INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF GOVERNANCE POLICY MANUAL

Board leadership requires, above all, that the Board provide vision. To do so, the Board must first have an adequate vision of its own job. The Policy Governance approach provides a powerful framework for structuring this task. Following this approach, the Board can free itself from unnecessary, time-consuming involvements and focus on the real business of governance: creating, sustaining, and fulfilling a vision.

The Policy governance model, in brief, reduces or eliminates meaningless Board and committee work, trivia, Board interference in administration, staff manipulation of the Board, unclear evaluation criteria, and role confusion.

Policy Governance emphasizes vision and values, the empowerment of both Board and staff, and the strategic ability to lead. Because policies permeate and dominate all organizational life, they present the most powerful lever for exercising Board leadership. Using the Policy governance approach, Boards lead by setting policy and them monitoring them.

The Board leaves it up to the President & CEO to decide on the means by which to achieve these policies and goals of the organization.

The Board prescribes what it wants to achieve. The Board states clearly what the Board expects, but it is otherwise silent regarding staff actions. This empowers staff to use their full creative powers but at the same time safeguarding against potential abuses, enabling the Board to concentrate its energies on ends results.

In addition, to providing the College with a vision and defining what the Board expects the Board must set policies about how it relates to staff for example, the Board's approach to delegation, its view of the President's role, and how it will assess CEO performance. The Policy Governance model envisions the President as a link between the Board and the staff. In essence, the President is the Board's sole employee. The only specific duty of the President is to be accountable to the entire Board for the performance of the College on how well the Board's policies and goals are being met. This maintains accountability while allowing the President a great deal of latitude to act and to empower others to act.

GOVERNANCE PROCESS (The Board's Job)

The Board must also set policies for its own internal workings, how meetings will be conducted, what topics will be addressed, the role of officers and committees, how the Board will discipline itself. An effective design of Board process ensures that the Board fulfills its three primary responsibilities:

1. Maintain links to the 'ownership', that is the community.

2. Establishing policies so that the CEO is clear as to what is acceptable and to what is to be achieved.

3. Assuring executive performance. These are areas in which the Board, and only the Board, must assume full responsibility. By setting clear Board Process policies, the Board develops a consistent plan for *how* it will operate compelling it to remain focused on the critical challenges of providing vision and leadership.