EXCERPTED FROM THE 2010 KSC SELF-STUDY

Standard Three: Organization and Governance

Description

Keene State College operates on the principle of shared governance. Faculty, staff, and students are involved in decision making at all levels through their membership on committees, and the principal administrators (the provost and vice presidents) are responsive to their proposed initiatives, supporting these ideas with necessary resources. Principal administrators also keep communication lines open with the entire campus community. The president, for example, during the recent economic downturn, held a series of open forums about the budget and invited the community to submit ideas for conserving resources; the president received 142 responses. Information and ideas flow in both directions, and the channels through which they travel are clearly delineated, as are the processes for decision making. Inviting input and making everyone part of the decision-making process demonstrates that all members of this community are valued.

As a post secondary institution, the College’s shared governance model exists within the larger context of the University System of New Hampshire (USNH), established by the state in 1963. To ensure that USNH would operate as a—well coordinated system of public higher education, “the four member institutions—Keene State College, Plymouth State University (PSU), the University of New Hampshire (UNH), and Granite State College (GSC)—were organized under the leadership of a single Board of Trustees (RSA 187).

- The Board of Trustees is responsible for the management and control of all property and affairs of USNH and its institutions. The Board consists of 27 members specified by state law:
  - Eight ex officio members (the governor; the chancellor of the USNH; the presidents of Keene State College, PSU, UNH, and GSC; the commissioners of education and agriculture)
  - Eleven members appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the Executive Council
  - Six alumni members elected by each residential institution’s alumni association (four from UNH, one each from Keene State and PSU)
  - Two students elected annually on a rotating basis by the student bodies of two of the three residential campuses: Keene State, PSU or UNH

Except for the student trustees who serve for one year, appointed or elected trustees serve four-year terms. Faculty observers/representatives from all four institutions are elected and charged with providing information to the Board and for reporting back to colleagues at their institutions.

The Board meets at least four times a year, holding one meeting per year at each campus. During the year, the Board accomplishes much of its work through standing committees: the Executive Committee, the Audit Committee, the Finance and Capital Projects Committee, the Investments Committee, the Governance Committee, and the Programs and Services Committee. Descriptions, membership, and meeting schedules for committees are available to the Keene State community online. Also, the Programs and Services Committee meets periodically to review the mission statements for each institution within USNH. When changes to an institution’s mission statement are proposed, the Programs and Services Committee reviews them in light of the provisions of the USNH charter (RSA 187-A), the missions of the other USNH institutions, the unique history and character of the institution in question, and the needs of the state of New Hampshire and its citizens. If the Programs and Services Committee approves the proposed changes, its recommendation goes to the full Board of Trustees for final approval. The Keene State mission and values statement was most recently reviewed, updated, and approved by the Board of Trustees in February 2008.

Prior to June 2009, the Board of Trustees Chair and Executive Committee were responsible for monitoring the Board’s performance and providing opportunities for further development, often through retreats to which external specialists or facilitators were invited. The group considered such topics as Board member selection,
orientation, and development, as well the Board structure, processes, and bylaws. In June 2009, the Board chair announced the creation of a Governance Committee responsible for assessing the Board’s performance. The Governance Committee is currently reviewing the informal mechanisms used for assessment and considering various options for more formal processes to monitor the Board. The committee made a recommendation to the full Board in spring 2010 and discussions are on-going.

The chancellor, as the chief executive officer of USNH, chairs the Administrative Board, which consists of the presidents of Keene State, PSU, UNH, and GSC. The Administrative Board is responsible for recommending and implementing policies and procedures and is advised by the following standing councils: Financial Policy and Planning Council; Human Resources Policy Advisory Committee; Information Technology Policy Council; Research, Planning, and Advisory Council; and System Academic Planning and Policy Council.

The presidents of the four institutions are given authority to adopt—institutional policies for their respective campuses; however, they receive substantial guidance from USNH policies. These are available to members of the Keene State community in the USNH Online Policy Manual and in the USHN Financial and Administrative Procedures Manual. In addition to being represented by the president on the Administrative Board, the College is represented by key administrators on all of the standing councils.

Board of Trustees’ policy authorizes the Executive Committee to appoint, evaluate, and set compensation for principal administrators at Keene State College. Sections 1, 2, and 3 of that policy establish the compensation guidelines, section 4 sets the decision-making procedures, section 5 speaks to the hiring and setting of conditions of appointment, and section 6 covers the termination and retirement of principal administrators.

The president of Keene State College is the chief executive officer of the College and has authority and responsibility for the general administration and supervision of all aspects of the College. The President’s Cabinet includes the provost, all the vice-presidents, the chief officer for Diversity and Multiculturalism, and the senior executive assistant and legislative liaison to the president; this body represents the administrative structure through which the president manages the institution and leads the institution to fulfill its mission. The President’s Cabinet makes recommendations to the President for decision making. The Executive Division consists of the president; two senior executive assistants to the president, one of whom also serves as the legislative liaison to the state; the chief officer for Diversity and Multiculturalism; and the director of Human Resources.

Three recent changes at this level of administration signal a commitment to the College’s values and a particular vision for the College’s future. First, in 2005 the president obtained approval from the Board of Trustees to seek a provost and vice president for Academic Affairs, signaling a designated leader in the absence of the president. Second, in 2007 the president created the Advancement Division by bringing together Advancement Services, Development, Marketing and Communications, and Alumni and Parent Relations. The new division was charged with coordinating the College’s relations with external constituencies, increasing campus outreach, cultivating relationships with past and current members of the community, and forming and renewing relationships with potential College partners. Third, in a 2008 decision to address the need for campus leadership in increasing diversity, the president added a chief officer for Diversity and Multiculturalism to the Executive Division. These three new positions, the provost and vice-president for Academic Affairs, the vice-president for Advancement, and the multiculturalism officer, join the two vice-presidents (Finance and Planning and Student Affairs) in serving on the Cabinet.

The Academic Affairs Division is responsible for all academic aspects of Keene State. In the past, this division was led by a vice president; however, in 2006, at the request of the president, the Board of Trustees appointed a provost/vice president as the chief academic officer in order to advance the College’s mission of academic excellence and to designate a leader among the principal administrators. The provost/vice president is supported by an associate provost; an assistant vice president for Academic Affairs; the deans of each of the schools of Arts and Humanities, Sciences and Social Sciences, and Professional and Graduate Studies; and the dean of the
Mason Library. Each academic department is represented by a chair or coordinator who reports to a dean. In addition, over the past three years, each school and the library added assistant dean positions so that the deans could focus more on outreach. Specific responsibilities of assistant deans are determined by the needs within each school and the library. As can be viewed on the organizational chart, academic support offices and programs are in the Academic Affairs Division.

Under the leadership of a vice president, the Student Affairs Division works to create a healthy and supportive environment for student success. The vice president is supported by an associate vice president/dean of students and an assistant vice president. Furthermore, as is reflected in the organizational chart, student support services are a part of the division of Student Affairs.

The Finance and Planning Division, led by a vice president, aims to provide leadership for planning, implementing, managing, and sustaining the College’s resources. Supporting the vice president are an associate vice-president of Finance, the director of Institutional Research, the director of the Physical Plant, and the chief information officer.

As stated earlier, shared governance at Keene State College is an integral part of the institution. The College has a variety of committees that focus on particular aspects of its life or mission. While membership varies, there is broad representation of campus constituencies on all committees; in addition, faculty, staff, and students are represented on almost all college-wide committees. For example, the College Senate is the policy-making and legislative body for all academic matters. Although the membership consists predominantly of tenure-track faculty members, there are also members representing adjunct faculty members, the President’s Cabinet, professional/administrative/technical staff (PAT), operating staff (OS), and students. Three standing committees—Curriculum, Academic Standards, and Academic Overview—are responsible for curriculum changes, academic policy proposals, and academic program review, respectively. A fourth committee, the Executive Committee, creates the agenda, which is distributed in advance of each Senate meeting; agendas and minutes are posted on the College's website. At general faculty meetings, held two or three times a semester, faculty members are informed about and discuss academic issues, including those being considered by the Senate.

In addition to the Senate, individual constituencies have their own organizations. The operating and PAT staffs are represented by staff councils that serve in an informational and advisory capacity to the president, the President’s Cabinet, and USNH on concerns regarding the rights and responsibilities, personnel policies, and the welfare of their constituencies. The director of Human Resources is an ex-officio member of each council. Council leaders meet with the president regularly. Members of the councils serve on various campus-wide committees, as well as on search committees for key campus personnel. OS and PAT representatives are voting members of the USNH System Personnel Policy Committee, where policy is reviewed and created. While adjunct (non-benefitted) employees do not have a council, the OS and PAT Councils attempt to take their needs into consideration.

The full-time tenure-track faculty members at Keene State College are organized as a union. This bargaining unit is represented by the Keene State College Education Association (KSCEA), an affiliate of NEA New Hampshire, and by the National Education Association. KSCEA and the administration bargain over the terms and conditions of employment using a collective bargaining approach. The collective bargaining agreements are historically three years in duration and are between the USNH Board of Trustees and the KSCEA. Talks are led by the provost and a USNH hired professional negotiator who represent the interests of the Board of Trustees; the KSCEA is represented by volunteers from the bargaining unit and a professional organizer from NEA New Hampshire. The trustees are chiefly concerned with controlling salaries and benefits. Faculty members, while concerned with salary and benefits, historically have also been concerned with workload issues and the promotion and tenure process. The collective bargaining agreement calls for union creation of four standing committees that make recommendations to the provost: the Faculty Evaluation Advisory Committee (promotion and tenure), the Sabbatical Leave Committee, the Faculty Development Committee (grants for scholarship and
professional development), and the Assessment Steering Committee (oversight for assessment work). Adjuncts at Keene State College are represented by the Adjunct Association (KSCAA). The goal of its elected executive board, is to improve the compensation and working conditions of adjunct faculty. KSCAA was officially recognized as the collective bargaining unit for adjunct faculty in 2000 and engaged in negotiations for the first time for the contact signed in 2002. KSCAA and the administration bargain over the terms and conditions of employment.

Student Government is the governing body for policies affecting students. Student Government oversees the constitutions and financial needs of all activity fee-supported student organizations, provides student representation on the College Senate, and is responsible for informing students about issues and policies affecting them, as well as for making recommendations to the administration. Student government consists of the student body representatives (president, vice president, and the student trustee from Keene State College who serves on a rotating basis), a legislative Student Assembly (five representatives from each class, five non-traditional students, and student body representatives as non-voting ex-officio members), class officers, and the student government executive board (student body representatives, officers of the Student Assembly, and class presidents).

Appraisal

Overall, Keene State College has an intentionally designed, participatory, and effective organizational and shared-governance structure that facilitates the accomplishments of its mission. The College’s commitment to academic excellence is demonstrated by its turning the position of vice president for Academic Affairs into a provost/vice president position, thereby emphasizing the central role of academics and bringing strong leadership to the Academic Affairs Division. In addition, the new assistant deans relieve the deans of some administrative duties so that they can spend more time working with the provost to advance academic excellence. The two additions to the Executive Division, the chief officer for Diversity and Multiculturalism and the vice president of Advancement, as well as the creation of the Advancement Division itself, unify the College’s efforts to strengthen relations with external constituencies and to increase diversity on campus.

In terms of the College’s commitment to shared governance and valuing—all members of our community, the College has continued its commitment to an inclusive system of planning, which results in transparency in the governance process and aids the campus in arriving at informed decisions. Faculty members continue to have a substantive voice in the formation and implementation of curriculum and in faculty personnel decisions. The formation of the KSCAA adds the adjunct faculty voice to the College’s shared governance model.

While the College’s organizational structure works well, communication among governance groups is not centralized or formalized. In addition, while the shared governance model often involves many layers to ensure that all groups are represented, there is some sense that these processes can take too long when a pressing issue needs immediate action. For example, the multiple layers of input needed to create and change the general education program, as well as the respect accorded to any voices of opposition, held back this process for years. However, because the shared governance process is so valued, constituencies choose the long process over principal administrators’ exercising their authority to take immediate action.

The administration of Keene State College and the University System of New Hampshire has been committed to ensuring parity between the faculty and staff compensation packages. In December of 2009, the System Personnel Policy Committee was presented with a document that outlined changes to a number of staff benefits. Prior to December these benefits were on a list of potential outmoded benefits to be discussed along with newer programs that would be attractive to current employees. The initial intent of these discussions was that they would be cost neutral with savings reinvested in new programs. In December the changes were presented as cost saving measures. At the same time, the USNH Board of Trustees hired an outside consultant to review the
overall staff benefit and compensation package in comparison to similar higher education institutions, as well as to New Hampshire businesses. The College received the Mercer Report on their findings in 2010 and discussions are on-going.

In a full-time tenure-track faculty survey, more than half of the faculty who answered the survey favored a change in the Senate that would increase the faculty representation in this group, especially among senior faculty. However, currently many committee positions, including Senate positions, union officers, and promotion and tenure committee positions go vacant or are filled unopposed. This may be due to the increasing service load for the limited number of full-time tenure-track faculty or to the fact that some faculty view the Senate as ineffective.

**Projection**

**Clarify Committee Structure:** Service is a crucial part of Keene State’s identity, but this service must be purposeful and valued. By 2012, the President’s Cabinet will review the current committee structure to determine if all committees are essential and if there is any redundancy among them.

**Review the Structure of the Senate:** The Senate is the academic decision-making body on campus. Faculty have stated that they want more representation on this body, yet current positions go unfilled. By spring 2012, the provost will lead the faculty and the campus community in a discussion of the structure and effectiveness of this body.
Standard Three: Organization and Governance

**Strengths**

- KSC has enjoyed strong and stable leadership over the past five years. The President’s Cabinet models teamwork and facilitates shared governance that is reflective of the values of the institution.
- There is also great stability and strength within the faculty and staff – a caring culture.
- **KSC promotes and enjoys broad participation from all constituents within the shared governance system. This model of shared governance is in keeping with the mission and the values of the institution.**
- Consistent collaboration and communication between governance groups (the two staff councils with faculty unions) has promoted more equitable treatment of all employees.
- KSC has earned the respect of the USNH Board of Trustees because of use of mission as rational for initiatives, understanding and support of the community in which the College is located, and effect management of resources.

**Concerns/ Consideration**

- A complex and multi-layer governance system which demands a high level of participation has evolved at KSC – there are times when such a system can impede communication – multiple bodies addressing the same issue, delay response time. Participation in this system allows great, campus wide involvement – but does have an impact on workload for faculty and staff alike.
- As the institution continues to evolve – building an infrastructure to support the dynamic change is important - creating and updating position descriptions that more clearly identify current or emerging roles and responsibilities would be of help.
KSC is a member of the University System of New Hampshire (USNH) and is overseen by the Board of Trustees (the Board) of the University System. The Board is responsible for the management and control of all property and affairs of USNH and its member institutions. The By-laws and policies of the Board clearly describe the authority, responsibilities, and relationships it has with administration, faculty, and staff of the College. Communication between the Board and the College is regular, involves all constituent groups, and is of high quality. This communication is amplified by the ex officio membership of the President, an alumnus, and a student on the Board. The Board also includes 11 members appointed by the governor who represent the public interest. The Board Chair has announced the creation of a Governance Committee responsible for assessing the Board’s performance.

The mission and values statement of KSC was reviewed, updated, and approved by the Board in 2008. In addition, the Board approved —A Strategic Plan for Keene State College 2009-2013. Members of the Board and the Chancellor of USNH demonstrate strong support for the mission of KSC as New Hampshire’s Public Liberal Arts College and have recognized the quality education experience provided by the College and the accomplishments of its students. The Board has responded to the distinct needs and strategic initiatives of KSC in areas of financial aid, capital funding, and increases in tenure track faculty.

The Administrative Board, consisting of the presidents of the USNH institutions, is chaired by the Chancellor of USNH and recommends policies and procedures to the Board. The President of KSC is granted authority to adopt policies for the College and receives substantial guidance from USNH policies.

The organization and structure of KSC facilitates fulfillment of its mission, reflects its stated values, and ensures appropriate participation by all constituents of the College. The President of KSC, appointed and evaluated by the Board, is the chief executive officer of the College and is granted, by the Board, authority and responsibility for the general administration and supervision of all aspects of the College. The President’s Cabinet includes the Provost, the Senior Executive Assistant and Legislative Liaison to the President, and the Vice Presidents for Advancement, Student Affairs, and Finance and Planning, as well as the Chief officer for Diversity and Multiculturalism. Members of the College clearly recognize the decision making authority of the Cabinet and the President.

The roles and duties of staff and faculty (including department chairs) are described within their respective handbooks. While faculty are assessed through collectively bargained procedures, assessment of staff appears somewhat uneven. This is a campus where staff are deeply engaged in their work and in campus governance, they welcome feedback on how they are doing, and how they can continue to improve. Both groups are enthusiastic supporters of the College and its students and work very hard to fulfill their respective roles within the College. Likewise, students enjoy multiple opportunities for participation in governance and are guided in their roles at the College by the Student Handbook. The College's system of governance involves the participation of administration, faculty, staff, and students and demands regular communication among these groups. The consultative process on which decision making at KSC rests is many layered and involves multiple councils, committees, and individuals. Some overlap appears to exist within the roles and/or actions of certain bodies (e.g. Planning Council and Budget Resource Council). The complex nature of this system can and, at times, has impeded communication and a nimble response to a complex issue. This system has also impacted workload for all constituents and may actually reduce the faculty’s participation in teaching, their primary role. The College has recognized these and other potential
challenges within its current governance structure. The Cabinet will review the current committee structure by 2012.

The Provost, the chief academic officer and a direct report to the President, co-chairs the Budget Resource Council and convenes the Academic Council. The Provost also sits on the Executive Committee of the College Senate, the governance body that reviews curriculum (through the Curriculum sub-committee), academic policy and standards (through the Academic Standards sub-committee), and oversees academic program review (through the Academic Overview subcommittee). Senate membership includes twenty-nine (29) voting members from the following six constituent groups: Principal Administrators (2), Tenure-track Faculty (19), Staff Councils (3), Adjunct Faculty (1), and Students (4). Recommendations of the College Senate are sent to the President through the Provost. This structure provides faculty with substantive voice in the college-wide process of assuring academic integrity in all academic programs. Faculty personnel issues, including promotion and tenure, are covered within the collectively bargained agreement. School and Library Deans serve on the Academic Council and play an evolving and significant role as academic leaders and managers. Their expertise and leadership might be more fully integrated into the overall governance system.

**Institutional Effectiveness**

KSC, through the Planning Council, periodically reviews its success in fulfilling its mission and achieving its purposes. Each principal administrator (the Provost and Vice Presidents) submits an annual report to the President summarizing accomplishments from the departments reporting to them. These reports are shared with the Planning Council and used to assess progress towards strategic goals and to inform the annual update to the strategic plan. Progress on assessment of effectiveness has been made in some administrative units through the use of performance indicators or national systems of quality improvement. Program reviews are encouraged for nonacademic departments.

The College has planned strategically and has rapidly progressed towards its goals. Constituents of the College, including the USNH Board of Trustees, understand and embrace its public liberal arts mission and public purpose. Evidence, provided through assessment and broadly disseminated, highlights and supports the effective focus on mission fulfillment and service to the public.