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Explorations in Governance and Leadership: The Philadelphia Orchestra

by

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Explorations in Governance and Leadership: The Philadelphia Orchestra

Over the last several years, members of the Philadelphia Orchestra community—board, staff, musicians, and volunteers—have invested many hours in discussion and analysis of their governance and leadership processes. Beginning in the fall of 1997, representatives of the Symphony Orchestra Institute engaged groups and individuals from the organization on topics of organizational performance and relationships among key constituencies.

In 1999, the board determined that it was time to revisit the organization’s strategic plan. As the conversations progressed, leaders of the constituencies agreed that the planning process itself should reflect a growing view that multiparty leadership was necessary for success. With that thought in mind, the planning process began in earnest in 2000.

Rather than having a designated committee develop a long “to-do” list for the next few years, planning-process leaders focused on four conceptual topics:

- ◆ Mission, vision, artistic direction,
- ◆ Venue,
- ◆ Marketing, and
- ◆ Governance, leadership, and professional development.

Work groups (representing all four constituencies) were formed for each topical area, with each group composed of at least 12 members plus a skilled facilitator. It was also determined to be wise to have a 16-member “integration group,” composed of representatives of the work groups and the process facilitators, in order to ensure that the recommendations of the separate teams would be aligned for the overall organization.

Symphony Orchestra Institute representatives worked most closely with the governance, leadership, and professional development group (GLD), and it is that story we detail here.

“... leaders of the constituencies agreed that the planning process itself should reflect a growing view that multiparty leadership was necessary for success.”

Because the GLD's recommendations were likely to have significant impact on the organization's long-term thinking, and because constituency leaders needed to have high stakes in the recommendations, the chair of the orchestra members' committee, immediate past president of the volunteers, current and immediate past board chairs, and president of the orchestra all agreed to serve on this committee.

Laying the Foundation

Early in the process, the GLD decided it needed to understand why its assigned topic was important. Committee members reached the following conclusions:

- ◆ The years ahead hold significant challenges that will require the best thinking of all members of the Philadelphia Orchestra community.
- ◆ The most effective response to challenges requires unified leadership and multiconstituent agreement.
- ◆ In the current organizational environment, effective decision making and action is difficult, due to governance or leadership concerns.
- ◆ All agreed that they had a strong desire to create new and more effective ways of working together.

The committee also recognized that it had been given a formidable charge to improve the overall governance process of the organization, as well as that of each constituency. Committee members had also been asked to examine and improve the relationships among and within constituencies, the quality of overall group leadership, and the professional development of constituency members.

As readers should well expect, this charge was more extensive than any committee could address in six months, so the group focused its attention first on the governance process, agreeing that thoughts about leadership and professional development would follow.

An additional part of laying the foundation involved agreeing to a basic flow of work. With guidance from the facilitators, the committee agreed to the following:

- ◆ It would first determine the scope and boundaries of its work. All participants needed to understand what was included in the work and what was not. This step included defining terms.
- ◆ They would then develop a governance, leadership, and development fact base for the organization as a whole and, separately, for each constituency.
- ◆ They would work through the following steps sequentially for each area:
 - ❖ Develop shared values and beliefs.

- ❖ Develop strategies for achieving those values and beliefs.
- ❖ Develop designs for action to carry out the strategies.
- ❖ Create a set of integrated, comprehensive recommendations.

Establishing Scope, Boundaries, and Definitions

In establishing the scope of its work, the committee understood very quickly that by agreeing to address governance of the organization overall, as well as in each constituency, they were extending accepted thinking about the topic. For example, when one says the word “governance,” most individuals immediately think “board of directors.” However, in a multiconstituent organization such as a symphony orchestra, the governance processes within individual constituencies should have great influence on the governance process of the board itself.

The committee identified several subtopics which members agreed needed to be addressed:

- ◆ Current and future roles of the orchestra members’ committee, the board and its executive committee, board committees, the volunteer association, staff and executive management, and the media company.
- ◆ Current and future roles of key individuals, including the orchestra members’ committee chair, the board chair, the president of the orchestra, the president of the volunteer association, and the music director.
- ◆ Decision making within and across groups, including consideration of how input is and should be sought, who is and should be involved, and what processes are currently and should be in place.
- ◆ The values of the various constituencies and the level of agreement within and across groups as to whether the values needed to be modified in order for the culture to evolve in a more effective way.
- ◆ The leadership of key individuals, including the music director, both within and across constituencies.
- ◆ Working relationships, including consideration of ways to develop trust and respect, and to improve relationships over time.

As they worked to locate the boundaries, committee members agreed that such important topics as collective bargaining and organization performance would be addressed tangentially, but not as core governance topics. They also agreed to working definitions of five terms: governance, leadership, professional development, beliefs, and values.

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The process of defining terms provoked some lively discussion. For example, the committee did not come to immediate agreement on an operational definition of governance. Members agreed early on that governance is not about having musicians on the board, nor is it about the decision-making process at the board level alone. They ultimately agreed that governance is about what items require decisions, where, how, and when decisions are made, and who is involved in making decisions. With scope and definitions now established, the committee turned its attention to developing a fact-base.

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Developing the Fact-Base

Effective strategic planning requires agreement about facts, although when the topic is qualitative (governance), what constitutes a “fact” may itself be debatable. The GLD approached this phase of its work by asking the representatives of each constituency to develop facts relating to their particular subgroup. This process required several meetings and involved assembling information that was readily available, asking questions to learn more, reporting, and discussion. The committee agreed that when all members of a constituency shared a belief, it would be viewed as a “fact.”

When the fact-base was complete, it was summarized as themes that appeared across several constituent groups. These were considered to represent a pattern of behavior throughout the organization.

Examples of facts as developed by the GLD include:

- ◆ There exists a high level of interest and energy to be involved in the organization’s activities in a meaningful way. However, many of these desires are not currently being fulfilled.
- ◆ Many constituency members do not view their participation in and input to the organization as valued.
- ◆ The constituencies do not currently view one another as partners, but there is a strong desire to develop strong partnerships and working relationships.
- ◆ In many cases, the current governance process assures that there will be reaction on the part of those groups that were not involved in the initial thinking and decisions.
- ◆ Many of the issues that exist within and across constituencies are due to the lack of good processes, knowledge, and skill in addressing very difficult and complex topics. They are not due to a lack of will to do a good job.

- ◆ There are structural and process challenges unique to each constituency.
- ◆ There is currently not a shared vision, set of values, and strategy within and across constituencies to serve as a coalescing force.

With the fact-base in hand, the committee turned its thinking to the process it would use to develop strategies and designs for action. The facilitators suggested a rigorous process that involved working to establish key values and shared beliefs, and only then turned attention to concepts, strategies, and designs for action.

Key Values and Shared Beliefs

Organization development professionals have demonstrated repeatedly that one way to create alignment of a team relative to the future is to establish agreement in two areas:

- ◆ The key values, or what the group sees as important to them relative to the future.
- ◆ The shared beliefs, or what the group holds to be true about the topic.

The GLD developed a set of key values related to governance that the entire organization should hold:

- ◆ Trust,
- ◆ Shared participation and broad involvement,
- ◆ Respect among constituencies,
- ◆ Commitment to artistic integrity,
- ◆ Maintenance and growth of financial viability,
- ◆ Synthesis and integration of the parts,
- ◆ Pursuit of excellence,
- ◆ Customer service, internal and external,
- ◆ Meeting the needs of all stakeholders, and
- ◆ Diversity.

At first blush, these values might seem obvious. But a rigorous planning process explores current values and contrasts them with ones desired for the future. For the Philadelphia organization, the current values and those desired were, in some cases, at odds. For example, everyone agreed that the organization had currently and should continue to have “a commitment to artistic integrity.” But discussions of participation, meeting the needs of stakeholders, customer service, and diversity revealed ongoing actions that contradicted this value.

The discussion of values was often difficult. However, it provided great insight into the organization’s culture and served as a springboard as the group began

to develop a set of beliefs that would guide “outstanding” governance for the organization.

Governance Beliefs

The process of establishing a set of beliefs about governance began with each committee member formulating his or her own set of beliefs. The committee then convened and reviewed all entries. The full set of beliefs was categorized and culled for duplication, and then discussion began. Over many hours, committee members worked to reach consensus and to determine the implications of pursuing each belief. When the group had agreed to a full set of beliefs, they tested their work for consistency and discussed the implications of the total set.

The agreed governance beliefs fell into three broad categories:

- ◆ Beliefs that focused on the overall organization.
- ◆ Beliefs that focused on the constituencies and the ways in which they work together.
- ◆ Beliefs that focused on each individual constituency.

Overall Organization Beliefs

The GLD agreed to five beliefs that would serve to guide the overall organization:

- ◆ Within a mutually agreed time frame, all decisions regarding direction, strategy, vision, and mission will be made through consensus-based processes that meaningfully involve all constituencies.
- ◆ A permeating and shared vision will energize what we do and assure that we can be outstanding.
- ◆ If we buy into our mission/vision at the highest personal level, we will create will and passion across the whole organization.
- ◆ All constituencies will respect the musicians’ legal right to “organize.”
- ◆ The total organization will address the great majority of issues, with a limited number of issues to be addressed in a traditional labor-management context.

The discussions that led to this set of beliefs was extended and often difficult. As an example, to reach agreement on the first belief, committee members needed to resolve several paradoxes and challenges. The board holds fiduciary responsibility for the organization, yet the staff has administrative and operational responsibility.

“The core question became: could each constituency agree to involve the others earlier and more fully in the decision-making process? In the end, the committee’s answer was ‘yes.’”

Current operational processes created conditions by which several constituencies became involved only after fundamental decisions had been made, which often led to polarization. Decisions were often challenged after the fact or defended as part of their presentation. The core question became: could each constituency agree to involve the others earlier and more fully in the decision-making process? In the end, the committee's answer was "yes."

Adoption of the last two beliefs also had deep philosophical and practical implications for all constituencies. While there was recognition of the reality of "organized" musicians as a Philadelphia Orchestra constituency, a number of GLD members were uncomfortable with that fact. Ultimately, the group worked through the tensions and agreed that the organization must have the systems, processes, and leadership to work in its actual environment.

Beliefs for Constituencies Working Together

The GLD also adopted five beliefs to guide the ways in which the constituencies work together:

- ◆ We will make decisions that are informed by what is "best" for the total institution.
- ◆ We will make better decisions and will be better able to implement these decisions by having broad involvement and participation.
- ◆ If people are better informed, and are able to learn about and have input into decisions, they will have a greater "buy-in" to those decisions.
- ◆ We are a more effective organization if each group has well-defined processes for making decisions and ways to communicate decisions within and across constituencies.
- ◆ When speaking to the outside world, all constituencies should speak with one voice.

The formulation of this set of beliefs also came only after extensive discussion. For example, agreeing with the first belief created two new accountabilities:

- ◆ To ensure that all constituencies know what is going on. That would involve developing processes to attack the exclusivity that currently existed within and across constituencies.
- ◆ Ensuring that decisions are made in the best interest of the whole organization.

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Beliefs for Individual Constituencies

The discussion that led to the development of the beliefs for the constituencies collectively also uncovered the need to recognize that three of the constituencies are legal entities with their own charters and bylaws. That fact gave rise to the development of the following:

- ◆ Each constituency maintains its unique integrity, and all other constituencies will recognize that integrity.
- ◆ Each constituency will have decision topics that are unique and confidential.

As they discussed the ramifications of making decisions in the best interest of the whole organization, committee members recognized that this might be interpreted as usurping the integrity of an individual constituency. They agreed that under no circumstances should that threat exist. These final two beliefs recognize the tension that must exist within and across constituencies. The GLD agreed that tension, when addressed productively and positively, created excellent outcomes.

Overall, this set of beliefs recognizes that an effective organization must have excellence in information sharing, involvement of participants beyond their core constituencies, and respect for the confidentiality and uniqueness of each group as a legitimate entity.

New Governance Strategies

As we turn to a discussion of governance strategies and designs for action, readers are reminded that three additional strategic-planning work groups were simultaneously addressing the topics of mission, vision, and artistic direction; venue; and marketing. Before the GLD began its further work, the 16-member integration group convened to reflect on the work of the four strategy teams and to ensure that there was basic agreement with each group's tentative conclusions. There was consensus that the direction being set by the GLD was correct, and the group was charged to develop specific, actionable ideas to implement the beliefs.

Beliefs form the roots of strategy. If one believes something to be true, one can develop a strategy to implement the belief. From the strategy, one can develop specific designs for action.

Over a period of several months, committee members developed six fundamental strategies. They believed that these strategies would have profound and lasting impact on the Philadelphia Orchestra.

Create systems and structures to ensure multiconstituent involvement in and information for fact-based decision making within constituencies and across the total institution.

GLD members acknowledged that in the current environment, information-sharing and decision-making processes were neither systematic nor structured. Further, working from fact—especially shared facts—was not a common practice. This strategy implied a desire for significant change.

Build common decision-making and conflict-resolution processes within and across all constituencies.

Common language and thought processes enhance the ability of groups to reach agreement, especially on difficult issues. Using identical tools for decision making, discussion, and conflict resolution gives groups the ability to work on the content or substance of differences. Committee members believed that this strategy would be required as the Philadelphia Orchestra organization addressed complex challenges in the future.

Identify individuals with governance and leadership expertise. Develop and improve their capabilities. Nurture and develop future leaders in all constituencies.

Committee members agreed that, in general, the constituencies did not have effective succession plans and had not made it a priority to develop effective future leadership. They agreed that in order to move the institution forward, this strategy was needed for the overall organization, individual constituencies, and current and emerging leaders.

Create structures for regular information sharing and for participation in decision shaping by appropriate, broad cross-departmental or organizational groups. Create visibility to the organization of the projects and efforts that are in motion.

The committee agreed that formal processes should be put in place to ensure that information was shared more on a “right to know” basis and less on a “need to know” basis. This implies volunteering information about ideas being considered or in motion and reduces reliance on the grapevine or “fishing expeditions.” Decision-shaping involvement implies that while every group may not be involved in every decision, there will be an awareness of what is being considered “before the concrete hardens.”

Create a minimum number of groups to complete the work of the organization effectively.

This strategy underscored the committee’s recognition that a proliferation of groups would tax the organization’s resources and ultimately backfire. They agreed that the groups should be focused and not redundant. For example, an overall artistic committee might replace the current musician, staff, and board artistic committees.

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Develop methods and processes to assess and assure the performance of individuals and groups.

Many organizations experience situations in which leaders do not meet the expectations of individuals and groups. Meeting expectations is a multidimensional process: the incumbents must understand the expectations; the expectations must be shared both among incumbents and those who have an interest in incumbents' performance; the means of assessment against expectations must be understood; and the process must be mutually confirmed. In other words, performance assessments can be truly fair only if everyone understands the rules of the game. Committee members agreed that individual constituencies and the organization as a whole needed a more formal process for assessing performance, providing performance feedback, and providing developmental opportunities.

Members of the governance, leadership, and professional development committee understood that these strategies would test the will of the organization to make effective and meaningful change. They also recognized that successful implementation could not rest with one or two constituencies or with one or two key leaders.

Strategies are important in framing the challenge, but strategies do not drive action. So committee members took the next step and developed specific designs for action.

Designs for Action

The GLD recognized that the strategies, in their broadest sense, could not all be implemented simultaneously or the organization would choke. Yet the members also recognized that demonstrable change needed to take place. They developed designs for action intended to be both bold and accomplishable.

They separated their thinking into action designs intended for the overall organization and those intended for individual constituencies.

Recommendations for the overall organization included:

- ◆ Convene an annual meeting of the Philadelphia Orchestra Association. This meeting is intended to be much more than an annual meeting in a legal sense. The intent is to bring together a large number of individuals from all constituencies to openly address the state of the organization.
- ◆ Top leaders of the organization should meet at least six times a year to discuss strategy, issues, working relations, and improvements in organizational processes. These leaders should include the music director, board chair, president, orchestra members' committee chair, and volunteers' chair. The GLD members recognized that in order for a multiconstituent leadership process to work, those leaders would need to meet regularly as a team to address the organization's challenges.

These meetings will set a new tone and direction for information sharing, participation, and decision making.

- ◆ The president and senior staff will develop an overall plan for increasing the diversity of the Philadelphia Orchestra’s patrons and advocates. Each constituency will develop a similar plan. The executive committee of the board and the cultural diversity initiative council will audit performance annually and make recommendations for improvement. This design is intended to establish shared accountability for diversity. Previously, not all of the individual constituencies were charged with responsibility for improving diversity.
- ◆ Identify recurring workflow processes that directly involve multiple constituencies (e.g., tours, season planning, budget) and create ways to discipline, structure, and improve these processes. Committee members acknowledged that the organization had many repetitive processes that played out in a dysfunctional way every time they occurred. Developing new ways of work would reduce negative energy and streamline decision making. For example, establishment of a tour committee that includes staff and musicians could contribute to decisions that are understood and supported from the outset.
- ◆ Create opportunities for informal activities which reinforce and support cross-constituency interaction. Committee members agreed that there currently existed several volunteer activities which, if expanded, could support this design for action. They added the caveat that in pursuing this design, musicians should not be asked to play “for free” at an event.
- ◆ Form a small task group to recommend ways to recruit, organize, manage, and lead nonaffiliated Philadelphia Orchestra volunteers. As the GLD pursued its work, it became clear that there were many individuals in the community who wished to be actively affiliated with the orchestra, but who did not want to join the board or the existing volunteer association. The committee agreed that it should be a priority to recognize these important resources.

“Committee members acknowledged that the organization had many repetitive processes that played out in a dysfunctional way every time they occurred.”

Recommendations for individual constituencies included:

- ◆ Strongly encouraging the president and senior staff heads to put in place a cross-departmental staff working group composed of staff heads and key next-level employees. In reflecting on the work of the staff, and the levels of information sharing that occur both within the staff and from the staff to the rest of the organization, the GLD determined that

a cross-departmental working group could both serve to link functional groups and to provide more effective overall communications.

- ◆ Strongly encouraging the musicians to examine their constituency's processes toward operating more consistently with the overall governance recommendations. In discussing ways in which musicians might be connected in more effective and meaningful ways, committee members agreed that the overall organization would benefit if the musicians considered such items as assuring longer continuity on both board and other committees, the method of appointing and electing members to various positions, and ways in which decision making on non-trade-agreement items might be expedited.

Committees

Throughout the discussions of governance, the topic of committee effectiveness—both staff and board—arose repeatedly. When the GLD ultimately tackled the topic of committee structure, leadership, and effectiveness, members were well-prepared and energetic. The seeds had been sown for consideration of significant change.

Under the process that was currently in place, the board chartered committees and named their chairs. The 11 currently constituted board committees had both oversight and fiduciary accountability for their topical or functional areas (e.g., finance, marketing, public relations, development, artistic programming). However, the quality of leadership and level of involvement varied greatly across the committees. Additionally, staff department leaders found the committees to be at times helpful and at other times burdensome.

Following substantive discussion, the GLD determined that board committee activity should be separated into two types:

- ◆ Policy and fiduciary committees, and
- ◆ Oversight process and staff advisory committees.

This was a decision of some gravity because it recommended a fundamental shift in thinking about committee formation, membership, and accountability.

The GLD determined that policy and fiduciary committees should provide guidance and be accountable for those topics that deal with the organization's control and fundraising in order to ensure the short- and long-term viability of the orchestra. They specified finance, audit, development, investment, human resources, and nominating/governance committees as policy and fiduciary committees.

The committee detailed its thinking about the formation and evolution, membership and leadership, and accountability of policy and fiduciary committees. Highlights of the recommendations included:

- ◆ The designation of these committees as standing committees, with membership on each (excepting audit and nominating/governance) to represent all constituencies. Committee chairs will be named by the board chair, following consultation with the nominating/governance committee, and will serve on the executive committee of the board.
- ◆ Establishing detailed accountability standards for policy and fiduciary committees. These include providing unambiguous policy direction, reviewing and approving specific plans, ensuring that staff decisions are aligned with and support overall organizational strategies, and auditing organizational performance against objectives.

Oversight Process and Staff Advisory Committees

In an effort to streamline the organization's functionality, yet retain board oversight of organization activities, the GLD recommended the dissolution of board marketing, education, artistic, and strategic planning committees. These are to be supplanted by staff advisory committees for the same functional areas.

The GLD further recommended that the board executive committee institute formal board oversight of staff advisory committees through appointment of a board advocate and liaison for each. This action will broaden the perception of and participation in what previously had been understood to be "governance." Also detailed were accountability standards which parallel those established for policy and fiduciary committees.

The GLD report also included several recommendations for formation, leadership and membership, and accountability of the staff advisory committees. Among the highlights of the recommendations are:

- ◆ Inclusion of at least one representative of each constituency on all staff advisory committees. Staff leaders may name additional committee members from inside the organization or invite outside experts to serve. Committees will be co-chaired by the staff leader and an individual named in consultation with the constituency group leaders.
- ◆ Enumeration of several specific ways in which the staff advisory committees are expected to provide advice and reflection on both annual and long-term plans.

Finally, the GLD recommended that a policy-making external affairs committee be formed to advocate for the Philadelphia Orchestra with community and government leaders and groups, to develop policies and direction to guide community relationships, and to seek funds to support topics of key importance.

The recommended changes in committee purpose and accountability place key nonfinancial activities under the leadership of the staff department heads and create a committee structure designed to support and advise functional activity directly.

The GLD wrestled with the tension that existed between wanting to provide meaningful support for functional activities while still providing vehicles for board members to be involved in and connected to the organization. Ultimately, the group concluded that the merits of separating board-member education from committee activity would be in the best interests of the whole organization.

Another significant change occurred with the recommendation to include strategic planning as a staff advisory committee. In the past, the board itself had held accountability for strategic planning, but it was agreed that the results of this charge were haphazard at best. There was further recognition that the staff has regular strategic discussions as it carries out its work. Within the framework of the GLD recommendation, the staff will guide the board about strategic challenges, and the board will then decide when its greater involvement is required.

“The GLD wrestled with the tension that existed between wanting to provide meaningful support for functional activities while still providing vehicles for board members to be involved in and connected to the organization.”

Board of Directors

The GLD recognized from the beginning of its work that no discussion of governance could be complete without consideration of board composition and membership. Due to the sensitivity of this topic, the group began by examining its beliefs about board membership, and formulated thoughts in six areas:

- ◆ An increase in the diversity of board membership (geographic, ethnic, gender, economic, age) will increase board strength. Board diversity will help encourage diversity in such other areas of the organization as donors and subscribers. The board should lead the organization in setting and attaining diversity goals.
- ◆ For the most part, board members should have the means to make meaningful gifts and the network to gain entrée to prospective donors. The board must include individuals from “the top of the corporate world.”
- ◆ The board will function more effectively through membership of those who are willing to work and participate, and who know how to facilitate and encourage others. The board also requires individuals who are willing to bring their experience and expertise to the organization.
- ◆ Staff, musicians, and volunteers should serve on the board. These individuals should be considered full board members, not representatives of specific interests. Staff and volunteer leaders, as well as the musicians’ chair should be ex officio board members, in addition to any other representatives from their constituencies.

- ◆ Board members should have passion for and knowledge of the art form.
- ◆ The board needs to maintain its position of prestige. The nominating/governance committee should consider the size and structure of the board, and include in its consideration such efforts as an improved emeritus group, a Chairman's Circle, and other groups that might enhance the overall organization.

With these beliefs articulated to establish a context, the GLD approached the topic of musician membership on the board and agreed to the following recommendations:

- ◆ Musician membership on the board should increase from two to four, and on the executive committee from one to two.
- ◆ The chair of the orchestra members' committee and the chair of the players' artistic committee should become board members, with the chair of the orchestra members' committee becoming a permanent member of the executive committee.
- ◆ The nominating committee should determine the additional musician to serve on the executive committee, perhaps in consultation with the chair of the members' committee.

The discussion behind these recommendations was fraught with ambivalence and paradox. Increased musician involvement on the board, and particularly on the executive committee, changes musician accountability and creates greater demand on key musicians for their time and involvement. That reality may, in turn, create changes in the musicians' governance structure. There is also the risk of tension among nonmusician board members on issues of confidentiality and equality of involvement. Raised, but left unanswered by the GLD, was an interesting question as to why there was concern about an increase in musician board membership, but seemingly no similar concern about an increase in board membership of key staff members (beyond the president). However, the GLD was ultimately satisfied with its work and submitted its recommendations to the integration group.

“Increased musician involvement on the board, and particularly on the executive committee, changes musician accountability and creates greater demand on key musicians for their time and involvement.”

Implementation

As this article goes to press, the Philadelphia Orchestra organization has begun the implementation of its new strategic plan. In March 2002, the board will consider the recommendations that have been developed by the four topical subgroups. But even before that consideration takes place, the Philadelphia Orchestra president, Joseph Kluger, reports that many of the governance recommendations have taken wing.

Staff and volunteers have reviewed and approved the recommendations, and musicians are scheduled to do so in the near future. Christoph Eschenbach, the orchestra's music director designate, has expressed enthusiasm for the work of the strategic planners, and in a meeting with the management team, coined the phrase "raising the invisible curtain" to describe the organization's future approach to making an in-depth connection between members of the audience and the performers.

Additionally, the top leaders group—defined by the GLD as the music director, board chair, president, orchestra members' committee chair, and volunteers' chair—held an initial meeting that was viewed positively by all of the participants.

The decision-making process is also evolving. As an example, musicians suggested, and staff members agreed, to use a "zero-base" process to plan the schedule for the 2002-2003 season. This represents a major step forward in the organization's implementation of multiconstituent decision making.

A Work in Progress

The strategic planners' recommendations present the Philadelphia Orchestra organization with the significant challenges of carrying on the demands of symphonic life while, at the same time, changing ways in which that life takes place. This will require that key constituency leaders remain steadfast in their support of the recommendations and willing to engage naysayers when voices rise in opposition.

In terms of working relationships, leadership, and capability, the organization is on the cusp of entirely new ways of thinking and interacting. Success will change the ways in which the organization functions. With the heightened spirit that exists in the organization's constituencies, one can anticipate heightened results, both on stage and off.

Author's Note: This report presents much of the government, leadership, and professional development committee's work in summary form. Readers who wish to review detailed outlines of the planning process and recommendations are invited to visit the Institute's Web site at < www.soi.org > .

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