Understanding & Review of Policy

Communications are the key to understanding College procedures, practices, and policies. Free and unhampered communication guarantees input from all elements and divisions whenever policies are considered or reviewed.

Employees are encouraged to become familiar with the Governance System (The College Governance System), and to attend open meetings of the various policy committees.

The College Governance System

The Board of Trustees, according to the College's Articles of Incorporation filed with the State of Minnesota on December 17, 1866, is responsible for the "perpetual existence" of Carleton College. Currently a group of 46 men and women, alumni and non-alumni, meet as a full Board on campus three times a year. Much of the Board’s work is done by nine standing committees. Individual trustees frequently participate in campus activities. The Board's principal duties:

- Oversees and approves the kind of education offered and makes certain that its quality meets the highest standards possible. The Board thus approves major policies and programs of the College.

- Since the Board is responsible for the acquisition, conservation, and management of the College's funds and properties, it approves budgets, investments, fund-raising goals, and plans for significant physical improvements.

It is ultimately responsible for the selection and replacement of the President of the College, although at Carleton faculty and students traditionally play a part in presidential selection. The Board approves the granting of degrees, honorary degrees, and faculty tenure, promotion, and leaves of absence.

As a private, independent college, Carleton is governed by many state and federal laws and regulations; its tax-exempt status and other conditions essential to its existence depend on compliance with these legal requirements. The trustees have ultimate legal accountability for the College's adherence to its legal responsibilities.

Individual trustees have an obligation to contribute in whatever way possible and appropriate to the promotion of the College's objectives. The trustees, who consist of a wide range of professional, business, and academic experience, serve both as advisors and as a bridge between Carleton and the wider society.

The Board of Trustees does not involve itself in the day-to-day functioning of the College, delegating its management to the President and his staff. They keep the Board abreast of the work of campus committees and of the College governance system – the College Council, Education & Curriculum Committee (ECC), Committee on Student Life (CSL) and the Budget Committee. The Board may act on Council decisions and one Board member sits as a non-voting observer on the College Council, although the Board need not respond to every decision taken by the Council. Notwithstanding the Board's practice of delegation, members do seek to maintain a "feel" for the College through association with faculty, students, and administrative staff.
Periodically, trustee committees meet with their campus governance analogues – CSL and ECC. Staff members participate in the process through interaction with their supervisor, thus ultimately to the President and Board of Trustees. Often staff members also participate through membership on College committees.

The Board makes a practice of not concerning itself, as a Board, with issues that do not bear directly on its responsibilities for Carleton College. Official actions of the Board are usually reported to the community by the President of the College, or the Secretary of the Board, through the College Council, The Carletonian, or other appropriate means of announcement.

The Board elects its own members, who serve renewable four-year terms. The Board of Trustees consists of not less than twelve (12) nor more than forty-eight (48) persons. The three special categories of trustees who must be off the Board for a year before being re-elected are:

An Alumni Trustee is nominated each year by the Alumni Association and serves a nonrenewable four-year term.

Two Young Alumni Trustees are nominated by the Committee on Trustee Affairs from graduates of the College between the ages of 23 and 28. They serve nonrenewable, staggered, four-year terms.

A 25th Reunion Trustee is nominated each year by the Committee on Trustee Affairs from the current 25th Reunion Class. The nonrenewable four-year term begins the year following Reunion.

Trustee Emeritus status is determined at the pleasure and discretion of the Board and is conferred no sooner than one year after a Trustee has left the Board. All the privileges except voting accompany Emeritus status, and it carries a life term.

Revised February 26, 2003
Revised July 11, 2003