

Case Study #1: Sleepy Hollow College

Sleepy Hollow College is a private college of 2000 students in the Midwest. Situated in a rural town of 15,000 residents, it has a beautiful tree-lined campus. The 12:1 faculty ratio fits with the historical reputation of the College as a traditional liberal arts college, though the number of humanities majors has dropped noticeably in recent years and the number of pre-professional majors has increased. The school has no graduate programs. Eighty percent of the College's students live in college-owned housing; 40% are NCAA Division III student-athletics.

Sleepy Hollow College is showing signs of stress:

1. While it has maintained its enrollment, its tuition discount rate has increased to above 50%. Net revenue has dropped steadily since the Great Recession.
2. The college's campus, though beautiful, is aging. Most of the students live in residence halls built in the 1960s and early 1970s. The college has made cosmetic updates to the residence halls, but there are serious HVAC and structural issues.
3. The college's most recent strategic planning process was completed four years ago, a year after the new president arrived. The plan called for the college to become a premiere college in the region through reducing the student/faculty ratio from 14:1 to 12:1 and instituting both a required senior research project and an international term for all students.
4. The chief academic officer of the college was hired one year ago and holds great promise, but the tenure of her five immediate predecessors has been an average of three years. Her immediate predecessor received a vote of no confidence when she announced the College would discontinue German. She left Sleepy Hollow after only 2 years. The president reversed the provost's decision to discontinue German.
5. The faculty senate is lethargic. The position of faculty senate chair typically rotates among the most senior of faculty. At some meetings, there's not a quorum.
6. Applications and deposits to the college are running 10% behind last year.
7. Faculty salaries lag behind medians at peer institutions, making new faculty in certain departments hard to recruit.
8. In its most recent financial review, Moody's downgraded the college's bond rating citing the level of deferred maintenance, the decline in the number of high school seniors in the Midwest and stagnant net revenue per student. The bond rating has nearly slipped below investment grade levels.

The new board chair and president agree that more aggressive action is necessary to address the challenges the college faces. They conclude

1. The student: faculty ratio of 12:1 cannot be sustained.
2. Budget priorities must be realigned to address deferred maintenance and a renovation of the student center; the FTE employee base will necessarily drop.
3. The culture of “replacing” faculty lines within departments despite student interest in the discipline must be abandoned. Instead open faculty lines should be reassigned to departments with the greatest student demand.
4. Faculty salaries must acknowledge market demand, i.e., business faculty should be paid at a higher rate than philosophy faculty.
5. Some traditional majors need to be adapted to emphasize a greater preprofessional emphasis (e.g. art and graphic design, journalism and new media, geography and environment studies).
6. Emerging sports in the Midwest should be added – lacrosse, crew and ice hockey.
7. Academic advising must improve to enhance student retention. Some of the advising function should be moved to lower cost and better prepared, non-faculty advisors.
8. Small-enrollment academic departments (e.g. art history, certain languages) should either be closed or combined with other programs.
9. The college should change the faculty rules on acceptance of community college credits in order to increase the number of community college transfers. Currently, only a portion of community college credits transfer. The new policy should allow all community college credit to transfer.
10. The college should partner with the area’s regional state university to co-sponsor either an MBA program or a Master’s in Education.

Questions for discussion:

1. What are the respective roles of the board, administration (particularly the president) and faculty in addressing the challenges facing the college? Must faculty approval be gained for each of the proposed actions?
2. What steps can the president and board take to strengthen shared governance in order to build the capacity needed to make the changes necessary to advance the college?
3. How much should the threat of a vote of no confidence in the president weigh on the college’s decisions to take dramatic steps?

Case Study #2: South Ocean State University (SOSU)

South Ocean State University (SOSU) is a regional public college in a major metropolitan area of three million. It has an enrollment of 10,000 full-time undergraduate students, 5,000 part-time undergraduate students and 5,000 graduate students. It's located 50 miles from the state's major high-tech corridor. SOSU provides high-tech employers with more computer science, engineering and business students than any other university in the state.

South Ocean State University is one of five universities in the Ocean State system. The president of SOSU reports to the chancellor of the system, which is governed by a board of regents appointed by the governor. There are significant financial strains on the university:

1. Over the past five years, state funding for the Ocean State system has decreased by 20%, after adjustment for inflation.
2. In response, tuition increases have averaged 6% per year for the past several years.
3. SOSU is experiencing significant competition from community college and partnership programs, particularly in computer science and business.

The new governor of the state campaigned on the platform of keeping education affordable and increasing the number of graduates prepared to enter the high-tech industries. As a candidate, the new governor was critical of SOSU for not providing the quality and quantity of workers needed by the high-tech industry, pointing to universities in other states that have closer relationships with their high-tech industries and more successful placement records.

The president, after consultation with the chancellor, has determined to advance the governor's agenda by entering into partnership with three community colleges in neighboring counties, all of which have very close relationships with their respective local high-tech industries. The model proposed would be an enhanced transfer articulation agreement where all students who matriculate at one of the community colleges would have the opportunity to complete three years of a SOSU baccalaureate degree at the community college campus, taught by community college faculty. For their senior year, students would either take courses at the SOSU campus or enroll in SOSU's online course offerings in order to complete their baccalaureate degrees. Curricula for these programs would be developed in close consultation with supporting high-tech companies in each county.

The president has consulted with SOSU's faculty senate about these plans and the faculty senate leadership is adamantly opposed. These leaders contend that none of these actions can be taken without the consent of the faculty. Many faculty members, particularly those from the College of Arts and Science, disagree with the proposed direction as inconsistent with programs of "high quality" education.

Questions for discussion:

1. Can the president take these actions without first seeking the approval of the faculty senate?
2. Assuming that the Board of Regents is in agreement with these actions, what involvement should the SOSU faculty have in the decision to partner with these community colleges? In the creation of the curriculum?
3. What would be the status of the community college faculty who would teach the upper level courses on the community college campus?
4. Are there ways of using systems of shared governance with respect to these decisions to help advance the University?

Case Study #3: Summit College

Summit College is a top ranked public institution of about 6000 students in the Mid-Atlantic. There are 5 unions on the campus, including the AFT which represents all the faculty, full and part time. The AFT negotiates terms and conditions of employment not with the campus but with the Governor's Office of Employee Relations. The state is the employer of record. There is also a faculty senate that engages with the local campus administration on issues of shared governance.

Located in a suburb of a metropolitan area of about one million, Summit is recognized internationally for its liberal arts colleges, graduate and professional schools, and focus on cutting-edge research. The current president has been in her position for four years and is well-regarded by the campus community for her efforts at transparency and engagement with students, faculty and administrators.

Known for its student activism, Summit has many prominent graduates in politics, media, and law. No stranger to healthy debates, Summit has a long-standing culture of inviting academics and public figures from across the political spectrum to share their knowledge with the college community. Last month, the Amnesty International student group on campus invited a prominent pro-Palestinian

advocate to speak at the college. This advocate has been controversial due to her previous statements at public forums about Palestinian/Israeli relations.

Students who are opposed to the speaker and her ideas have been protesting in the weeks leading up to the talk. Most of the conversation has taken place on Twitter and Facebook, most noticeably from Jewish student groups sparring with students from the Amnesty International and Muslim student organizations. Some faculty have also joined in the conversation, particularly those who have been vocal about supporting Israel and those who teach Middle Eastern Studies. Lately, the conversation has spilled over into the student newspaper op-ed section, and some local newspapers have also picked up the story. Students have begun circulating a petition to have the speaker barred. The speaker has tweeted that she will be on campus regardless of resistance. In the lead up to the speech, Summit's president has remained relatively quiet on the issue in public.

The Thursday evening the speaker was set to appear, the protests moved from online to on-campus spaces, with a group of students holding a sit-in on the steps of the building where the talk was scheduled to be held, demanding the withdrawal of the speaker. There was a light campus police force present – three unarmed men and women – as the president did not want to escalate any incidents unintentionally.

As students, faculty, community members, and the local news media arrived for the talk, however, angry yelling ensued, and several students were shoved down the stairs. No one was badly hurt; but in the confusion, it was unclear if the pushing was incited by students or by non-university community members. Several people from both the protesting group and audience have been brought to the police station for questioning. Meanwhile, after a slight delay, the speaker proceeded with her speech, with several students standing with their backs turned to the podium in protest.

The following Monday, the president issued a statement to the campus community about the incident, noting that an investigation would take place to determine the proper course of action for each person involved. She emphasized the need for open, healthy dialogue and encouraged the community to come together.

While the leadership of the faculty union and the faculty senate had spoken with the president about the incident and her message, many faculty did not feel the president's response was sufficient. Several faculty members argued that there should have been a greater police presence knowing that the speaker was

controversial from the start. Other faculty groups insisted that the administration should outline harsher consequences for those who restrict freedom of expression. Still others felt that some representative faculty group (either the union or the faculty senate) should have been consulted before the president issued her post-event statement.

Questions for discussion:

1. What is the role of shared governance in an incident like the one that occurred at Summit?
2. The process of shared governance can result in a delayed response to issues. How might you ensure that your shared governance system is nimble enough to respond in a timely manner to volatile events like the speaker at Summit?
3. Where is the line between free speech and hate speech? Who draws that line?
4. How might you respond if involved faculty present themselves as representatives of the faculty union rather than the faculty senate? How does this have an impact on both your shared governance channels and your principles of academic freedom?
5. How might you resolve the disagreements that many of the faculty have expressed in how the president handled the incident?