

A dark wood desk with a blue pen and a glass of water. The pen is in the bottom left corner, and the glass is in the top right corner. The text is centered on the desk.

Promoting quality in governance and administration

Dr. Steve Hardy

Appreciating governance and administration

Most schools have been started by teachers who don't necessarily understand all the other stuff involved in making educational programmes work better.

Appreciating governance and administration

In this session, we want to look at two aspects of that “other stuff” – administration and governance, without which one cannot really achieve excellence

Governance

Governance is what occurs when those who are the owners of a training program assume responsibility for what is theirs. Governance is the primary way by which training institutions are accountable for what they do.

Administration

Administration is developing and coordinating a team of people who can do specific things that need to be done to support your training programme.

Governance and Administration

Both of these are important pieces
of having quality or excellence
in the training that we offer.

But are boards worth the effort?

Constitutions usually require some sort of board, council or governing body – but few boards tend to be functional.

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- A board is often only a token group of national church leaders convened for appearance sake.
- Board meetings involve listening to reports about issues that have already been decided.

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- Boards may seem to function only as working committees (personnel, finance, admissions, constitution).

Are boards worth the effort?

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- Strained relationships over “we-they” tensions – with power struggles between individuals or groups
- Meetings can become forums for problems that have little to do with the school.

So why have a board?

The answer lies in understanding the nature of governance:

To help training programs be accountable to those whom they exist to serve as they faithfully accomplish what was intended to be accomplished.

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Poor governance may be the single biggest weakness for many theological training institutions.

Ownership

The foundational questions are:

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- Whose school are we?
- Who makes the rules that we need to follow?
- Who helps us to make sure that we continue to be and do what was intended?

Ownership

(1) Is the government our owner?

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No, although you may need to submit to legal registration

Ownership

(2) Are we our own owners?

Ownership

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- Writing our own purpose statement and developing our own five-year plan
- Making and enforcing the rules regarding curriculum, internal operations and student selection
- Hiring, firing and evaluating each other
- Determining our own salaries, along with finding and administering funds

Ownership

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We shouldn't primarily be giving reports to ourselves.

Ownership

(3) Are the founders our owners?

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We should honour those who brought and nurtured the school into existence, but we don't exist to serve them in the same way that a factory exists to provide profits for its founders and stakeholders.

Ownership

(4) Are the beneficiaries of the programme our owners?

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Absolutely!

Ownership

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Absolutely!

Those who consider the institution to be their school need to be acknowledged, honoured and listened to.

Ownership

(4) Are the beneficiaries of the programme our owners?

This is not a question of legal ownership (as defined by constitution). Neither is it a question of “authority over” - but of “responsibility to.”

Levels of Governance

(1) General Assembly

This is governance at an authority level by those who represent the entire constituency. It involves those whose “amen” you need.

Levels of Governance

Give them:

- Reports and information for understanding
- Opportunities to discuss bigger issues
- Authority over major issues
- Ways to provide feedback regarding success or failure
- A chance to be a forum to consider new ways to do training, administration, fund-raising, recruitment, etc.

Levels of Governance

The importance and influence of this group should not be underestimated.

Levels of Governance

(2) The governing board

This is governance at a policy level by a smaller group selected for their expertise as representatives of the owners.

Levels of Governance

This group should:

- Define the institution's purpose or mission
- Develop the strategic plan, operational policy and the rules under which the program functions
- Oversee the implementation of those policies
- Serve as trustees, assuming legal responsibility for the training programme

Levels of Governance

(2) The governing board should

- Meet quarterly
- Have no life-time members
- Speak with one voice
- Work with reports given them ahead of time

Levels of Governance

(3) The administrative or management team

This is governance at the implementation level.

Levels of Governance

The principal is responsible to see that things are done, working together with all of the school's administrative staff and faculty.

- Listening to advice and feedback
- Implementing policies
- Doing the day-to-day work

Responsibilities of the governing board

- (1) A visionary dimension
- (2) An administrative and managerial dimension
- (3) A public relations dimension
- (4) A legal dimension

Responsibilities of board members

- (1) 7 seconds a day in prayer
- (2) 7 minutes a week to stay informed
- (3) 7 hours a month to stay in touch
- (4) 7 days a year in meetings
- (5) 7 years on the board
- (6) Last 7 weeks to train others
- (7) 1/7 of the overall budget

Responsibilities of the Principal

- (1) Strategic planning
- (2) Operational planning, including staff development
- (3) Annual budget
- (4) Regular reports to board of health and needs of the school
- (5) Represents the school
- (6) Teaching?

Responsibilities of the Principal

Dividing his or her time between;

- (1) Building relationships with the governing board and the members of the general assembly
- (2) Investing in the school's leadership or management team
- (3) Doing public relations and fund-development

Quality in Administration or Management



Remembering that...

Administration is developing and coordinating a team of people who do specific things that need to be done to support your training program.

Administration

So what does need to be done
to make a program better -
besides teaching?

Several basic things to *not* do

- Don't even try to do everything that has always been done.
- Don't overly complicate things.
- Don't grab just any available body to do things for which they may not be competent.
- Don't forget that the administrative team is part of the learning environment.
- Don't do it alone.

The most important thing to do...

... is to develop a team of emotionally healthy people competently doing what needs to be done.

It is much better to equip, encourage and empower your staff than to constantly be looking for new people.

How to strengthen your team

- Respect your staff for who they are
- Give them job descriptions
- Provide them with adequate health care and salary benefits
- Give them regular and honest feedback
- Help them be competent
- Encourage them and give pastoral care
- Don't leave conflict unresolved

Administrative structures

Somebody has to be in charge. He or she should develop, train and supervise a team for three interrelated areas:

- Academic affairs
- Administrative affairs
- Public relations and fund-development

Conclusions

*“If you really want to help Africa,
strengthen the structures of Africa.”*

Dr Tokunboh Adeyemo, former
General Secretary of the
Association of Evangelicals in Africa

Conclusions

If you really want to encourage quality in your theological programme, strengthen its structures.