Begin with the Mission of The UMC

Make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world

Committee Basics from ¶258.2

Purpose of the Staff-Pastor Parish Relations Committee
The Staff-Parish Relations Committee is the administrative unit in the local church where staff and congregational interests are integrated to focus on the mission of the church.
  • The SPRC serves the “governing board” in an advisory capacity related to personnel administration.
  • It does not exist to provide managerial or leadership oversight to the staff team (that is the work of the senior pastor).

Membership
  • Between 5 and 9 persons (one shall be a young adult and one may be a youth)
  • Must be professing members
  • Divided into three year classes
  • Members shall be able to succeed themselves for one three-year term (new in 2009)
  • Oversees the work to all staff
  • Pastor should be present, unless s/he excuses self or if D.S. is in attendance
  • The lay delegate and lay leader are members and have voice and vote
  • On charges, a representative & Lay Leader from each church
  • Relates to and works with all staff (paid and non-salaried)
  • People engaged and attentive to their own Christian spiritual development

Who we cannot be
  • Staff members
  • No more than one immediate family member from the same household
  • Immediate family members of the pastor or staff

Meetings
  • At least quarterly
  • Written “minutes” of decisions/actions
  • Pastor present, unless s/he excuses self
  • Only with knowledge of pastor or district superintendent
  • May meet with the district superintendent without pastor or appointed staff
    ➢ With due notice before and sharing immediately after
  • Shall meet in closed session (BOD ¶258.2e)

Confidentiality
  • Issues are discussed during meeting, not between meetings
  • All matters under discussion are kept in strict confidence, i.e., a “safe” place
  • All input brought to the meeting is held in confidence, but is “owned” input
  • If you cannot keep a confidence, then have the integrity to resign from the Committee.
  • Joint statements owned & shared by all members
  • Careful reporting to Council of each meeting
Resources for Pastoral Relations Committees

Effective and Ineffective Pastoral Relations Committees (PRC)

Characteristics of Effective and Ineffective PRCs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Ineffective</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meet regularly and often</td>
<td>Conduct annual evaluations only</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prepare for meetings</td>
<td>• Withholds regular feedback</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Have an agenda</td>
<td>• Lets issues build too long</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Stay focused on agenda and identify topics for future meetings</td>
<td>• Related to salary and appointment decisions more than to growth</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Allow adequate time</td>
<td>Allow too little time and care</td>
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<tr>
<td>Establish partnership with pastor</td>
<td>• Insufficient time to do task well</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Keep pastor informed</td>
<td>• Insufficient care in getting input and preparing for evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Take pastor into confidence</td>
<td>Behave unfairly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• &quot;We are in this together&quot; attitude</td>
<td>• Bringing unevaluated complaints</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Provide support and understanding</td>
<td>• Bringing anonymous complaints</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Giving all sources equal credibility</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Doesn't put issues in perspective</td>
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What PRCs and Clergy Most Need from Each Other

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRCs Most Need from Clergy</th>
<th>Clergy Most Need from PRCs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation and receptivity</td>
<td>Honest feedback</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Willing to listen with open mind</td>
<td>• Balanced, objective, thoughtful, and candid feedback</td>
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<td>• Attempt to understand members' needs and concerns</td>
<td>• Treated as adults who can take criticism</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Attempt to make some changes</td>
<td>Personal concern and support</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Openness to improvement ideas</td>
<td>• Advocate for pastor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clear and open communication</td>
<td>Communication with the congregation</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Pastor's vision for ministry</td>
<td>• Education of congregation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Candid assessment of what is going on in the church</td>
<td>• Feedback from and to congregation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Information about issues and needs</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Based on a comparison of pastoral relations committees deemed effective by both the PRC chair and the pastor and those deemed ineffective by the chair and pastor.

Lewis Center for Church Leadership
Wesley Theological Seminary www.churchleadership.com
Duties of Committee (¶258.2g)

**Communication**
- Confer and counsel with pastor & staff, advising them of ministry conditions
- Continually interpret to people the nature and function of ministry
- Counsel pastor & staff on relationships with congregation, priorities, skills, goals
- Intercept to congregation: preparation for ordained ministry, Ministerial Education Fund

**Personnel Issues**
- Develop and recommend to Council staff positions and job descriptions for staff other than pastor
- Recommend to Council personnel policies and monitor compliance
- Consult: pulpit supply, compensation, vacation, insurances, pension, housing — making recommendations to Council
- Enlist, interview, evaluate, review, recommend: Lay Speakers, Candidates for Ministry and missionary service
- Consult: continuing education, renewal
- New in 2012: “To encourage, monitor, and support clergy and lay staff pursuit of health and wholeness” (¶258.2g(16))

**Parsonage Issues**
- With Trustee and Pastor, make annual review of parsonage
- “The committee will follow up to assure timely resolution of parsonage problems affecting the health of the pastor’s family.” (¶258.2g(16))

**Annual Evaluation**
- Provide annual evaluations for pastor and staff to encourage effective ministry

**Appointment Issues**
- Confer with pastor & cooperate with pastor, DS, and bishop in securing clergy leadership when it becomes evident that the interests of the church and pastor will be served by a change.
- Such conferring and cooperating with DS and bishop are advisory only.