Acuerdo: Participatory Governance Structure of Roxbury Community College

This document describes the structures and processes of participatory, shared governance at Roxbury Community College. It was approved as an update to an earlier document of April 1990, and replaces that document as the operative instrument for the College.

Approvals

Dawna Parry, President, Student Government Association

Theresa Russ, Co-President, Faculty Assembly

Shonda Green, President, Classified/Confidential Staff Assembly

Elizabeth Clark, President, Professional Staff Assembly

President, Administrative Assembly

Javad Moulai, Secretary, Acuerdo Board of Officers

Dr. Valerie R. Roberson, President of the College

Gerald Chertavian, Chair, RCC Board of Trustees
Acuerdo means “consensus, agreement.”

PURPOSE
The mission of the Acuerdo is to allow all parts of the RCC community to come together to foster communication and provide representation of all of the College’s diverse constituencies for the interests of RCC as a whole. The goal of the Acuerdo is to encourage the College community to speak with a united voice, and to provide input into College policy.

STRUCTURE
RCC’s Acuerdo is a system of assemblies and committees, and the Acuerdo Board of Officers.

The Acuerdo Board is the College participatory governance body which advises the President directly and represents the general will of the entire College community. The Acuerdo Board consists of presidents or chairpersons from the five constituent assemblies.

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES:

- All students, faculty, staff, and administrators are citizens of the college and are concerned with the primary goal of improved learning and teaching.
- Stewardship provided by the President and Acuerdo Board shall be predicated upon an atmosphere of trust and respect for individuals and constituencies. Mutual trust and respect are essential to the health of the college community.
- The rights of individuals and constituencies will be secured through majority vote.
- Minority views and opinions will be promoted and protected within the college community.

COMMUNICATION
One of the most important functions of the Acuerdo is to foster dialogue — not just between the President and the College community, but also among different assemblies and in the committees and within each assembly.

LIMITATIONS:
One policy area the Acuerdo does not have influence over is that of wages and employment conditions. These are the exclusive domain of the unions, administration, individual employees, and the Trustees. Although certain assemblies may have much of the same membership as the corresponding union, the Acuerdo structure’s purpose is shared governance and management, not employment advocacy.

Acuerdo governance structures must be within the framework of the laws of the Commonwealth, the Board of Regents of Higher Education, and the RCC Board of Trustees. No governance body and no section of this document may in any way conflict with Affirmative Action procedures and guidelines or collective bargaining agreements.
ROLE OF COLLEGE PRESIDENT
The President of the College approves all policy decisions and has full and final legal authority for all decisions affecting RCC, but is expected to honor the participatory governance structure and follow its procedures. The President’s decisions are legally subject to the Massachusetts Board of Regents of Higher Education, the Roxbury Community College Board of Trustees, and the Governor, who appoints those boards. The President acts as steward to the whole college community and submits all major policy initiatives to appropriate governance groups before making a decision.

The College President may call a meeting of any one of the constituencies at any time, including general faculty and/or staff meetings. One (1) week notice will be given; such meetings are not considered constituent assemblies for constituencies in attendance.

All Acuerdo actions are subject to the President's veto.

CONSTITUENT BODIES
The Acuerdo is made up of
1. standing committees
2. the Acuerdo Board of Officers (the Acuerdo Board)
3. five assemblies:
   - Students
   - Faculty
   - Classified/Confidential Staff
   - Professional Staff
   - Administrators.

Definitions
- Students: currently enrolled students, both full- and part-time. Alumni may be included via their engagement with the Student Assembly / Student Government Association.
- Faculty: those occupying full-time positions as instructor, assistant or associate professor, or professor and eligible to be members of the Faculty/Professional staff bargaining unit.
- Classified/Confidential Staff: classified and other non-professional full-time employees; full-time confidential support staff not eligible to be members of a bargaining unit.
- Professional Staff: those occupying full-time professional positions whose primary duties are other than teaching and who are eligible to be members of the Faculty/Professional staff bargaining unit.
- Administrators: full-time professional employees who are not eligible to be members of the Faculty/Professional staff bargaining unit.
- Part-time Employees: adjunct faculty, administrators, professional and support staff employed on a part-time basis. Each constituent assembly should include part-time employees in their deliberations and should decide on the extent of their voting rights.
- Employees on Special Arrangements: temporary full-time employees such as those on “soft money,” grants, internships, exchanges, or other special arrangements and who are not eligible to be members of a College bargaining unit.

All committees, whether standing or ad hoc, including those specifically appointed by the President, report to the Acuerdo Board and the President.

Sub-committees appointed by individual constituent assemblies or committees or their chairs and dealing only with matters of internal concern may limit their reports to the appointing bodies.

MINUTES
- Minutes for each of these bodies are required at each meeting.
- Once approved, copies of all minutes and related documents should be given to the archivist in the library and to the Acuerdo Secretary for the Acuerdo Moodle site.

- Record all decisions made, and if a vote is taken, record the vote.
- Made available within one (1) week of the meeting to persons in the college.

MEETINGS
Ample notice must be given (not less than twenty-four hours) for an emergency meeting of any governance body, and every effort must be made to inform the whole college community.

Time and place of meeting of every governance body shall be preset and regular as indicated elsewhere in this document and shall be widely publicized within the college community.

DEFINITION, MEMBERSHIP, and DUTIES of GOVERNANCE BODIES

I. ACUERDO BOARD

PURPOSE
The Acuerdo Board of Officers (the Acuerdo Board) advises the President and is the ultimate forum for college-wide discussion and input on policy initiatives. The Acuerdo Board considers all major policy initiatives after obtaining ample information and input from all segments of RCC.

MAJORITY
The Board should determine its own definition of a quorum from time to time. Acuerdo Board decisions are made by consensus or agreement of all the voting members; if that is not possible, the majority of those present shall prevail. Acuerdo assumes that mutual trust and respect are essential to the health of the College community. Therefore, each of the assemblies gets one vote, and each is equally important.
Acuerdo Secretary is selected and appointed by the College President.

Responsibilities of Acuerdo Secretary

- Convene monthly meetings of the Acuerdo Board.
- Keep minutes of Acuerdo Board meetings.
- Oversee staff work needed to implement Acuerdo procedures and agreed upon activities.
- Has no voting rights.

MEETINGS
Meetings of the Acuerdo Board must be announced at least two days in advance. The designated representatives of each assembly may send substitutes or alternates to vote in their place if necessary; the designated representative must inform the Acuerdo Secretary in these cases. Any member of the College community may attend these meetings.

PROCEDURES
The Acuerdo Board responds to policy proposals presented by the President, the Assemblies and/or the committees. As they may deem appropriate, the Acuerdo Board may refer proposals directly to the President, send proposals to appropriate committees or assemblies for further study or refinement, and/or convene any other college-wide forum necessary to ensure sufficient informed input.

- Assembly presidents are the officially recognized voting members to the Acuerdo Board, though alternates are allowed.
- Assembly officers must bring before the Acuerdo Board any proposal or issue given to them by their constituent assembly and must represent their constituency as directed.
- Once a proposal has been presented to the Acuerdo, it must be acted upon within one (1) month.
  - If the Acuerdo Board approves a proposal, the Board will refer the proposal directly to the President in writing.
  - If the College President has no objections within ten (10) days, the decision of the Acuerdo will be implemented. If the President has objections, s/he will convey them to the Acuerdo Board.
  - If the Acuerdo Board feels a proposal needs further study or refinement, it refers the proposal to the appropriate committee or other body.
  - If the Acuerdo Board rejects the proposal entirely, it will be returned with the rationale for rejection made known to the originators.
- If the Acuerdo Board approves a change in Acuerdo principles (i.e., a change to this document), 3 of the 5 assemblies must approve it, and special efforts should be made to ensure broad input from the College at large.