Bank Street
College of Education

Bank Street College Advisory Council Charter

Introduction

Governance at Bank Street is complex. As an academic institution, Bank Street has inherited a particular tradition of academic governance that, along with a strong allegiance to progressive ideals like democratic participation, has been influential in how we organize many of our existing structures and groups. These groups aim to build cohesion and provide opportunities to give voice to faculty and staff across the many divisions of the institution. Indeed, these structures are very much guided by the College's mission, which is to:

> " … improve the education of children and their teachers by applying to the education process all available knowledge about learning and growth, and by connecting teaching and learning meaningfully to the outside world. In doing so, we seek to strengthen not only individuals, but the community as well, including family, school, and the larger society in which adults and children, in all their diversity, interact and learn. We see in education the opportunity to build a better society."

Bank Street is also a legal entity with a Board of Trustees, which has fiduciary responsibility for the overall health and well-being of the organization, and a President, who has administrative oversight. However, as noted above, much of the daily decision-making and implementation within the College is entrusted to individuals and groups within its various divisions. Existing structures that offer opportunities for feedback and advisement include College-wide engagement processes, advisory groups, division-specific committees and groups, and the unions. Staff Council, which no longer exists, is one example of a College-wide body that has, at times in its history, given faculty and staff opportunities to engage with and provide advice to leadership and facilitated communication between divisions.

Analyses, like the Middle States Self-Study and the 2015 strategic planning process, highlighted the need for greater clarity around the function of each of these structures: *How do our existing governance and advisory structures strengthen communication pathways between divisions? How do they give voice to faculty and staff to play an important role in the planning and execution of new initiatives across the College? Where might we have redundancies and where might we have gaps?*

In 2015, the administration expressed a strong commitment to seeking input from the College community concerning these questions. Members of the College have since been encouraged to engage in cross-divisional dialogue and outreach to identify specific mechanisms by which staff and faculty may more effectively voice their ideas and concerns regarding policy matters, new initiatives, and institutional goals, and increase their agency within the College. It is in the spirit of this comprehensive and targeted consultation that the advisory group called the **College Advisory Council** was created.

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Mission

The role of the **College Advisory Council** (*the Council*) is to establish a representative body from across the College to advise the President and Cabinet; raise issues and make recommendations on mission-related College matters; improve communication between the President and the faculty and staff across divisions; and foster collaboration throughout the institution.

The Council will engage in issues including but not limited to:

- Providing feedback and input on strategic planning processes and the College's mission and supporting College-wide communication about related initiatives;
- Reviewing annual budget forecasts and ensuring an overview is shared with the College community;
- Raising issues of concern to the broader community and providing feedback, as well as formal recommendations, to the administration;
- Supporting the community's commitment to social justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion; and
- Engaging in the broader discussion of governance across the College and facilitating dialogue between various groups as needed (i.e., bringing issues relating to compensation and personnel to the attention of the appropriate union body and members of the administration).

In order to do this successfully, the Council will consult with the President and Cabinet at least annually and will meet with representative members of the Board of Trustees, including the Board Chair, as needed or requested.

Membership

The College Advisory Council will have a maximum total of fourteen (14) members based on the following composition:

Division	# of Representatives
Children's Programs	**3**
Graduate School of Education	**4**
Strategy and Operations	**3**
Bank Street Education Center	**2**
President's Office	**1**
Development and Alumni Relations Office	**1**

The President of the College and Chief of Staff will serve as ex-officio members of the Council. Staff Associate Trustees will be automatically included as representatives for their respective divisions (e.g., a Staff Associate Trustee from the Graduate School would be counted among the four representatives of that division). Additionally, Children's Programs will include one member from the Family Center as one of the three representatives.

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No member of Cabinet may seek election to the Council. The Council will choose two co-Chairs among its membership to serve as the Council's leadership for a two-year term. Staff Associate Trustees and Council Co-Chairs will comprise the executive leadership of the Council and meet regularly to foster a strong, supportive, and cohesive working relationship.

In the event of a vacancy, divisions are responsible for finding a suitable replacement and holding special elections within one month.

Term of Service

- Elected members can serve up to two (2) three-year terms (for a total of six (6) years) before they must cycle off. Once a Council member cycles off for three years, they have the option of seeking an election again.

Budget

- The Council will be given a budget to support their work on projects and initiatives that benefit the College as a whole. Additionally, the co-Chairs will receive stipends given the time and effort required to successfully execute their charge.

Meeting Process

- The Co-Chairs will send a monthly summary to the President following the Council's monthly meetings throughout the academic year. The President will be invited to attend the Council's monthly meetings on an as-needed basis.

- Prior to the start of the academic year, the Council's executive leadership team will consult with the Council's membership to set an annual agenda and goals based on issues that have been raised by their constituencies.

- Meetings will be convened for approximately 90 minutes monthly on Tuesdays at 3:45 PM - 5:00 PM. A meeting calendar will be established in advance of the academic year to ensure meaningful participation by Council members. Meeting dates will be made available to the community on the College's website.

- In lieu of selecting a secretary, the Council will rotate the task of documenting meetings each month, and coordinate with the Council member in charge of website updates (or the central Communications team) to ensure the summary of the minutes is posted on the website and kept up-to-date.

- The agenda will include a review and formal approval of minutes, the appropriate follow-up for issues raised, and tracking of old or ongoing business. As stated above, the summary of the discussions will be available on the website.

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- The agenda will include updates or issues as raised by the President, members of Cabinet, or the community.

- Meetings will also be an opportunity to share information and report on activities taking place within and throughout the various divisions. Additionally, meetings should provide opportunities to create feedback loops between the community and leadership.

Responsibility of Council Members

- Council members will be responsible for surfacing issues and reporting out at their respective divisional meetings with time granted on each divisional agenda for engagement.

- Council members will be responsible for delving deeply into their respective divisions, meeting with divisional leadership to learn about issues that impact their constituency, and being kept abreast of new initiatives at the divisional level.

- Council members will be responsible for providing a formal update or report from their respective divisions or team at each of the monthly meetings in order to ensure continuity of communication.

- Council members will help to proactively identify and resolve issues that impact the College community by organizing opportunities for deeper discussion and engagement with their constituents.

Eligibility for Election

- All full-time Bank Street faculty and staff members are eligible to be nominated or can self-nominate, to be considered for a position on the College Advisory Council.

Election Process

- Each division will be responsible for organizing their respective elections no later than May 31 of the current academic year (i.e., May 2023 for the 2023-24 academic year).