

Overview of Our Governance Model

Agenda

- Background
- A Map for Thinking About Our Congregation
- Definition of Terms
- Governing Documents Accessible on Website

Background

- At August 2015 Board Retreat-
 - The Board and Rev. Nina held a discussion on the “Governance and Ministry: Rethinking Board Leadership” book by Dan Hotchkiss.
 - All agreed to begin the work of governance change to clarify roles and responsibilities and define an organization that will sustain a growing congregation.
 - The first step was made to form the Governance Task Force (GTF).

Statement of Reasons to Transition to a Policy Based Governance Structure:

1. To place our mission and vision at the forefront of our work as a congregation. Allow the board to concentrate on its most important task: refining the broader vision and strategic assessment of our mission.
2. To liberate the energies of our members by putting ownership for the ministry in the hands of the staff and teams, giving them authority to carry out the mission.
3. To encourage our growth and better manage increasing complexity in the congregation, by improving professionalism, communication, and efficiency.

Background

- Aug 2015 – Jun 2016, GTF drafted UUFS Board Policy Book for board to approve one-year trial run
 - Responsibilities included drafting policies* for board affirmation (not adoption). Affirmation is a yellow light, permission to share partial proposal with wider group of leaders.
 - At each iteration, the GTF made changes in the policy drafts in response to widely held concerns and shared a revised draft with the Board.
 - Once enough policies were developed by the GTF and affirmed by the board to provide reasonable safety net, the GTF asked the board to approve a one year trial run of the new structure.
- Jun 2016 – Jun 2017, GTF monitored and revised policies as needed during one-year trial run
 - GTF submitted Final Report and Board adopted the UUFS Board Policy Book, as recommended.
 - GTF was replaced by Governance Committee, a standing committee.

*What is a Policy?

A policy is an authoritative written statement designed to control many individual decisions over time. Developing effective policies is the responsibility of the Board. Policies provide the framework for on-going decision making. Ministry Team management decisions are made within the context of the appropriate policies. Dan's book recommends policies covering discernment, strategy, management, and oversight. [Source: Glossary of Governance Terms, 2010 revision, First Unitarian Church of Omaha]

A Map for Thinking About Our Congregation

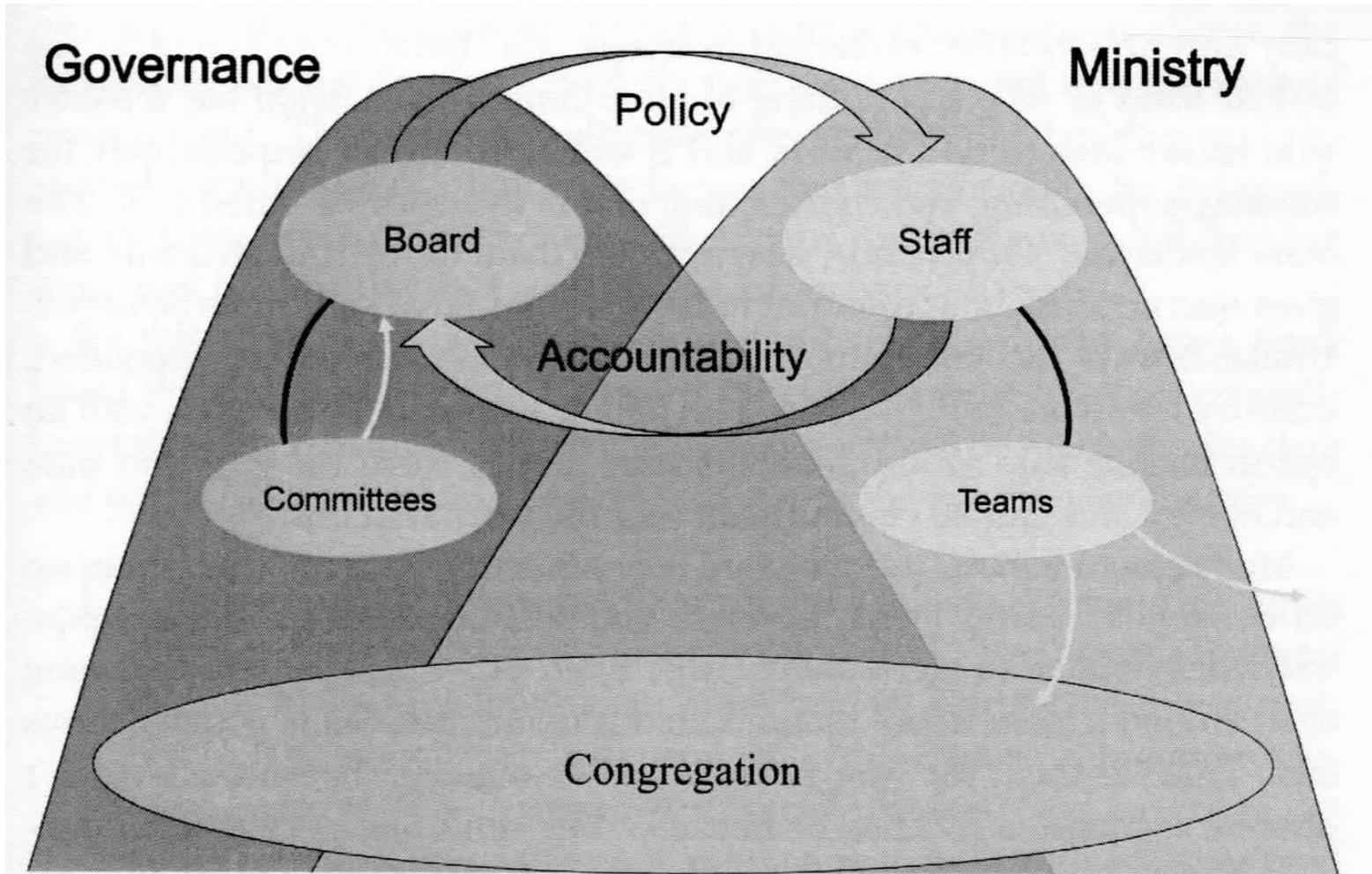


Figure 4.3. Committees and Teams.

Definition of Terms

- Governance

In Dan's book, the terms governance and ministry are used to differentiate between two spheres of leadership in congregations. *Governance* means “owning” the congregation, exercising ultimate control of its human and material resources and ensuring that it serves its mission. Governance is holding the whole institution and its work in trust, voicing its intentions, making its biggest decisions, and taking responsibility for its performance. Governance produces minutes, policies, mission statements, goals, and strategic-planning documents. Governance is the job of the Board.

- Ministry

In this book, governance and ministry are used to differentiate between two spheres of leadership in congregations. Ministry doesn't mean just giving sermons or making pastoral visits. Rather, ministry is used in the broader sense meaning all of the work that is done by the congregation to serve the church's mission and make it an important aspect in the lives of both the congregation and the community. When we use the word "ministry" we include the work that you, your fellow congregants, and all staff members do...not just the work that Rev. Nina does. Ministry means making daily choices about money, time, and space. Ministry brings into being worship services, study groups, mission trips, service projects, happy children, and renewed hope. Ministry is where the rubber meets the road and you are part of the “Ministry Team”.

Definition of Terms

- Board of Trustees

The Board is elected by the congregation to govern the church. The central tenet of the book is that strong Boards do not manage; they govern. The Board is responsible for understanding and articulating the church's mission, planning for the church's future, developing strategies and goals to achieve its vision, and evaluating the degree to which past efforts achieved the desired results. To focus on these key responsibilities, the book encourages the Board to delegate the day to day management of the church to the Ministry Team.

- Staff

Staff includes everyone who is part of the chain of practical activities that constitute a congregation's work. We do not distinguish between ordained and lay, paid and unpaid, or "program" and "administrative" staff. All of the staff members constitute the Ministry Team.

- Congregation

Our current congregation received the church from its predecessors and holds it in trust for future generations. Congregation members wear many hats and serve in all of the roles (both governance and ministry) described in the book. Congregation members make the church's most important decisions directly (e.g. calling a minister or electing the Board of Trustees). Although the votes of congregation members control the church, the book argues that the church is actually "owned" by its mission.

Definition of Terms

- Committee

The book thinks of a committee as a group to which a deliberative body has referred, or “committed,” a piece of business. A committee gathers information, drafts a policy, or prepares in some other way to report back to the body that appointed it. The book uses the term committee to describe groups that report to the Board. In practice, there is no hierarchy associated with work group terminology and the terms “committee” and “team” are simply ways to conveniently identify whether a given group does its work primarily for the Board or primarily for the Ministry Team.

- Team

Teams are action oriented and produce practical results. Some teams directly fulfill pieces of the congregation’s mission, producing the primary results the mission calls for. Worship teams, educational ministries; outreach, service, and social-action teams; hospitality and caring teams; and choirs—depending how the congregation sees its mission—fall into the primary-results category. Other teams produce supportive, secondary results: a clean building, a fund-drive mailing, a readable newsletter, an attractive garden. The book uses the term team to describe the groups that report to the Ministry Team leadership. In practice, there is no hierarchy associated with work group terminology and the terms “committee” and “team” are simply ways to conveniently identify whether a given group does its work primarily for the Board or primarily for the Ministry Team.

Governing Documents are Accessible on Website

- These documents are available at the Governance page on the UUFS Website:
 - UUFS Bylaws
 - UUFS Board Policy Book
 - UUFS Board of Trustees Charter Statements document
 - UUFS Ministry Team Roles & Responsibilities document