

# CONSTITUENCY RECOMMENDATIONS & ADMINISTRATIVE DECISIONS

## GOAL

To provide intellectual insight into the role of constituency groups in providing recommendations for administrative final decision-making.

## DEFINITIONS

Administrator (Chief Executive Officer -CEO): A person who directs/administers the activities of other persons and accepts the responsibility for achieving certain objectives and making final decisions in keeping with the standards of the organization, even though the role title might not include the word “administrator.”

Constituency Group: A group, body, or designed board of select individuals that patronize, support, and provide insight and personal expertise relative to an administrative assignment. The intended result of the constituency group is to provide a written recommendation(s) for the ultimate final administrative decision(s).

Independent Chairperson: An independent person unassociated from the constituency group that conducts and leads a constituency group process. The role involves chairperson leadership, the optimization of group governance, and communicating with the administrator. The materials and information the Independent Chairperson shares with the constituency group members are approved and finalized by the administrator. The role involves leading discussions and determination of written constituency group recommendations to help determine a final decision(s) as set forth by the administrator.

Job Description: A written and signed document that explains an individual’s expected job role, duties, responsibilities, and required qualifications.

## THE ADMINISTRATOR’S ROLE

The administrator’s role definition states that the administration makes final decisions, and is, therefore, held accountable for requiring compliance to final administrative decisions. An administrative role is a difficult job—therefore, it is often best (in many situations) to seek support and advice from an *appointed* group of constituents.

The constituency group recommendations and, consequently, the administrative final decision(s) are to be supportive of the organization’s mission statement, policies, procedures, long-term goals, short-term objectives, and job descriptions. It is the administrator’s final decision(s) and the long-term outcome(s) of the administrator’s final decision that determines the degree of recognized administrative ability and success.

The administrative role is identified in an administrator's job description which includes the required cognitive information, psychomotor ability/skills, and general attitude related to the administrative position and responsibilities. The administrator's cognitive information is to be recognized as intellectually sound and appropriate, required psychomotor ability/skills are to be specifically related to the job, and the attitude toward the acceptance of constituency group recommendations is intended to be considered regarding the final administrative decision(s). Once an administrative final decision is made by an administrator, coercion for a change in an administrative final decision(s) change by any constituency group member is not tolerated.

The administrator's job description requires thoughtful and intellectual administrative final decisions that are founded on the acceptance or rejection of a constituency group's recommendation(s) and the pre-established intellectual requirements of THE THREE AMIGOS—an intellectually sound approach to all administrative final decisions.

THE THREE AMIGOS:

1. Psychological Astuteness (ability to behave and react in a positive, constructive, and predictable way).
2. Critical Thinking (ability to objectively analyze an issue to form an accurate judgment).
3. Common Sense (ability to have sound judgment in practical matters).

Administrators of tax-funded and supported programs, organizations, and educational institutions must consider final administrative decisions (according to their correctly written job description) that maintain community tax-payer support for themselves and the program/organization. The administrator's need/desire to continue to be supported in the administrative (CEO) role by a tax-payer constituency group(s) while (at the same time) trying to make an objective administrative final decision, can sometimes be an administrative challenge. In this instance, such challenging final decisions by the administrator should strive to be a successful combination of constituency group tax-payer members' recommendations and the administrator's intellectually determined final decision using The Three Amigos as they relate to the administrative role. This cooperative effort between a constituency group and an administrator's final decision promotes a taxpayer's community's current and future positive efforts that result in appropriate and accurate final decision-making outcomes. The final administrative decision(s) that considers the tax-funded and supported programs and ultimate community outcome(s) becomes the historical telling sign of administrative strength and competence.

Promoting intellectual leadership competence by the administrator is when the administrator holds fast to the final administrative decision defensibly and confidently. Such administrative intellectual assurance of leadership is enhanced by holding constituency members accountable for their appropriate and accurate recommendations that have resulted in a final administrative decision. However, the administrator who chooses only a constituency group recommendation without administrative intellectual prowess to make final administrative decisions is often felt to be lacking in the confident administrative ability to promote the standards of the organization.

**THE INDEPENDENT CHAIR ROLE**

The Independent Chair role is supportive of (but different from) the constituency board membership. The single-person Independent Chair role is hefty with an administrative assignment to control the group constituent's goal-directed expectations to eventually identify in writing to the administrator the constituency board recommendations.

The Independent Chair role has a unique job description requiring the management (not necessarily participating or giving personal advice) of constituency group performance, exactness, and their job description expected behavior(s). Helping to maintain a stable and objective environment in a usually active and sometimes controversial meeting environment can be challenging; however, it becomes necessary to facilitate effective, on-task, and candid constituency board communication to eventually produce written, accurate, and effective recommendations to the administrator.

There is an expected Independent Chair role involvement and prestigious status. This person individually directs constituency board processes through skillfully optimizing constituency group thinking while (at the same time) maintaining goal-oriented outcomes of appropriate and responsible administrative recommendations. The role requires a sense of constituency board member respect while carefully managing (not necessarily participating) in the orderly communication that is intended to maintain objectivity. The outcome results in constructive, rational, written, and constituency group member's signatures of the group's administrative recommendations.

To provide constructive input into possible administrative final decisions, the constituency group, ideally, would initially be presented with the following:

1. A written job description document indicating the group assignment title, mission, purpose, goal, description of the activity, days and times of expected meetings, assignment requirements, expectations, and purpose of the group. Other information could be added for clarification.
2. A document of understanding that states clearly the intended and recommended role and responsibilities of the constituency group as an Advisory Group and not a Decision-Making Group to the administrator. At the onset of an occasional group meeting, each group member is to sign, again, this written document and be allowed to ask questions for clarification about the roles and expectations of constituency group performance and the role of the Independent Chairperson.
3. The title, geographical location, and times of the meetings are to be considered.
4. If a person is being interviewed for a job/position, the written job description and applicant's related information are provided by the Independent Chair for each interview.
5. The Independent Chairperson manages constituency board member's behavior, offers a "Thank You" for appropriate responses, and (if needed) dismisses from the room inappropriate behavior exhibited by any constituency board member or visitor.

There are times of necessity and circumstances where the Independent Chairperson must be performing the role of administrator—therefore, making final decisions on behalf of the constituency board's recommendations. The Independent Chair role does not require or allow a voting of the constituent board to make the final decision. Therefore, the minutes of the constituency board minutes reflect the final decision of the person performing the Independent Chair role assignment (in the absence of a so-called administrator). The need for intellectual

ability using the Three Amigos is extremely important in the appropriate functioning of the Independent Chair role function acting as an administrator.

## **CONSTITUENCY GROUP ROLE**

Constituency groups are known as committees, counsels, advisory groups, commissioned groups, boards, and other creative words for groups that provide influential administrative or Independent Chairperson recommendations.

One of the most common constituent groups is related to the recommendation of hiring a specific person to fulfill a specific role within the organization. This type of constituency group recommendation process is intended to minimize biases.

A constituency group is a predetermined and assigned limited uneven number of organized or similarly interested individuals from a larger conglomerate of similarly interested individuals who share a common bond of interest and responsibility. Their constituency group involvement is often related to belonging to an affiliation related to a selected/determined business, professional group or entity, special interest group, community members, or academic affiliation. The association or administratively assigned constituency group is carefully selected or determined by vote to provide the required expertise in the field/area, situation(s), or question(s) under scrutiny. The constituency group members are expected to be (or made to be) knowledgeable about the group responsibilities and have effective intellectual use of the Three Amigos to assess options and make collectively determined recommendation(s) to the administrator (or a person assigned to that role, such as an Independent Chairperson), regarding a final administrative decision(s). These constituent group requirements are carefully outlined in the constituency group job description.

Constituency groups (when the job description requires identifying an appropriate applicant for a specific job) perform interviews, complete administratively prepared assessment forms, and share privately between members of the group their verbal subjective feelings (pros and cons) regarding the capability and qualifications of each job applicant to meet the established required job description, and their personal subjective opinions as a constituency group. Such collective sharing among constituency group members ultimately results in a final written group agreement given to the administrator or Independent Chairperson, if acting as the administrator. The final decision, for which the constituency committee has presented their recommendation(s), is always the administrator's (or administratively assigned Independent Chairperson, as administratively assigned).

The decision-making process of a constituency group's recommendations resulting in an administrative hiring final decision will often lead to a history of positive or negative final employment decisions by the administrator. These historical outcomes provide the affirmation of "good" or "bad" final administrative employment decisions. The key to historically recognizing a "good" administrator (or assigned Independent Chairperson as administrator) requires the administrator to have historically and consistently intellectualized the recommendation(s) of a constituent group to make the administrative final decision.

Regardless of a constituency group recommendation for any decision, the administrator's role (or as administratively assigned as a final decision-maker, is to be an outcome of considering or choosing the most accurate and appropriate decision from the constituency group recommendation(s) that best meets, supports, and futuristically assures the continued stability of the organization's standards.

## **MAXIMIZING OBJECTIVITY & MINIMIZING SUBJECTIVITY**

Remembering the original intention and goal of a constituency group to maximize recommendation objectivity is an administrative responsibility! This allows the objective process of the constituency group to complete its intended mission, function, and purpose.

A problem of usurping the constituency group role can occur when an administrator seeks or accepts personal input from other (non-constituency group) interested parties or organizational employees regarding a future administrative final decision. As a human factor, the intentional or unintentional listening or administrative communication seeking of non-constituency group recommendation(s) could easily influence administrative thought and final administrative decision-making; thereby, perhaps appearing to ignore the constituency group recommendation(s). Such information naturally (and unfortunately) usurps the constituency group's assignment to produce objective recommendations and could replace the administrative final decision with an overt subjective administrative decision.

Therefore, it is most advantageous for the administrator to respect the constituency group process and allow without compromise the final constituency group recommendations to occur as originally assigned and intended without allowing or seeking additional input from other individuals. Such self-control by an administrator of not interrupting, interfering, or trying to influence the outcome of the constituency group process is to be an administrative expected behavior. It might, also, be advantageous if a known policy or a job description requirement exists that intentionally curtails additional outside influences during the constituent group process. To disrupt or interfere with a constituency group process usurps the constituency group's contribution to the objectivity of their assigned role.

Whereas, understanding the need for constituent group process might be important, it is also important to understand the administrator's assigned role. The administrator role (or as assigned by the administrator--(e.g. Independent Chairperson) hopefully is identified in the administrator's job description as the person responsible for making final decisions as part of administrative role. With this intended and granted power, final decisions are based on constituency group recommendations. It is intended that if constituent groups are used, they are contributors of information and recommendations that help the administrator make logical and accountable decisions, not intentionally make the decision for the administrator.

Strong administrators who take seriously their role as competent and responsible administrators use constituency group processes to provide informational input—not to make decisions. There are times when the administrator may succumb to only constituency group pressure; however, the strength of the administrator is recognized when recommendations are noted and appreciated by the administrator, but the administrative decision is based on objectivity. It is this administrative strength of decision determination that is the expected role of the administrator.

When an administrator makes the final decision after consideration of the constituency group input, it is made clear that all constituency group input is/was considered and appreciated.

## **ABERRANT DECISION-MAKING LEADERSHIP BY THE ADMINISTRATION**

It is a common desire of humankind to be liked in whatever role. The administrative role is no different! Therefore, administrators often seek independently other groups and individuals' rather than the constituent group for subjective advice about their desires and recommendations regarding leadership final decisions.

An "Administrator" is hopefully well-educated and/or experientially astute. However, administrators, like everyone else, desire to be appreciated and want to be "liked." Therein can be the potential downfall and even the sometimes relinquishing of an administrator's strict responsibility of outstanding leadership. There is a personal desire to be liked by others that overshadows the need to make difficult leadership decisions through personal administrative intellectual knowledge, psychological astuteness, critical thinking, and common sense—known as the Three Amigos. When putting the emphasis on the desire to be liked by others as a necessary leadership requirement, it might cause an ignoring of the recommendations of the constituency group.

The process of seeking non-constituency group information may be intended to be administratively helpful and supportive; however, it often encourages other recommendations and desires intended to award friends or cohorts to leadership role(s). Where administrative non-constituency group recommendations were intended and used as support, seeking non-constituency group advise and administrative fraternization could decrease the intended objectivity related to recommendations provided by the constituent group.

## **IN CLOSING**

For the constituency group to conform to the intended goals and objectives of the constituency group, the consideration of the constituency group's recommendations by the administrator is appropriate. However, the final decision that produces an outcome is always the administrator's (or assigned administrator's) choice, which is in keeping with the administrator's job description.

Carolyn Taylor, Ed.D. M.N. R.N.

Recommended author's published reference for writing Job Descriptions: Job Descriptions (by title and located at [leadershippoweronline.com](http://leadershippoweronline.com))