constituency conversations were energizing, forward-looking, and grounded in a shared sense of possibility. Many Task Force members found renewed purpose in imagining how Roanoke College could lead by example and contribute meaningfully to the national conversation on shared governance in higher education. As we move forward, members have an opportunity to extend that same spirit of trust, mutual respect, and openness across the broader campus community.

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### **LESSONS LEARNED**

Alongside our progress, we also encountered challenges and limitations that will inform the important work still ahead. While communication within the Task Force was strong, our outreach to the broader campus community was less consistent. Aside from periodic updates at faculty and board meetings, we did not maintain a comprehensive or regular approach to sharing our



work. It was easy to become absorbed in the process of “doing” and overlook the importance of communicating that work as it unfolded. To address this, we will collaborate with IT to create a SharePoint or Teams site where all materials will be accessible to the campus community.

Our progress toward developing a staff council was also limited. While we created a basic framework, we intentionally chose not to move too far ahead without broader staff input. Staff members on the Task Force expressed a clear desire to keep the larger staff community involved and informed. This work will continue into the fall, led by staff representatives committed to moving the effort forward collaboratively. The President’s Cabinet will also discuss how we might return to all-staff meetings.





# DEFINITIONS

The task force created two definitions that capture our aspiration for what shared governance should look like at Roanoke College. The abridged version emphasizes shared governance as a collaborative and iterative process with multiple participants:

*Shared governance at Roanoke College is the process through which stakeholders participate in institutional decision making. This deliberative and collaborative process takes into account the roles and responsibilities of designated stakeholders while considering the impacts on the entire college community. Shared governance is an iterative process that will be regularly reviewed.*

The longer version acknowledges the various stakeholders and their different expertise, emphasizes the importance of structures for deliberation/decision making, elaborates on mutual responsibilities needed for productive shared governance, and recognizes the need for flexibility to ensure agility when necessary.

*Shared governance at Roanoke college is the system through which different institutional constituents (for example, the Board of Trustees, faculty, staff and administration, and students) participate, as appropriate, in the process of making decisions for the good of the institution. This system includes the work of members of the various stakeholder groups as they (or their representatives) act in deliberative and/or consultative bodies, and the responsibilities of all of them for communication, consultation, collaboration, and consideration of the expertise of others and the impact on others of the decisions in their power.*

*Decisions of shared governance include, but are not limited to, strategic decisions about College priorities and goals and decisions about policies that have implications Collegewide, or beyond any one constituency. Shared governance requires appropriate levels of transparency and a clear understanding of who is responsible for making, communicating, and implementing decisions, and who is accountable for the results. Shared governance must also provide processes for expedited decision-making when more timely action is necessary. The College will regularly assess its systems of shared governance.*

*Shared governance is a unique collective responsibility. It thrives in an atmosphere of respect and trust and where developing broad consensus through compromise is valued over the absolute authority of any single group or individual.*

These definitions can serve the College well as we educate the campus about shared governance and put this renewed vision into practice. However, like the process of shared governance, these definitions are viewed as being continually in process and thus open to refinement.



# VALUES AND OUTCOMES



Unlike most corporations that place value on having a single, prominent leader/decision maker, institutions of higher education aspire to a different mode of leadership and decision making. While shared governance, in general, does not often result in rapid decisions and is “burdened” by what outsiders might view as “too many cooks,” we affirm the values and outcomes of shared leadership.

Shared governance fosters collaboration, transparency, and inclusivity, ensuring that all stakeholders have a voice in the decision-making processes. This collective approach enhances trust, promotes diverse perspectives, and leads to well-informed policies that align with the institution’s mission and goals. By involving stakeholders in shaping academic and operational priorities, shared governance supports a sense of ownership and commitment, ultimately contributing to a stronger, more vibrant campus community. Effective shared governance also needs to strive for the ideal balance between inclusivity and agility.

The best practices created by our subcommittee are meant to help guide how we put this balance into practice. Not everyone can, wants to, or needs to be included in every decision; however, through careful consideration of the practices below, we hope to build processes that optimize inclusivity without sacrificing our ability to respond and adapt to a rapidly changing academic landscape. Underpinning these concepts is a commitment to effective and efficient communication. Establishing a culture of shared governance is a critical step toward building a shared vision of the college based on strong relationships and creative partnerships.

As we think about establishing effective shared governance at Roanoke College, we will need to provide clarity about who has the authority and responsibility to make certain decisions. However, we believe that framing our work around the issue of authority will inhibit our ability to create a culture of shared governance. We see the central issue of shared governance as prioritizing effective and efficient communication among mutually respected stakeholders, leading to strong relationships and creative partnerships that can bring to fruition a shared vision.



# GUIDING PRINCIPLES



At its first meeting in August 2024, the Shared Governance Task Force began to draft a set of guiding principles to shape how members would collaborate and engage in their work. These principles were refined over the next few meetings and served as a foundation for the task force's process. Over time, they emerged as essential to effective shared governance more broadly. They have since been adapted to support a college-wide culture of collaboration, transparency, and trust.

Shared governance at Roanoke College is a collective endeavor among the Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, staff, and students—each playing an essential, interdependent role in advancing the institution's mission, strategic goals, and long-term success. The following principles form the foundation for a unified and holistic commitment to shared governance across all groups:

## — **INSTITUTIONAL FOCUS**

Shared governance prioritizes the College's mission and goals by breaking down silos, valuing diverse perspectives and experiences, and working together towards a common aim.

## — **FUTURE FOCUS AND OPENNESS TO CHANGE**

Shared governance embraces a forward-looking, adaptable, and solution-oriented mindset, calling all constituents to remain open to change while acknowledging how the past shapes perspectives and informs—rather than defines—the path ahead.

## — **INCLUSIVENESS AND COLLABORATION**

Shared governance requires consultation and collaboration in an environment where contributions are actively welcomed and valued, regardless of role or position. It depends on full engagement, individual accountability, and a shared commitment to the integrity and spirit of the process and its outcomes.

## — **TRUST, HONESTY, AND MUTUAL RESPECT**

Shared governance relies on a foundation of trust, honest dialogue, and an environment where participants can share ideas, ask questions, and challenge one another with openness, courage, and mutual respect. It calls for assuming good intentions, practicing active listening, seeking understanding, and valuing diverse perspectives.

## — **TRANSPARENCY AND COMMUNICATION**

Shared governance depends on accurate, consistent, clear, and transparent communication throughout the decision-making process, including the representation of dissenting views.





# STRUCTURES *(THE WHO AND THE WHAT)*

The SGTF successfully defined the roles and responsibilities of key constituency groups at Roanoke College. These groups are the Board of Trustees, the Administration (led by the Cabinet), the Faculty (including the School Deans and Assistant Deans), the Staff (employees not considered Administration), and the Students. The descriptions of roles and responsibilities below draw on SGTF members' personal experiences at Roanoke, and we supplemented those descriptions with information from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB), and the American Association of University Professors (AAUP)<sup>1</sup>. What follows represents the task force's attempt to articulate our aspirations for Roanoke College rather than a description of current consensus or practice.

## THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES *(led by the Chair of the Board and Executive Committee)*

- Legal authority and fiduciary oversight of the institution, although it may delegate responsibility to various agents
- Approves annual budgets
- Stewards the endowment
- Reviews and approves the mission and strategic directions of the College
- Establishes the policies of the College
- Manages conflicts of interest and dismissal processes for board members
- Confers earned academic degrees on the joint recommendations of the President of the College and the faculty and, by its own act, may confer honorary degrees
- Selects, evaluates, and provides oversight for the President of the College
- Through a vote of two-thirds of elected Trustees, the Board may remove or suspend at any time the President of the College, any administrators, or, subject to contractual rights, faculty, and may also remove a Trustee for cause.
- Protects the institution from undue influence by external persons or bodies
- Regularly evaluates its own effectiveness

<sup>1</sup> Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), available at <https://sacscoc.org/>. Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, available at <https://agb.org/>. American Association of University Professors, available at <https://www.aaup.org/>. One key document in deriving these roles and responsibilities is the "Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities" published in 1966, which was jointly formulated by the American Association of University Professors, the American Council on Education (ACE), and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB).



## THE ADMINISTRATION *(the Cabinet, led by the President)*

The **President** plays a unique role within the Administration by shaping the institution's mission, goals, and priorities for Board approval, advancing said mission, goals, and priorities, and communicating them to both internal and external audiences. The President is the “hub” connecting the “spokes” of each administrative division as well as the Board. In addition, the President:

- Ensures that the standards and procedures in use within the College conform to the policy established by the governing board and external accreditors, and to the standards of sound practice.
- Oversees all divisions of the institution.
- Selects, evaluates, and provides oversight for the Vice Presidents of each division and other members of Cabinet.
- Represents the institution to its many audiences.

**Cabinet members** also have specific and defined roles and responsibilities for the main operational areas of the College, including Finance, Academic Programs, Enrollment, Student Success, and Athletics, among others.

- **The Cabinet** may advise and endorse operational decisions or policies created within an individual division and may vote on policies or decisions that affect the entire institution.

## THE FACULTY

The **faculty** of Roanoke College direct the academic enterprise, enacting policies regarding curriculum, academic standards, and faculty status through a collection of governance committees. The Faculty Moderator convenes the faculty, coordinates the work of faculty committees (through the Faculty Affairs Committee), and represents the faculty with the administration and the Board. The faculty:

- Oversees and coordinates curriculum, pedagogy, program and student learning outcomes assessment, research, and major program advising.
- Sets the requirements for degrees and other academic credentials, determines when the requirements have been met, and recommends to the President and Board candidates for degrees.
- Determine the criteria for faculty rank and status and related matters, including appointments, reappointments, decisions not to reappoint, promotions, the granting of tenure, and dismissal on academic grounds.
- Provides input to the Administration, President, and the Board regarding College priorities and policies.
- Seeks input from other constituencies regarding the academic enterprise.



## THE STAFF

The various resources that the SGTF consulted about college constituencies did not as a rule include Staff. Part of our charge was to create a more inclusive structure for shared governance. We begin by acknowledging the crucial role that Staff play at Roanoke.

The Staff, working in the divisions led by the vice presidents on the Cabinet, are responsible for the daily operations that sustain the College and advance its mission, vision, and strategic priorities. Their expertise informs and supports every area of the institution, including academic affairs, advancement, athletics, finance, administration, facilities, marketing and communications, enrollment management, and student success. In addition to ensuring the effective functioning of campus systems, services, and academic programs, staff play a central role in the education of learners through advising, mentoring, programming, coaching, and support. They shape the co-curricular experience and foster environments where learners develop leadership, resilience, and a sense of belonging.

Currently the Staff do not have an explicit role in governance. Below is a draft for a new governing body, a **Staff Council**, through which the Staff can formally participate in decision-making processes at Roanoke. Staff members will continue to work on the definition of responsibilities, structure, and internal procedures for the Council.

Staff perspectives and expertise will be represented in shared governance by the Staff Council and thus contribute to decisions that impact campus operations and community well-being. While it will not hold policymaking authority, the Staff Council will provide informed input on policies, campus initiatives, strategic planning and priorities, emerging concerns, and operations. Specifically, the Council will:

- Advise the Administration, President, and Board on matters affecting staff roles, workplace culture, and the effectiveness of college systems and services.
- Contribute to the development and review of institutional policies related to staff employment, student support, and operational effectiveness, in collaboration with other governance bodies.
- Promote transparent, two-way communication between staff and leadership through structured feedback, open forums, and ongoing dialogue.
- Support initiatives that enhance institutional effectiveness by contributing staff insight to strategic planning, student success, sustainability, and cross-campus collaboration.
- Foster a campus culture of inclusion, collaboration, and shared responsibility by engaging with faculty, students, and administrators in pursuit of the College's mission.



## THE STUDENTS

Likewise, students were generally not included in the resources consulted by the SGTF as a recognized constituency in shared governance, though they do have their own governing body, the Student Government Association (SGA). Through this mechanism students can participate in shared governance at Roanoke. Specifically, this body:

- Advises the faculty, administration, President, and Board on matters affecting students, College culture, and the effectiveness of college systems and services.
- Establishes its own structure, internal priorities, and criteria for funding student organizations.
- Disburses funding from student fees in support of student organizations.

While the Administration is governed by the Cabinet and the Students are governed by the Student Governing Association (SGA), the Board of Trustees and the Faculty both function as governing bodies as a whole; that is, no one subgroup of either of these constituencies has the authority to make decisions on behalf of the entire group (except in extenuating circumstances).

Fifteen general areas of responsibility (specified in the first column in the table below) were synthesized from the descriptions of each constituency at the College. The chart does not represent all possible decision-making areas but is meant to be illustrative. For most of these areas of responsibility, more than one constituency group plays a role in making decisions. In some areas we have begun to indicate what the role(s) of each group are for a particular area of decision-making, but we did not attempt to be comprehensive. Continuing to augment this chart could be part of the College's ongoing work on shared governance.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

	BOARD	ADMIN	FACULTY	STAFF	STUDENTS
<b>College funds/budget</b>	Allocation	Allocation Disbursement Accounting	Disbursement Accounting	Disbursement Accounting	Disbursement Accounting
<b>Fiduciary responsibility</b>					
<b>Strategic direction</b>					
<b>Personnel</b>	Budget Allocation Selection of Pres. and VPs	Selection and Approval	Requests and Suggestions	Selection and Approval	
<b>Legal compliance</b>					
<b>Self-governance/self-policing/ self-organization</b>	Board of Trustees		Faculty Committees	Staff Council	SGA and Student Orgs.
<b>Sabbatical</b>	Budget Allocation and Approval	Recommendation	Recommendation and Application		
<b>Student success</b>					
<b>Admissions</b>			Standards		
<b>Tenure and promotion</b>	Approval	Recommendation	Recommendation and Application		
<b>Student discipline</b>					
<b>Curriculum</b>					
<b>Advising</b>			Major	First Year Undeclared (?)	
<b>Academic integrity</b>					
<b>Day-to-day functions</b>					



## AN EXAMPLE OF SHARED GOVERNANCE IN ACTION

While the Board has oversight of the College, it entrusts the conduct of administration to the administrative officers (the President and the Cabinet) and the conduct of teaching and research to the Faculty, ensuring a clear and appropriate distinction between the policy-making function of the Board and the respective responsibilities of the administration and faculty to administer and implement policy. For example:

- The establishment of tenure and promotion standards is primarily within the domain of the faculty, because of their expertise in pedagogy and disciplinary research. The Vice President for Academic Affairs joins the Faculty Personnel Committee in reviewing faculty credentials and the quality of faculty work and recommending candidates for tenure and promotion to the President, who then recommends those candidates to the Board for final approval.
  - At any point, if there is disagreement about a candidate, explanations of that disagreement must be provided to all participants in the decision.
- The President and the Board ultimately approve all tenure and promotion decisions because of their responsibility for seeing that the College adheres to sound practice and their fiduciary responsibility. Accordingly, they should familiarize themselves with tenure standards; the chief academic officer should ensure that those standards are fair and uniformly applied and provide the President and the Board with information regarding compliance with the established policies.

## RECOMMENDATION

In addition to the Staff Council (described above), the SGTF recommends the creation of a standing **cross-estate shared governance council** that will continually develop, monitor, and assess shared governance at the College. Establishing such a group would communicate a commitment to creating and maintaining a robust culture of shared governance. Moreover, this group will serve as a microcosm of shared governance in action by including members from all constituencies (e.g., Board, faculty, administration, staff, students). This committee will • Serve as an advisory group that can be consulted about best practices, especially when there is friction in the process.

- Advise other shared governance bodies that wish to create policies with significant impact.
- Advise on expedited decision making under exigencies.
- Offer to the RC community, in collaboration with other groups (e.g., Teaching Collaborative, Board of Trustees, Staff Council, etc.), professional development on shared governance.
- Regularly solicit feedback on the operation of shared governance from the College community.
- Create and maintain a central location for shared governance documents.



# PROCESSES *(THE HOW)*



The SGTF designed a flexible, agile governance process, including a policy workflow and criteria for shared governance decisions that balances inclusivity with the need for timely decision-making. (See flow chart at the end of this report.)

One of the key issues within shared governance is defining precisely which decisions need to go through the formal shared governance procedures (from our charge: What policies or issues should be decided by shared governance?). The SGTF struggled to determine this; the description below represents our best effort. We submit this recognizing the need for further thought and discussion and hoping that practical application of these best practices will lead to greater clarity.

Shared-governance decisions are those that have broad impact (outside of a single constituent group), those in which an individual or group is held accountable for effects beyond their own constituency, those that involve overlapping roles and responsibilities, and/or those that demand the expertise of multiple constituents.

In recent years College policies have been proposed, adopted, revised, or removed in various ways. Consistency has not been our forte. And this lack of consistency has led to misunderstanding, confusion, and unfulfilled expectations. What we propose here is a set of best practices whose implementation would provide the campus community with greater stability as well as better decision-making.

## WHO SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN SHARED GOVERNANCE?

Asking who should be included in any particular shared-governance process is an essential starting point. Because of the complex nature of institutions of higher education, the answer will depend on the particulars of the issues being addressed. As a general principle, those included in shared governance discussions and decision making are those who are accountable for the results, those who have expertise in the area, those who will be impacted, those involved in implementation, and those with an understanding of the financial, educational, and other impacts.

Broader participation in any process has both positives and negatives to consider. Benefits include building trust, including diverse perspectives, cultivating a sense of ownership and commitment, and creating well-informed policies that align with the institution's mission and goals. However, including a large number of people may unnecessarily slow the process, cause information overload, increase individuals' workload (leading to potential burnout), and decrease participation (e.g., due to survey fatigue or other factors). These benefits and liabilities should be thoughtfully balanced when embarking on a new process.





The following questions will help identify which stakeholders should be included in a decision-making process about a policy or practice:

- *Who will be affected by the outcomes of this policy?* In addition to considering the primary college constituencies (the Board of Trustees, the Administration, the Faculty, the Staff, and Students), consider smaller groups and individuals within these larger constituencies (e.g., Building and Grounds, Financial Aid, other programs, departments, and offices). We may also want to consider external groups, such as parents, alumni, prospective students, the local community, accreditation and financial bodies.
- *What is the size, scope and duration of the impact on different groups and individuals?* Those who are affected most significantly are often those who ought to be included. • *Who will be expected to implement these policies and be held accountable for the results?* The “boots on the ground” should be consulted about practical implications of decisions.
- *Who has relevant expertise and experience to help formulate good policy on this issue?* This may include individuals on and off campus as well as those best able to assess resource implications (staffing, finances, equipment, facilities, etc.).

## HOW CAN DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS BE INCLUDED IN SHARED GOVERNANCE?

Involvement in shared governance comes with responsibility to acknowledge the value and limitations of one’s particular role and respect the roles and contributions of others in the process. There are a range of ways individuals can be involved in shared governance; the examples given here are not meant to be exhaustive, and often there can be overlaps in the types of involvement. When constituencies are invited into decision making, their roles should be made clear from the beginning.

### ——— BEING INFORMED

- Some individuals will not be involved in any of the ways detailed below, but should be made aware when and why a policy is under consideration and then be made aware of important outcomes.

### ——— PROVIDING INPUT

- Individuals or groups may be asked for input at one or more points in the process (e.g., via surveys, focus groups, forums, etc.), without being directly involved in decision making.

### ——— CONSULTATION

- Some individuals or groups may be utilized as experts, who provide input or play a more substantial role in deliberation, design, and/or implementation of the policy or process.
- Individuals or groups who may not play a role in decision making, but who will need to be consulted regarding how a decision is implemented and assessed.



## ENGAGING IN DELIBERATIONS

- Individuals or groups who are more actively engaged in discussing/debating/working on one or more parts of the process.

## DECISION-MAKING

- Decision-making may be the responsibility of an individual (e.g., the VPAA, the head of IT, the President) or a group (e.g., the Board of Trustees, the Faculty, the Staff Council) or multiple groups and individuals (e.g., FPC, the VPAA, the President, and the Board of Trustees).
- Each individual or group may have different levels of authority regarding decision-making (e.g., FDC makes decisions about to whom to award grants and then passes those along to the VPAA who has ultimate authority to decide who is funded).

At the beginning of a shared governance process, the identity of participants and their roles should be determined. It is essential to identify who will be responsible for various components of the decision-making process (needs assessment, data collection, communication, implementation, etc.) and who, ultimately, should make the final decision, and why? A timeline for the work should also be drafted.

All participants should receive professional development on shared governance principles and practices, with resources provided on effective and transparent communication, leadership, planning, assessment, and decision-making skills.

Effective shared governance helps members of our community feel shared responsibility and provides them with opportunities for input, when appropriate. Participants should assume good intentions from those involved and feel they can safely and collaboratively express their ideas. An understanding of common goals within an environment of trust is key to success.

## HOW DO WE CREATE EFFECTIVE POLICIES IN AN EFFICIENT MANNER, ESPECIALLY IN EXIGENT SITUATIONS?

Good decision making requires planning and thoughtful consideration. Good policies align with the College's mission and strategic plan and are effective and efficient, with benefits that outweigh the costs of implementation.

Those seeking to create policy should map out the process timeline, who will be responsible for each part of the process, and who will be invited to participate in what ways and why (see above, "who should be included and how"). Communication about the process should be clear, concise, and transparent, include a clear rationale, provide access to documents where appropriate, invite input and feedback, and close the loop.

Effective policymaking requires open and frank conversations that can sometimes benefit from a confidential space in which to deliberate. (Many existing or ad hoc deliberative bodies, such as the Faculty Grievance Committee or Executive Committee of the Board, require some level of confidentiality due to the sensitive nature of the subject matter. It is important, however, that participants consider the cost/benefit trade-offs of confidential vs. transparent deliberations (e.g., the potential for suspicion, lack of trust, rumors, etc.).



Decisions that have a significant and potentially negative impact on multiple groups of stakeholders provide the biggest challenge to effective shared governance. If a policy is likely to have negative effects (e.g., loss of positions, loss of offices or programs, loss of income, etc.), a decrease in morale and/or trust may be mitigated by involving all those effected to the degree possible, so they can better understand the rationale and necessity for proposed changes, provide input, feel their voices have been heard, and feel that they are part of working together towards common goals.

Establishing ad hoc or temporary committees can be an effective way to work through complicated situations. All involved stakeholders should be represented. The ultimate decision maker should not be a part of the committee but should be kept regularly in the loop, receiving reports and giving feedback and asking questions. A committee should conclude with a final written report and recommendation (multiple courses of action can also be proposed). Committees do not have to reach full agreement to be successful; a collaborative sharing of ideas and perspectives is valuable.

When decision-makers face exigent or emergency situations where expediency is required (e.g., a natural disaster, or the immediate financial survival of the College is at stake), they should try to preserve as many of the normal shared governance processes as possible. For example, one might continue to gather input from all relevant constituencies, but under an abbreviated timeline. Or instead of involving large numbers of voices in the process, a smaller representative group is convened. Emergency situations may also require confidentiality, at least initially. This should occur only when absolutely necessary; in the interest of transparency, those affected by a decision should be included as soon as possible.

The College should develop clear guidelines describing when a potential policy change requires expediency, even if it does not rise to the level of financial exigency—beginning with an identification of the special circumstances. A standing cross-estate shared governance council will serve as an ideal group with whom to consult when any group is considering a more expedient policymaking process.

## **SOME BEST PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- **Each constituency group (i.e., division, department, committee, office, estate) should examine their existing policies and procedures in consideration of these best practices. Policies whose primary impact is within a constituency group should be created and revised by that group.**
- **The task force did not develop best practices for the implementation and assessment of new policies because they were judged to be outside of the scope of our charge. However, we strongly recommend that the College develop best practices in these areas (e.g., data management, assessment practices, effective oversight, communication of outcomes, training, professional development, etc.).**
- **We recommend ongoing professional development concerning shared governance. Building a culture of shared governance focused on common goals is something that will take time and effort.**



## APPENDIX A / DRAFT OF STAFF COUNCIL CONSTITUTION (from SGTF staff subcommittee)

### MISSION STATEMENT

The Roanoke College Staff Council (RCSC) serves as a liaison between the college administration, faculty, and students and allows the opportunity to develop ideas, voice concerns, and establish policies that affect staff.

### VISION

- The Council will advocate and represent the interests of staff employees to the administration and the campus community.
- The RCSC has the following responsibilities: Inform staff employees of issues and policies that affect them; recognize and promote staff growth and development.

### CORE VALUES

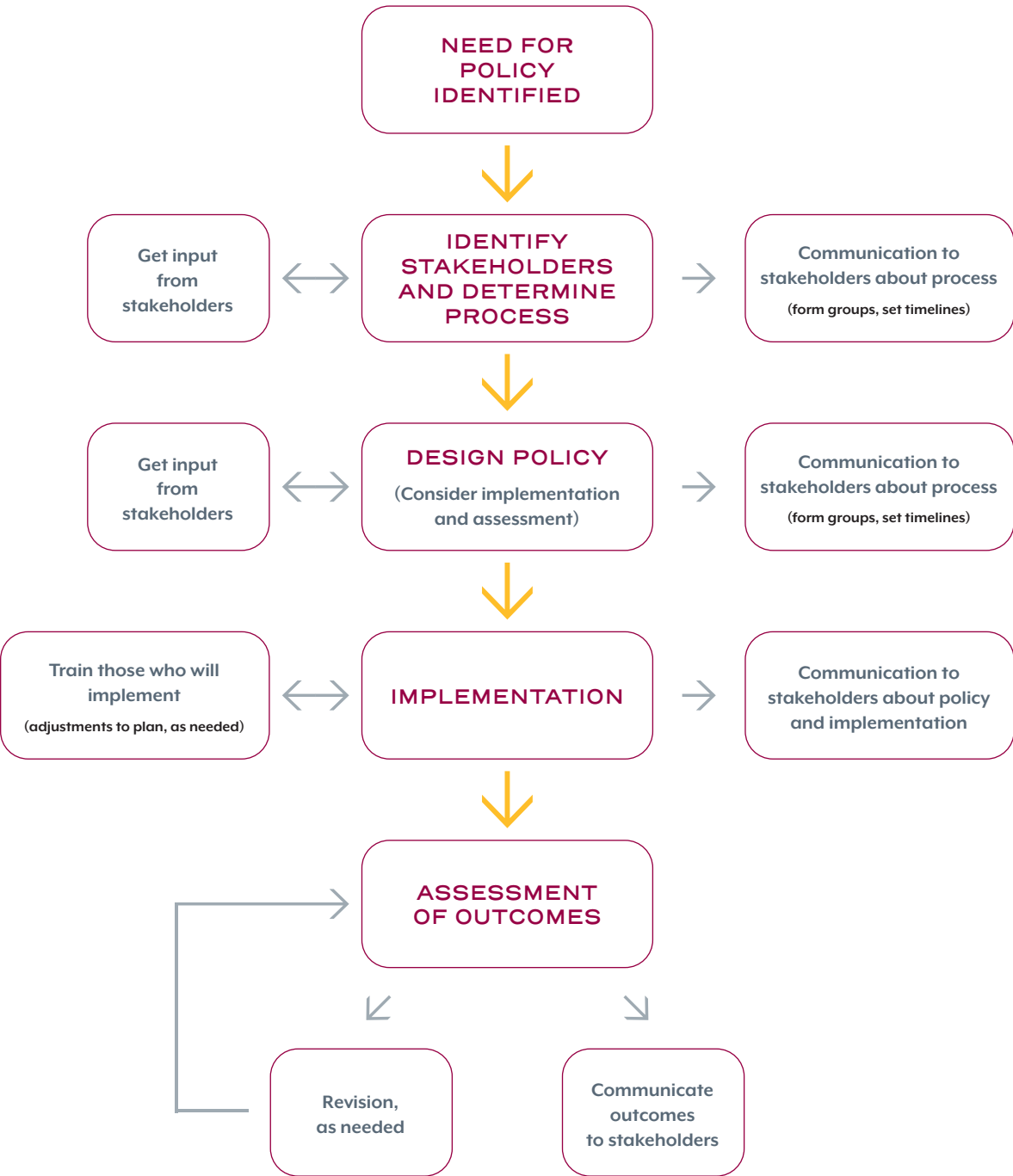
### COUNCIL BY-LAWS

- ESTABLISHMENT AND PURPOSE
- WHAT AUTHORITY IT HAS

### MEMBERSHIP

One member per college division to include at least one hourly staff member. Determine time of terms (i.e. 2-year terms). Create and define categories of membership in the future, if needed. Possibly limit of ten members. Determine Ex-officio members.

*Note: Some additional discussion occurred in the summer, which is not captured here.*





# TASK FORCE MEMBERS

## COORDINATING COMMITTEE

**Jennifer Berenson (Faculty)**

Professor and Chairperson  
of Religion and Philosophy

**Kirk Betts (Board)**

Trustee and Chairperson  
of Institutional Advancement Committee

**Ennis McCrery (Staff)**

Executive Director for Administration (former)

**Kathy Wolfe (Senior Administration)**

Vice President for Academic Affairs

## MEMBERSHIP

**Jesse Bucher (Faculty)**

Associate Professor of History  
and College Historian

**Chris Buchholz (Faculty)**

Associate Professor of Psychology

**Joe Carpenter (Board)**

Trustee

**Jay Ellison (President's Cabinet)**

Vice President for Student Success  
and the Roanoke Experience

**Judy Hall (Board)**

Trustee and Chairperson  
of College Life Committee

**Kathy Harkness (Board)**

Vice Chairperson of the Board of Trustees

**Michelle Vineyard (Staff)**

Sr. Director of Human Resources

**Joshua Masten (Student, Junior)**

History major and President  
of the Student Government Association  
(fall semester 2024, while president of SGA)

**Roger Petersen (Board)**

Trustee and Chairperson  
of Trusteeship Subcommittee

**Catherine Potter (Staff)**

Advisor to the President

**Len Pysh (Faculty)**

Professor of Biology

**Karin Saoub (Faculty)**

Professor and Chairperson  
of Mathematics, Computer Science, and Physics

**Amy Perkins (Staff)**

Dean of Students

**Leslie Warden (Dean's Leadership)**

Assistant Vice President for Curriculum and Advising

**Brandon Wolfe (Staff)**

Director of Institutional Research

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**Malon Courts**

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**David Mowen**

Vice President for Business Affairs

**Frank Shushok, Jr.**

President