

Franciscan Renewal Center
September Board Meeting
Contingency Planning and Succession Discussion
Tuesday, September 19, 2023

Succession Planning is critical to our immediate and long-term success because it:

- 1) protects our organization's capacity to perform key functions, sustain important relationships, and fulfill our commitments to the people we serve, our donors, and the community, and
- 2) develops staff and volunteers (including board) for future leadership needs and opportunities

Key Questions we want to discuss:

1. Current Leadership team, tenure, individual strengths and expertise
2. How are very short-term absences covered right now for the Executive Director (like vacation)?
3. Assuming payroll was happening, the first concerns to arise in case of the Executive Director's unexpected absence would be?
4. What would the board's role be in case of an unexpected absence? Who's involved?
5. If the Executive Director/CEO were unavailable for more than a few weeks, we would need additional support in...?
6. What internal and external resources could we turn to?
7. If we decided we needed an Interim Executive Director, where would we look? What would be key experience and qualities needed in this person? Short-term vs. longer term?

Preparing for the Inevitable: A Succession Readiness Checklist

When the following conditions are in place, an agency can expect a relatively smooth transition to new leadership whenever it might occur. An agency might determine which elements below are lacking in its current operations and then create a “succession plan” or “capacity building plan” that prescribes activities and timelines for filling the gaps. The agency is then ready for leadership transitions, foreseen or unforeseen. (Building a Leaderful Organization – Tim Wolfred)

Yes	Some	No	NA	
				A strategic plan is in place with goals and objectives for the near term (up to three years), including objectives for leadership talent development
				The board evaluates the executive director annually on general performance and achievement of strategic goals.
				The board, based on its annual self-evaluation, is satisfactorily performing its major governance jobs—financial oversight, executive support and oversight, policy development, and strategic planning.
				The executive’s direct reports, based on annual evaluations, are judged as solidly skilled for their positions.
				The top management cohort, as a high performing team: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a solid team culture in place in which members support one another and can reach decisions as a group efficiently and harmoniously; • Shares leadership of the organization with the executive in having significant input to all major agency decisions; • Can lead the organization in the absence of the executive; • Has authority to make and carry out decisions within their respective areas of responsibility.
				Another staff person or board member shares important external relationships (major donors, funders, community leaders) maintained by the executive.
				A financial reserve is in place with a minimum of three months’ operating capital.
				Financial systems meet industry standards. Financial reports are up to date and provide the data needed by the board and senior managers responsible for the agency’s financial strength and viability.
				Operational manuals exist for key administrative systems and are easily accessible and up to date.
				Top program staff have documented their key activities in writing and have identified another staff person who can carry their duties in an emergency.

Sustaining Board Leadership

Succession Planning for the Board

In many regards, planning for succession of board leaders is just as difficult as planning for the succession of staff leaders. Though we always hope to know well in advance when a board leader will be leaving, in reality careers, family, or illness can often throw well-made plans off course. In addition, new board leaders need time to learn about the organization, the board and staff team, and their role – and to learn all this on a part-time, volunteer schedule.

We realize that multiple strategies will be required in order to build and maintain a strong leadership culture at The Franciscan Renewal Center.

Key Strategies

- Identifying Leaders – the most informal, watching the board work and observing those people who bring the passion for our efforts along with leadership skills, organizational skills, and discipline to get things done.
- Replicating Leaders – each board officer and committee chair is challenged to develop their own successor and have that person ready before they are needed.
- Recruiting Leaders – as the governance committee is recruiting new candidates, they are looking for new members who bring leadership experience and skills from other boards or a similar team environment.
- Leadership Roles – whether heading a special event, a task force, or other short-term effort, we look for ways that board members and other volunteers can develop and showcase their leadership skills.
- Learning from Participating – though conventional wisdom suggests that every conversation have the fewest possible people involved, we open the doors of most board and committee meetings to any board member who is interested with the hope that they will develop new interest and learn more about how things work within our organization.

Putting It Into Action:

- Every Board Officer and Committee Chair should be able to name at least one person who would be able, willing, and reasonably prepared to step into their role if they were unable to continue.
- We will put into practice the identification of the next board chair one year prior to the time they will take office and build a culture of strong leadership.

Assembling Key Staff Contingency Plans

Please complete the following questions/blanks to organize key information about your current roles and responsibilities. We are trying to take a minimalist approach but if you have additional information to provide or have assembled procedures for many of the things that you do, please attach that material with this submission.

The current thinking is that this information will be reviewed and updated with your immediate supervisor annually as part of the performance evaluation process.

Name _____ Job Title _____

- 1) In the chart below, please begin by listing the various areas of responsibility where you spend most of your time, or that are unique to you (no one else in the organization does it).
- 2) For each of those roles, note the person or people who would cover for you in an unexpected absence, this might be similar to how coverage is handled when you take a vacation and should presume that you are not easily reached by phone.
- 3) If you have not yet identified a way to cover this responsibility in your absence or you have identified a person to cover but need to train that person, please add that note.

1) Key Role/Responsibility	2) Who could provide interim coverage?	3) What preparation, documentation or cross-training is needed?

- 4) If you were out for more than 30 days, what would be the greatest challenges to covering your area? What guidance can you offer about who should be involved in covering until you return and what they need to know or do?

5) What Key people or organizations does this position work with that no one else works with?

Name/Title	Organization	E-mail and Phone#

6) In addition to the people listed in Q#5 above, what is the list of people/organizations that need to be informed in case of your serious illness or departure?

Name/Title	Organization	E-mail and Phone#

7) Please spend a few minutes looking at your calendar to briefly note your recurring responsibilities and outline an annual calendar of major responsibilities and deadlines – don't try to fill every box.

Things I do every week

- .
- .
-

Things I do every month

- .
- .
-

Annual Calendar

Month	Key Tasks/Projects/Events	Key Deadlines
January		
February		
March		
April		
May		
June		
July		
August		
September		
October		
November		
December		

Successor Development

- Who are the high potential people on your team right now? What makes them stand out? What would have the greatest impact on their growth and increase their likelihood to stay with us?

Please submit this form to your Executive Director with a copy of your most recent Job Description and any other information that is pertinent to someone covering your role in your absence.