



GOVERNANCE PROPOSAL
for the HALIFAX SHAMBHALA CENTRE

The task of establishing a new governance structure for the Halifax Shambhala Centre is viewed as a priority for Director Andrea Doukas. This was one of the tasks she inherited from the previous director, Richard John, who had worked with what was then the Shambhala Council. To begin the process, Ms. Doukas called upon members of the Halifax Shambhala community to form a “Governance Exploratory Group” whose primary purpose would be to suggest a model for local governance based on research, community consultation, and reflection.

Members of the Governance Group are: Geoff Crinean, Molly De Shong, Andrea Doukas (Halifax Centre Director), Ron Renz (representing the Dekyong Council), Barbara Solarz, Jim Torbert, and Bob Vogler (Chair of the previous local Shambhala Council).

The group reviewed governance models now in use at Shambhala Centres in Boulder, New York, Boston, and Dorje Denma Ling, and interviewed leaders in those places. They also looked at other examples of models for organizational governance. Input was solicited from the Halifax Shambhala community through the delek system, by individual contact with members of the Governance Group, and at a community meeting held at the Centre on February 10. Relevant documents have been posted on the Centre’s website and progress reports appear monthly in *the Banner* newsletter.

What follows is a brief outline of the group’s proposed model for governance of the Halifax Shambhala Centre.

PROPOSED MODEL

Purpose, Role and Accountability

We suggest that a Board of Directors be established to guide and govern the Halifax Centre. This board would articulate the overall “ends” (desired results) for the Centre, and seek to empower the Centre Director to determine and carry out the “means” by which those ends are achieved. This distinction of means and ends is borrowed from the so-called Policy Board model: here, the role of the board is to establish overall expectations for organizational “achievement,” in a way that empowers staff to act with as much latitude as possible.

The board would seek to guide and govern in a way that is in keeping with the tenets of Shambhala Governance – respecting natural hierarchy, encouraging representation and genuine participation from the community, and so forth. (Tenets can be viewed at <http://www.shambhala.org/community/governance.php>). The Halifax Board of Directors is legally accountable to the Sakyong’s Council, and through them, to the Kalapa Court.

We also recommend that a Community Council be created to meet quarterly with the Board to inform the Board of their current concerns and vision for the HSC. The Community Council would provide a forum for discussion and serve as a resource for the Board but would not function as an ongoing organization beyond the quarterly gatherings. The meetings would be open, and all constituent groups of the Halifax Shambhala Community, and interested regional groups, would be invited to send at least one representative to each quarterly meeting.

Activities

The main activities of the Halifax board would be to:

- Articulate the overall “ends” (desired results) for the Centre
- Recruit the Centre Director, making recommendations to the Kalapa Court
- Establish executive limitations, or clear parameters with respect to unacceptable “means”
- Prepare Annual Report and convene Annual General Meeting
- Meet quarterly with Community Council (as described above)
- Ensure Centre has adequate funds to achieve ends by designing and/or participating in fundraising

The community which the Halifax Centre aims to serve includes:

A) Members and friends of the Centre, including (but not limited to):

- Pre-Seminary students
- Shambhala Training students
- Intermediate students
- Tantrikas
- Sadhakas
- Dorje Kasung
- Kyudo group
- Nalanda Translation Committee
- Tea group
- Dekyong Council
- Sarpashana group
- Karuna group
- Palliative Care group
- Meditation Instructors and Shambhala Guides
- Families / children

B) The general public, including (but not limited to):

- People potentially interested in meditation, such as those who visit the Centre or attend open houses
- Interfaith groups
- Educational associations

Operating Principles

Some proposed operating principles for the board:

- Membership includes 10-12 people, including:
 - 4 *appointed* members: a Warrior of the Centre; a representative from the Dekyong Council; a representative of the Dorje Kasung command group; and a senior teacher
 - 6-8 *additional* members who are members of the Halifax Shambhala Centre
- The Board makes decisions based on the principles of ‘Broad Agreement’ as set out by the Sakyong’s Council in “General Principles of Decision Making.”
- The Board consults with anyone it chooses to, in order to fulfill its role
- Length of term: 2-3 years (initial terms to be staggered)
- The Director of the Shambhala Centre is a member of the Board
- The chair of the Board would be chosen from among the additional members (not from the appointed members)
- The Board ensures adequate transparency and communication with community by making minutes or notes of proceedings available to members
- The Board will attempt to maintain diversity among its members

Timeline

We would like to begin the process of accepting nominations from the community by April 1. Nominees must be members, must be willing to serve, and must be seconded by another member. We will meet with nominees

around April 20, and the list of nominees with recommendations of the Governance Group will then be submitted to the Kalapa Court for approval. We hope to have the Board in place to interview the short list of applicants for the Centre Director job sometime around the end of May.

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