Vision and Principles of Effective Governance for TESOL International Association

Vision

To ensure that TESOL International Association has a governance system that efficiently and effectively responds to the evolving needs of TESOL members and the profession; supports communities of practice; facilitates collaboration in a professional learning community; and is built on a culture of knowledge, trust, nimbleness, and transparency.

Principles

The following principles of effective governance for TESOL International Association provide a guiding framework for the further collection of data in the governance review process. The framework has been developed substantially from the data collected from the leadership activities conducted in Dallas 2013, but alongside discussions from the GRTF and their engagement with the literature around effective governance.

The framework is comprised of five principles: two Foundational Principles, upon which three Instrumental Principles of effective governance are built. The Principles incorporate the three core elements of association governance (structure, process, and culture), the desired attributes of effective governance (knowledge, trust, and nimbleness), with the following feedback provided by TESOL leaders:

- Organizations must respond to the changing contexts they operate within. The strength of any organization is not in its structure per se, but the extent to which its structure makes effective use of the strengths of its people.
- Governance structures enable effective knowledge sharing and communication between the components and members of TESOL International Association.
- Governance reflects the people in the organization and enables the voices of all the people in the organization to be heard

Foundational Principles

1. **Strategic alignment**

- Alignment - All parts of the association operate in concert with the agreed upon strategic direction of the association.

- Accountability - Governance components reflect, enable, and are accountable to the association's strategic direction

- People understand the association's strategic priorities clearly enough to be able to make and execute decisions in a timely manner.

2. Structure and Process

- Structure - Structures enable – rather than hinder – the ability to make decisions and take action most critical to success.

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- Process - Processes are designed to produce effective and timely decisions and action.

- Accountability - Governance structures and processes must ensure that fiduciary and ethical responsibilities are met.

Instrumental Principles

3. People, Roles, and Relationships

- Roles – Individuals and components understand their roles, accountability, and authority in decision-making.

- Relationships – Individuals and components understand the relationships between parts of the association.

- Leadership – The association is able to engage the best and most qualified people to positions where they can have the most impact.

- Representation – All stakeholders are appropriately represented in the decision-making process.

4. Knowledge and Information

- Knowledge - Structures and processes enable the cultivation and dissemination of knowledge to members, components, and stakeholders.

- Information – People in decision-making roles have the appropriate information they need – when and how they need it – to make rational, data-driven decisions.

- Communication – Members and components have sufficient information to help them understand the work done on their behalf by the association.

5. Culture and Engagement

- Culture – Organizational culture reinforces prompt, effective decisions and action throughout the association.

- Behaviors - Leaders at all levels consistently demonstrate effective stewardship, collaboration, accountability, inspiration, and decision behaviors.

- Engagement - Members are engaged appropriately in the decision-making process.

- Innovation - Governance structures and processes enable innovation and creativity within the association.