

EXCERPTS FROM PRATT'S PLANNING & ACREDITATION DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE ONLINE: WWW.PRATT.EDU/PRESIDENT

1. Report to the Pratt Community and the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, 1991
2. Middle States Report to Pratt, after campus visit Oct. 6-9, 1991
3. NASAD Report to Pratt, 1993
4. Periodic Review Report to the Commission on Higher Education May 1996
5. Pratt Institute Self Study, August 2002

01 REPORT TO THE PRATT COMMUNITY AND THE MIDDLE STATES ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS, 1991

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X. Governance

Pratt in the 1980s had a rather uncomplicated system of governance. Most senior administrators (Vice Presidents, Deans, Director of Human Resources, etc.) reported to the President. Indeed, it was one of the flatter pyramids in higher education. The Vice Presidents met in the Planning Council to determine long-range issues. The Deans met separately in a Deans' Council to consider academic policy, from agreeing to new programs and reviewing existing programs, to determining the acceptability of individual courses and questions of academic probation. In theory and largely in practice, until the serious fiscal problems arose, the Deans were delegated responsibility for running their Schools without frequent and detailed intervention by the President's office, where there was only an Assistant for Academic Affairs with responsibility for continuing education and other special programs. As fiscal conditions became more complex, a Chief Academic Officer was appointed and given more budgetary control. A Coordinating Council existed to bring together the Planning Council, the Deans' Council, and selected others to remain abreast of activities across the Institute. Faculty had a representative Faculty Council, and an agenda which was largely reactive, responding to issues as they arose. While each School had a governance system, most of which leaned towards the "administrative" in orientation, there was no place to convene chairpersons for discussion and policy judgment, other than in their respective Schools. As they were not legally part of the faculty, their views were not part of the Faculty Council. The students had an elective Student Government Association, which varied in effectiveness during the period. The faculty union conducted the bulk of "academic business" during the period through collective bargaining and individual grievances. Finally, the Board of Trustees, 25 members strong, had the ultimate policy responsibility for the Institute. Meeting four times a year as a Board, but more often as committees of the Board, the Trustees -- with faculty, student, and alumni members -- represented the setting where the Institute as a whole considered its collective future.

Governance for the 1990s promises to be different. It is both more and less hierarchical. The number of Vice Presidents has been reduced from seven to four. The Vice President for Finance and Administration has assumed the responsibility for Campus Management, Student Administrative Services, and Administrative Computing. The Provost has assumed responsibility for Planning and Academic Computing. The present Administration is also less tidy and hopes to engage the many constituencies of Pratt to take on a more active role, often bumping into other constituencies in the process. Veering towards a matrix organization, the present Pratt administration believes that "cleanness of delegation" may not provide enough support to achieve the desired ends. For that reason, the Vice Presidents now constitute an Administrative Management Committee, designed to share priorities and achieve coordination. The Deans' Council has become the chief policy-planning body, now eschewing individual course approvals and keeping focused on academic programs and policy. An External Relations Management Committee has been constituted to effect coordination with the various offices addressing the outside world. Temporarily, a Chairpersons' group has been convened to consider matters of policy until the Academic Senate is constituted in the Fall. The Academic Senate will be composed of representatives of faculty and Chairpersons and will be responsible for the academic policy-making normally associated with such bodies -- academic review, academic

policy, personnel review, etc. Straddling the whole Institute is a Budget Review Panel, which is privy to all allocative decisions and its members are asked for their judgment and receive an explanation of broad budgetary decisions.

The Student Government Association will continue, hopefully with more consultation from the Administration and hence more interest from the students. The Union will continue to play its role in collective bargaining and individual grievances, though issues of broad policy will become the province of the Academic Senate. Finally, the Trustees will be expanded in number, from 25 to nearly 35, with explicitly elected alumni representatives, and a greater representation outside of New York and within the professions where Pratt provides education. While the bulk of the Board's work will continue to be transacted within committees, the enlarged size of the Board will bring into play meetings of the "Officers" of the Board in the intervening months between Board meetings to set agendas and to determine mid-meeting policies.

III. Strategic Plan For Pratt Institute 1991-2000, Goals

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C. Governance

The Institute will be governed by structures and processes that balance academic and non-academic authority to achieve a shared, mutually respectful, and collegial system.

Action Steps:

1. In addition to such existing structures as the Deans' Council, we will develop an Academic Senate bringing Chairpersons and faculty together in a common forum for decisions on academic policy matters. (Academic Senate)

02 REPORT TO THE FACULTY, ADMINISTRATION, TRUSTEES AND STUDENTS OF PRATT INSTITUTE BY AN EVALUATION TEAM REPRESENTING THE COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION OF THE MIDDLE STATES ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS PREPARED AFTER STUDY OF THE INSTITUTION'S SELF-STUDY REPORT AND VISIT TO THE CAMPUS ON OCTOBER 6-9, 1991

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V. INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE

Presently, Pratt Institute is poised to initiate an entirely new governance structure. The team believes it is necessary to create governance mechanisms that preserve the primacy of the educational mission of Pratt and sustain the delivery of highly effective and demanding curricula.

Although members of the Pratt community have differing viewpoints regarding the best way to reach this goal, the team found overall agreement on the importance of the goal itself; the process therefore may be easier than some community members might imagine. Certain structures, already in place, will facilitate planning and organization. In some cases, these structures will require modification if Pratt is to develop an overall system of governance consonant with its mission and the expectations of the academic community at large.

Academic Senate

The new Academic Senate is a most promising development. The Senate can play a number of crucial roles in the further development of the Institute. Its membership -- which cuts across all the academic units of the institution and includes both full - and part-time faculty — can additionally serve as a communication channel in an institution, which acknowledges that it has suffered from inadequate communications in the past.

An equally important function is the senate's potential role in curriculum development, and in ensuring that the curriculum is delivered effectively and efficiently. As a body charged with curricular and program review, the Academic Senate is a safeguard against both curricular omissions and redundancies. It also serves as a forum for candid and professional discussions about a core curriculum and the appropriateness and location of additional offerings outside the core. The Academic Senate can also contribute most usefully to discussion and decisions about the ranking of academic priorities, consonant with the Institute's mission statement.

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Recommendations

- 14.0 Strengthen institutional governance structures;
- 14.1 Continue progress toward the creation of an Academic Senate;

03 NASAD REPORT TO PRATT, 1993

D. GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Governance

Since its founding in 1887, members of the Pratt family served as Chairs of the Institute's Board of Trustees until 1972 (85 of its 106 years). Similarly, members of the Pratt family served as Presidents of the Institute until 1990, except for the 19 years between 1954 and 1973. This family legacy provided critical funding and ensured the continuance of the School's founding values. However, many at the Institute also feel this may have insulated the college for too long. Trying times in higher education require moving to a new level of governance. The Board is now undergoing a rapid evolution as it tries to cope quickly with the financial realities of the college. It is trying to build up its fundraising capacity, governance skills, and community outreach in an effort to stabilize and then rebuild Pratt's finances. This is a well-intentioned Board. The trustees we met with were aware of the issues facing Pratt, and seemed genuinely committed to the college and to making the changes necessary to turn things around. We hope they do this quickly.

Given all that must be accomplished financially and the need to increase fundraising, the Board may not be large enough. The Self-Study stated it would increase from 25 to 35 members - it stood at 29 when we visited. We think the trustees should proceed quickly and might consider increasing to 40 (there is much evidence linking fundraising results to board size,). There seem to be a rather large number of Board committees and we wonder if some consolidation would help. Also, we got the impression that Board committees do not meet that often. Again, with all there is to do, we would have expected at least the Finance, Development, and Academic Committees to be meeting quite frequently. (There is a financial task force that meets regularly, but we are not sure of its relationship to the Board.) The upper level administration has been restructured in recent years - partly to reduce costs (55 staff layoffs in the past 18 months), and partly to enhance communications and decisionmaking. The President has made great efforts to open up his office and to encourage broad involvement and shared decisionmaking. He has wisely started new committees to involve more people from throughout the campus in decision-making. He has created an Academic Senate to make key academic decisions - a good move we think, in that much of the academic decision-making was dominated - sometimes inappropriately - by the union. The President has been frank with the campus community about the issues they face. The recent memos regarding Pratt's finances were detailed and forthright. They were an attempt on the part of the senior administration to impress upon people the realities of the present situation. They were a wake-up call to those who are complacent or who do not think the situation is grave.

The Board and senior staff seem amply persuaded of the need for financial, administrative, and academic change. About half the faculty and general staff seem to understand this reality, too. Unfortunately, many others are in denial mode, and their willingness to accept change and sacrifice is much less certain - particularly the faculty union. (We have no quibble with unions - they exist at most of our campuses. Rather, we are concerned when unions appear to place short-term protectionism ahead of the long-term health of the institution). Candid communications and participatory planning will be necessary to bring change.

04 PERIODIC REVIEW REPORT TO THE COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION MAY 1996

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INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE

Traditions of ‘top down’ management were still in place when the Visiting Team came to the campus in 1991. Since that time, the growth of an Academic Senate, changes in executive leadership, both in terms of individuals and philosophy, and a growing sense of the decision-making and planning roles of the deans and chairs have all combined to form a new pattern for institutional governance at Pratt. These changes have paved the way for improved communication and sense of participatory management previously not in evidence.

Academic Senate

The development of an active Academic Senate has been a major accomplishment since the last Visiting Team was on campus. Composed of members representing full-time and part-time faculty and chairpersons, this body provides continuing strong advisory and review functions for the President and other senior administrators.

Among the activities currently in the province of the Academic Senate are the selection and nomination of the Institute Professor, Distinguished Teacher, providing a review of curricular change, and reviewing and advising the president on all major changes facing the Institute. In all of these areas the Senate has demonstrated a commitment to the success and well-being of the Institute.

The growth of this body from the old faculty council as an ad hoc group with no clear mandate, to the present active and chartered Academic Senate is a major step forward in shared governance at Pratt.

05 PRATT INSTITUTE SELF-STUDY LEADING TO PEER REVIEW UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE MIDDLE STATES ASSOCIATION / COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS OF ART AND DESIGN, 2002

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Ten years ago, the visiting team saw a campus governed by the president with little involvement by the faculty or staff. The board was not well informed about the issues on campus, and the academic senate and staff were relatively powerless to make changes. Today, the board receives written reports from the president covering all developments on campus; the board committees are actively involved in policymaking; and the board participates in strategic planning and is updated each year on progress toward achievement of goals.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The president, senior staff and the Academic Senate president attend board meetings, as well as one Pratt appointed faculty trustee, and two students. All are voting members except the senior staff who are invited to attend. Faculty and student representatives serve on all Board committees.

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ACADEMIC SENATE

The Academic Senate is a faculty administration governance body that directly interacts with the president and provost. It is the sole official faculty representative body for academic matters at the Institute, and addresses itself to a broad range of issues including current and proposed curriculum and academic policies, services and procedures. The president of the Senate is invited to attend meetings of the Board of Trustees and attends senior staff meetings. This has helped unite the faculty and administration in the fulfillment of common goals. It has also created a more open atmosphere and sense of trust.

The Senate played a critical role in the creation of the new faculty handbook and has increasingly taken responsibility for the interviewing of prospective deans, vice-presidents and provosts. Facilitated by its Nominations and Elections Committee, the Senate recommends faculty representation to the standing committees of the Board and the Institute. The Senate reviews and approves all academic offerings at the Institute in conjunction with the Office of the Provost. With the support of the Provost, the Senate has created an Academic Initiatives Committee, which has introduced a series of Institutional Dialogues designed to encourage dynamic discourse and enhance the intellectual life of the Institute. The Senate has begun to publish a newsletter, and plans to publish a web page, increasing its ability to provide informed representation.

The Senate has a minimal budget, no staff, and no office space. It has requested but been denied additional resources for its operations.

Faculty Responsibilities

Teaching and advising students are primary responsibilities of faculty members. The number of credits taught by faculty is outlined in the collective bargaining agreement and varies from school to school. In response to the rapidly changing fields in many of the disciplines, faculty members review and develop curricula. Through various committees in each school and through campus wide-committees, Academic Senate, and representation on the Board of Trustees, the faculty has a considerable role in governance of the Institute. Curriculum vitae for the full-time faculty and a selection of the part-time faculty, available in the Team's workroom will prove that Pratt's faculty are active in their fields and contribute substantially to their respective fields.

Curricular changes most often emanate from faculty and departments in response to changing needs in specific fields. Typically an individual faculty member, or a curriculum committee will produce and review syllabi and whole programs. Pratt has a standardized set of procedures and forms that ensure final curricular review by the Academic Senate and the Deans Council.