



## OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Dear Unity College Community Member,

On behalf of the Unity College Board of Trustees, I'm writing to share some important and exciting information about recent adjustments to our college bylaws.

Over the past decade we have seen a significant paradigm shift within higher education. We have witnessed an industry struggling to maintain the traditional four year model in a sustainable manner, and sadly hear of small colleges closing at an alarming rate. As well, technological advances have created alternative methods of delivering education to a broader population of 'students' and providing access to a global classroom.

This 'industry of education' has become a complex maze of survival for future generations. At Unity, we have been fortunate to see increased enrollment, and a solid financial base for the moment. However, complacency is not our friend.

Within the past seven years the Board mandated the development and implementation of an ongoing Strategic Plan to assure a viable future for the College. An immediate realization of the plan was the need to create alternative revenue streams in order to diversify the college's income model.

The Board also recognized that in order for Unity to define success as an institution, it could no longer afford the prolonged discourse of decision-making which at times has taken years to create action. Strategically, the Board understood that being nimble as an organization was a critical component to its strategic ethos for long-term success.

As the Strategic Plan was implemented and evolved, the Board, in conjunction with the President, launched a number of initiatives with the goal of creating a long-term vision for the institution.

The first initiative asked the simple question of 'Who, what and where is Unity?' and became known as the Strategic Branding Initiative, or "Deep Dive". The second initiative was to understand how the organizational structure operates and affects process and management, and how could it become more nimble. And finally, the third initiative focused on the area of governance, and how the nimbleness of the college's processes are affected by current governance practices.

The conversations in committee as well as quarterly meetings on these ongoing initiatives have informed the Board's view of Unity's position within the future landscape of small private institutions. We have now reached a time where the collective knowledge of all three initiatives will allow for action, as within our purview, and to look beyond the status quo to set a course of strength and flexibility for future success.

To this end, the proposed changes to the organizational structure and associated system of governance described below will build on Unity's current momentum and promote a more nimble organization, guided by a leadership of innovation to ensure a sustainable institution with financial and cultural vitality.

The proposed changes can be organized into two major, but somewhat overlapping, categories: 1) reorganize the structures of the existing college, and 2) adjust the role of the President, other faculty members, and students in our governance system.

### ***Proposed Changes in College Organization***

*In order to achieve the goal of a more nimble operating model, Unity College will move from a single operational entity, with a single faculty and a single staff, into a more decentralized “enterprise” model, defined as follows:*

- *There will continue to be one board, one accreditation, one president, one chief academic officer, and some aspects of administration and some board committees will continue to have an “enterprise-wide” function.*
- *The college will be organized into Strategic Education Business Units, or SEBU's.*
- *There will be some changes to the committees of the board to improve alignment between the board and the new college structure.*
- *The largest of the SEBU's will be the traditional part of Unity College, which will be called the Flagship.*
- *The first “new” SEBU (which has already been created and is growing rapidly), is Distance Education.*
- *Each SEBU will have its own faculty and its own faculty meetings, and many of its own policies and procedures. This will allow each SEBU to better customize its operations for maximum success, and will allow each faculty to focus on the educational decisions most relevant to its expertise.*

### ***Proposed Changes in College Governance***

*In order to further achieve the goal of a more nimble operating model, adjustments will be made to the system of shared governance at Unity College, reversing some decisions that were made by the board in 2006 and making the system more consistent with NEASC accreditation standards, as follows:*

- *While each SEBU’s faculty will continue to have a substantive voice and be responsible for the implementation of the curriculum within its SEBU, we are streamlining the process of making programmatic changes across the entire college in accordance with the college’s strategic priorities. Going forward, all such changes will go through the president.*
- *In addition to abundant faculty representation on a wide variety of college wide committees and groups, there will continue to be one Flagship faculty representative and one Flagship student representative to the full board.*
- *The role of the faculty and student representatives will be to facilitate the sharing of information between the board and their respective groups, but these representatives will no longer be voting members of the board, they will have no special administrative or governance role in the college, and they will not have the authority to bring issues, reports, or proposals (other than whistleblower or grievance issues, as documented in our employee handbook) to the board without the prior approval of the president.*
- *These representatives will come from the Flagship SEBU and will be nominated by election of the Flagship faculty and student body, respectively, but they will have communication responsibilities to all faculty members and all students, respectively.*
- *Starting with the next time such elections occur, these nominees will need to be approved by the governance committee of the board.*
- *Finally, the president, as the head of each SEBU’s faculty, will preside at (or designate a facilitator for) the meetings of each faculty as needed.*

We believe these proposed changes, while sure to be challenging to some members of the Unity College community, will serve the long-term best interests of Unity College. We have also provided more detail about these proposed changes in an attached FAQ sheet.

Sincerely,

*John Newlin, Board Chair  
Dr. Melik Peter Khoury, President  
Unity College*

## **FAQS REGARDING ENTERPRISE MODEL**

**Q: Why does Unity College need to change?** A: Unity College must modernize its institutional structure and practices and become nimble enough to respond to rapidly changing industry, demographic, and societal environments in order to avoid becoming another college on a growing list of small, private, not-for-profit colleges dissolving.

**Q: What is an “enterprise model?”** A: The “enterprise model” is an institutional structure that allows for policy, human resource, and curricular separation between college units. Most larger universities are use an enterprise model, although many smaller institutions of higher education do so as well, including Harvard and Southern New Hampshire University.

**Q: Why does Unity College need an enterprise model?** A: An enterprise structure will provide Unity College with the vital structural flexibility to nimbly develop independent Strategic Education Business Units (SEBU's) - real life, revenue-generating manifestations of our curriculum.

**Q: Why SEBU's?** A: SEBU's will generate revenues and help to stabilize Unity’s operating revenues, thereby helping to keep tuition costs sustainable, providing living/working opportunities for students, and diversifying revenue streams to protect Unity College from market fluctuations that have hurt and will continue to affect tuition-dependent revenues for colleges and universities.

**Q: What SEBU's will we have?** A: To start, Unity College will have two SEBU's: Distance Education, which currently includes the online master’s degree, and Unity College Flagship, which is the main educational institution and currently everything else. The expectation is that we will develop new SEBU's as opportunity presents and capacity allows.

**Q: Why is there a need for governance and policy separation between the SEBU's?** A: Differentiated enterprises require differentiated expertise and differentiated employee expectations. Separation allows us to develop SEBU's while protecting the core business (Flagship) from financial risk and unplanned resource drains.

**Q: Will each SEBU have its own accreditation?** A: No. Unity College will maintain single accreditation with NEASC.

**Q: How is this impacted by the “Deep Dive?”** The result of the 4-year, \$450,000 strategic branding initiative (another outgrowth of the College’s strategic initiatives), identifies frameworks for future success that involve the creation of flexible development of independent SEBU's.

**Q: Will there be changes to the board of trustees?** Yes, a board of trustee committee restructure is necessary to respond to changing conditions, facilitate the creation of Strategic Education Business Units (SEBU's) and align with the Association of Governing Board's latest recommendations: "Most boards spend the majority of their time overseeing institutional operations, typically divided into committees that replicate the administrative reporting areas (academic affairs, finances, facilities, fundraising, and so on)." [Consequential Boards: Adding Value Where it Matters Most](#). AGB, 2014.

**Q: Why is there a need for changes to the role of the president?** A: The changes to the role of the president clarify the office of the president and align that position with industry expectations. The changes are designed to allow the president to function as a nimble innovator, and not just a gatekeeper with veto power.

**Q: How do the proposed roles of faculty and students on the board of trustees compare to other colleges?** Based on AGB's research:

**TABLE 36: TYPES OF REPRESENTATION ON BOARDS**

	<i>Student Voting</i>	<i>Student Non-Voting</i>	<i>Faculty Voting</i>	<i>Faculty Non-Voting</i>
Public	44.9%	25.8%	10.9%	9.6%
Independent	9.7%	12.7%	15.4%	15.1%

**Q: What about shared governance?** A: The faculty at Unity College retain a significant voice regarding appropriate areas of college decision-making through a robust set of college-wide and faculty-specific committees and through a number of faculty officers and representatives on institutional decision-making bodies including Senior Staff, Accreditation Review Committee, College Policy & Process Committee and Budget Committee.

**Q: What about timing?** A: Regarding the proposed changes to the system of governance, the current system has been in place since 2006, at which time it was characterized by the president, in board meeting minutes, as an experiment. Starting in 2012, if not earlier, numerous efforts by the president to move the college nimbly, within this experimental governance system, have been significantly slowed by the provisions of this system, and as a result, the board has determined that the system needs to be changed without further delay. The proposed changes to the college structure have been discussed for nearly two years. The results of the strategic branding initiative clearly affirm the need to establish additionally SEBU's supporting the need for these changes.