

The Structure of College Governance

Governance at Pennsylvania Highlands Community College is divided between several different groups. Once you know those different groups, you'll have a better understanding of how governance works and where you fit in.

The Board of Trustees – The Board of Trustees has overall control of the College and final approval of college policies and initiatives. The Board focuses on the overall direction of the college.

The College President – The President works with the Board to craft the overall direction of the college. The President also works with department heads to support the day to day running of the college. The President will submit new policies or policy changes to College Senate for feedback before going to the Board for final approval, except in unusual circumstances when he or she may be forced to take changes directly to the board. For example, when responding to new laws or regulations.

College Senate – The College Senate is made up of representatives from each of the four college senates: staff senate, student senate, administrative senate, and faculty senate. During the academic year, each senate meets once a month to discuss college business, before coming together at College Senate at the end of the month to share their feedback. Each senate has its own area of expertise, and it is hoped that by sharing their feedback together, the best possible policies can be created. Feedback on college policies is shared at College Senate and then forwarded to the President, who can then choose to accept or reject feedback on the policy.

Faculty, Staff, Administrative and Student Senates –

Faculty Senate – The faculty have their own senate composed of all instructors. Faculty Senate focuses on developing new curricula (new courses and programs) and policies that impact instruction. Of course, faculty may weigh in on any proposal brought through governance. Faculty Senate also has several committees that are unique to Faculty Senate.

Staff Senate – The Staff Senate is composed off all employees designated staff. Just like the other senates, they can offer feedback on any policy brought through governance.

Administrative Senate – The Administrative Senate is composed off all employees designated as administrators. Like the other senates, they can offer feedback on any policies brought to College Senate.

Student Senate – Student Senate is composed of a group of students that represent the interests of the student body. Student Senate has the important role of reviewing policies and offering feedback from the student perspective.

College Senate Committees – Within College Senate, there are several different committees that support different aspects of the college. For instance, the Employee Development Committee is composed of College Senate members who work together to create professional development opportunities for all college employees. There are also Community Involvement and Diversity Committees. Every college employee should participate in college committees.

The Governance Process:

The Governance Process enables all parts of the college to provide input on institutional policies. The President, Cabinet, or any Senate member may propose creating, revising, or deleting a policy. These proposals are first introduced at the College Senate, then shared with the Staff, Administrative, Student, and Faculty Senates for discussion at their next meetings.

At the following College Senate meeting, each Senate presents its feedback on the policy, which is then forwarded to the President for consideration. The President may or may not make changes to the policy based on feedback from the senates. The policy is then posted on myPEAK for a one-week public comment period, during which any member of the college can submit additional feedback.

After the comment period, the President takes the policy to the Board for final approval. This process ensures all voices across the college contribute to shaping college policy.

