

Managing the White Space in our Organizational Chart: Guiding Principles of Senior Administrators

Mount Vernon Nazarene University

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An Outline Philosophy of Senior Leadership

Mount Vernon Nazarene University is a private institution of higher education sponsored by the Church of the Nazarene. The Board of Trustees is MVNU's Corporate Board and is responsible for governing the university and electing its President. As chief executive officer, the President of the University is responsible for the administration of all operations necessary for carrying out the institution's stated mission and ensures that policies related to governing the institution are clearly articulated and implemented in harmony with both the Board of Trustees and the *Bylaws*.

The President, in consultation with the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees, appoints senior administrators and delegates to them the authority and responsibility necessary for leading their respective sector of the institution. Senior administrators report to the President and are subject to preemption at his discretion. They represent their administrative units to the President and serve faculty, staff, students, and other constituents on behalf of the President. Mid-level administrators and managers are assigned leadership and decision-making authority by their division's senior administrator. The senior administrator presents the employees' viewpoints to the President for policy development, long-range planning, and overall management.

The vice-presidents of the university fulfill the role of senior administrators and, in accordance with the job description outlined by the President, are responsible for the following:

- 1) leading the budget planning process of the assigned division;
- 2) creating policies and procedures that establish the framework for the division to function efficiently and effectively;
- 3) equipping and empowering divisional personnel for successful daily operation of the division and providing continuing professional development;
- 4) serving as a catalyst for the implementation of institutional objectives and accomplishment of institutional goals in the assigned area;
- 5) representing the division to the President and other internal and external constituents and networking on behalf of divisional personnel to advance their contributions toward fulfillment of the overall mission of the institution.

These senior administrators constitute the President's Administrative Cabinet. Senior staff reporting to the president may also serve on the Administrative Cabinet at his discretion. All members of the Administrative Cabinet will model and encourage a distinctive spiritual, intellectual, social, and physical Christian lifestyle within the Wesleyan evangelical tradition. The individuals in these positions are expected to be a resource for and lend support to campus experiences that personify the life of Christ in communication, learning, living, and serving.

Guiding Principles and Procedures

I. Senior administrators and the President

A. Leadership

1. Senior administrators are to embrace the President's leadership philosophy and vision for the university within their assigned area of responsibility.
2. Senior administrators are to work with the President as well as divisional and cross-divisional personnel to obtain training for the specifics of their assignment, information on institutional policies and procedures, and knowledge of working relationships with other departments and divisions.
3. Senior administrators work with the President in managing and incorporating institutional change.

B. Communication

1. Senior administrators are responsible for keeping the President personally informed of divisional plans and projects, challenges, and opportunities via e-mail, fax, voice mail, memo, and personal conference.
2. Senior administrators are to respond promptly and thoroughly to all inquiries from the President.

C. Empowerment

1. Senior administrators are empowered by the President to make decisions regarding his/her area of responsibility, within established parameters and subject to the President's review.
2. The President represents the collective perspectives and priorities of the institution to the Board of Trustees and in so doing often seeks input from senior administrators. Senior administrators are expected to solicit appropriate input from divisional personnel in order to provide counsel to the President.

D. Accountability / assessment

1. The President conducts an annual evaluation session with each senior administrator, including a performance review, goal setting, and action plan development for the individual and the division. Senior administrators may also work with the President to incorporate divisional input into the annual performance review.
2. The senior administrator may review his/her job description with the President annually for guidance, reflection, and possible revision.
3. Senior administrators are encouraged to seek opportunities for personal and professional development within the university and from other organizations/ agencies as well as pursuing advanced degrees in accordance with institutional guidelines.

II. Senior administrators and the Administrative Cabinet

A. Leadership

1. The President seeks the counsel of the Administrative Cabinet as a senior leadership team.
2. Senior administrators are expected to make Cabinet meeting attendance and punctuality a priority and to maintain the confidentiality of Cabinet discussions.
3. Items of business that deal with broad campus planning, policy, or coordination are brought to the Cabinet agenda by the President, or by a member of the Cabinet and approved by the President.
4. Cabinet meetings are chaired by the President or his or her designee and scheduled at regular intervals based on an annual calendar established at the end of the prior year. Planning meetings are also held prior to the fall semester, in preparation for Board of Trustees meetings, during the spring semester, and in early summer.
5. The Cabinet agenda for regular meetings is divided into three parts:
 - a. *Items for Information* refer to divisional activity, published articles, or other information that may be of interest to other Cabinet members.

- b. *Items for Discussion* refer to policy or operational issues related to the campus as a whole, identified in the form of a question in order to solicit feedback from all sectors of the institution.
 - c. *Items for Decision* are identified in the form of a statement, offering recommendation for specific course of action.
 - d. A fourth section, *Items for Presentation*, may be added when reports or major initiatives are brought for the Cabinet's attention or consideration.
- The Cabinet agenda for planning meetings focuses on Board-related and/or long-range items.
- 6. The President or the Cabinet may refer issues to *ad hoc* committees or divisional teams for review and recommendation prior to making a final decision.
 - 7. Operational plans and procedures within a Cabinet member's area of responsibility that do not impact other administrative divisions or conflict with institution-wide policies need not be brought to the Cabinet, but can be implemented by that administrator (avoid "delegation upward").
 - 8. The Cabinet reviews the annual academic calendar (recommended by Academic Affairs) and the campus-wide meetings and events calendar (recommended by the Campus Calendar Committee).
 - 9. As part of the senior leadership for the institution, Cabinet members are expected to model flexibility and compromise while maintaining integrity and consistency.

B. Communication

- 1. Consultation with the President, personally or through email, should occur prior to items being placed on the Cabinet agenda.
- 2. All agenda items for discussion must have two sponsors. Cabinet members wishing to propose an agenda item are to consult with the senior administrator(s) whose divisions are primarily involved; if the item is a policy matter from one division, the senior administrator can confer with any other Cabinet member to gain perspective and to ensure that the item has a campus-wide scope.
- 3. Recommendations brought as items of decision are to be jointly drafted and co-sponsored by the senior administrators with responsibilities related to the issue or may include the work of a campus committee involved in the matter.
- 4. Prior to a plan/procedure/policy being brought to the Cabinet by the responsible senior administrator, Cabinet members will request input from the individuals/groups directly involved with implementation and may invite those personnel to the Cabinet meeting to present the issue and serve as a resource during discussion.
- 5. Issues that cross divisional lines may be dealt with outside the Cabinet meeting among the senior administrators and personnel involved if the situation allows.
- 6. Regarding issues that do not cross administrative lines but have budget impact on another division, the senior administrator will consult his/her colleague in the potentially affected area prior to bringing the issue to the Cabinet. New divisional programs or initiatives that have personnel, salary, or budget implications for the institution require consultation with the Vice-President for Finance and Management prior to being brought before the Cabinet.
- 7. Senior administrators are expected to share information regularly with other Cabinet members regarding divisional issues.

C. Empowerment

- 1. Senior administrators represent their division's perspectives and priorities at the Cabinet level and as such, the vice-president is to seek and express broad input on campus-wide policy issues at the discussion and decision stages.
- 2. The President will assign action items resulting from Cabinet decisions to the appropriate senior administrator who is subsequently responsible for implementation of the item.

3. Senior administrators operate within an understanding of the empowerment of other administrators and campus employees to fulfill their assigned duties; therefore, each administrator is subject to and impacted by the policies and procedures in another's area. Any need to address policies and procedures assigned to another area may be done informally on a one-one-one basis with the senior administrator involved or formally with the President.

D. Accountability / assessment

1. The President may review the effectiveness of the Cabinet as a leadership team on an annual basis, collectively as part of a planning meeting and individually at the senior administrator's performance review.
2. Senior administrators are encouraged to submit suggestions to the President for improving the operation of the Cabinet as a leadership team.

III. Senior administrators and divisional personnel

A. Leadership

1. Senior administrators are to be friendly, warm, concerned about details, and attentive to the needs of other Cabinet members, of divisional colleagues, and other faculty and staff campus-wide.
2. Senior administrators are to approach every responsibility from a Christian perspective.
3. Senior administrators are to strive to assemble a network of specialists operating within a teamwork approach to form a highly creative and innovative administrative division. Senior administrators are to be mindful of developing leaders who see the "big picture" and have the potential to improve effectiveness campus-wide.
4. Senior administrators are to model the high expectations they have for those with whom they serve.
5. Senior administrators must oversee diligently the divisional budget and model fiscal prudence.
6. Senior administrators must reflect through their priorities, conversations, and actions, an intense commitment to divisional vision, energy, passion, and synergy.

B. Communication

1. Senior administrators are to meet regularly (preferably weekly but at a minimum bi-weekly) with their divisional leaders, staff or faculty, in an effort to provide the information, resources, and support needed.
2. Senior administrators are to develop communication channels within their divisions that will enable personnel to receive input/information and provide feedback.
3. Senior administrators are responsible for implementing and communicating decisions made by the President or through the Cabinet to members of their division. Within seven days of a Cabinet decision, each Cabinet member shares the decision and its impact on the division with middle administrators and managers. Communication systems are expected to be in place to inform other divisional staff. Senior administrators are to ensure that divisional personnel implement and support the decision.
4. Decisions made by the President or through the Cabinet that affect the entire campus may be communicated to faculty/staff through university publications.
5. Senior administrators are to write notes of encouragement weekly to co-workers.

C. Empowerment

1. As a follow-up to the university's orientation for new employees, senior administrators are to provide middle administrators and managers with training on divisional procedures and working relationships with other divisions.
2. Senior administrators will strive to empower those closest to the implementation level to make the decisions necessary to ensure efficiency and effectiveness within their area.

3. Senior administrators will strive to resolve conflicts both personally and corporately by believing in and bringing out the best in people.
4. In developing leadership within the division, senior administrators are expected to model the perspective that challenges are “opportunities” rather than “crises.”

D. Accountability / assessment

1. In setting divisional goals and objectives, senior administrators are encouraged to integrate a historical perspective with future possibilities.
2. Senior administrators are responsible for creating an annual plan for the division, identifying divisional gauges, success factors, and specific targets that can be measured, evaluated, and attained, as well as providing updates on progress as requested by the President.
3. Senior administrators are responsible for all personnel and committees within the division. Complete job descriptions are to be provided by the senior administrator for each middle administrator and manager who in turn will work with the senior administrator to develop job descriptions, procedures manuals, and annual plans for all other personnel.
4. Cross-divisional committees and task forces may be assigned to a specific senior administrator for reporting purposes, subject to review by the President.
5. Senior administrators conduct annual performance reviews for those who report directly to them, and oversee the review process for all other divisional faculty and staff.
6. In the event a negative performance review or personal conduct incident detrimental to the university by a divisional employee necessitates action of any kind, the senior administrator is to work with Human Resources and the President to ensure proper processing of the situation.

IV. Senior administrators and university colleagues and constituents

A. Leadership

1. Senior administrators are to relate to students, parents, pastors, other faculty and staff, etc., in a positive spirit of service.
2. Senior administrators are expected to follow-up immediately, clearly, and substantively on requests for and referrals to information from inside or outside the division.
3. Senior administrators are encouraged to explore ways in which the division or sectors within the division can collaborate with other divisions or sectors on related projects and ongoing processes.
4. Cabinet members are assigned by the President to serve as a resource to Board standing committees. As such the Cabinet member works with the committee chair to prepare the agenda, lend clerical and administrative support, and provide information needed. Any items or recommendations for these board committees prepared by senior administrators must receive prior approval of the President.

B. Communication

1. When plans and procedures within a senior administrator’s area impact the duties and workload of individuals in other divisions, the respective senior administrator and other involved personnel are to be consulted.
2. Senior administrators are encouraged to share timely information concerning the work of their division through appropriate channels, i.e. *Bits & Pieces*, *MVNU Now*, campus-wide email distribution, etc.
3. Any objections related to policies or decisions made through the Cabinet should be discussed informally with the responsible senior administrator. If an employee still has a concern, he/she may place it in writing to the President.
4. Senior administrators are encouraged to increase their sphere of influence by developing relationships campus-wide.

C. Empowerment

1. Senior administrators may include in regular or special meetings of the division any middle administrators and managers having a related assignment in another division, with the approval of the President and appropriate senior administrator. Copies of the minutes of these meetings should be sent to the other senior administrators as a courtesy.
2. In light of the university vision statement, senior administrators are urged to create student leadership opportunities within their division when possible.

D. Accountability / assessment

1. Senior administrators are encouraged to create various avenues for soliciting feedback and to respond to suggestions from students, employees, pastors/ churches, and constituents with openness, grace, and responsiveness.
2. Senior administrators may work with the President to incorporate cross-divisional and/or constituent input into an annual performance review.

V. Senior Administrators and Crisis Response

A. The administrative Cabinet's role during a crisis.

1. The Cabinet will convene and conference as necessary to address issues not falling under the jurisdiction of the Crisis Response Team, and/or to assist the Crisis Response team as requested. In the President's absence, the Cabinet will be convened and chaired as necessary according to the following order of succession:
 - ☐ Executive Assistant to the President for Planning, Institutional Research & Compliance
 - ☐ Vice President for Academic Affairs and Academic Dean
 - ☐ Vice President for Finance and Management
 - ☐ Chaplain/Vice President for Campus Ministries
 - ☐ Vice President for University Advancement
 - ☐ Vice President for Adult and Graduate Studies
 - ☐ Vice President for Enrollment and Student Services
2. The Vice President for University Advancement (or his/her designee) will work closely with the President or administrator in charge throughout the crisis concerning internal and external communications.

The document, a work in progress, was reviewed, discussed, and revised annually by the senior administrator team during the summer planning retreat.