

# **PCD Quarter Century Task Force Report**

## **PCD Quarter Century Task Force Report** **March 2005**

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## **Introduction**

Social historians say that one factor that distinguishes organizations that succeed from those that fail is something that can occur around the time of an organization's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Princeton Country Dancers turned a mere 25 years old in 2003, but there might be something PCD could learn from more venerable organizations.

These historians point out that many of the most successful and long-lived organizations are those that decided to undertake a major process of self-examination and self-renewal at a key point in their histories. During this period of self-examination, the successful organizations made the decision to:

- Recommit themselves to their core values
- Refocus on their strengths
- Concentrate on the activities that had caused them to become successful in the first place

PCD recently began its own process of self-examination. The process was initiated by the PCD Executive Committee (EC) to study the current state of PCD's operations, and look for ways to improve them. Responsibility for this inquiry was assigned to a group of volunteers, known as the Quarter Century Task Force (QCTF). This report presents the Task Force's findings and observations. The report also makes recommendations for strategies the Task Force believes can enable PCD to refocus and reinvigorate itself, as both an organization and a community.

## **Why the Task Force Was Formed**

### ***Its Mission***

The 2002-2003 EC appointed volunteers from the PCD community to serve on the Task Force. The members of the Task Force had been actively involved in PCD in various capacities, for periods ranging from 5 to 24 years. The EC charged the Task Force with:

- Examining what had made PCD so successful for its first 25 years.
- Identifying the challenges PCD needed to find ways to deal with.
- Making recommendations about what PCD could do to meet these challenges, to allow it to thrive and prosper for another 25 years.

### ***External Indications of Some of the Challenges PCD Was Facing in 2003***

The EC was concerned about a number of trends clearly visible within PCD at the time:

- Attendance at PCD's weekly dances was down.
- PCD's volunteer base was shrinking; fewer people were coming forward to help organize and run things.
- PCD was starting to depend on deficit spending, by borrowing from its savings account to cover its expenses.
- The people who had historically been part of the PCD community were not the people you would typically meet on the PCD dance floor, or at a PCD committee meeting.

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- The people you would typically meet on the PCD dance floor were not the people you would typically meet at a PCD committee meeting or social event.
- There was a perception that the quality of dancing at PCD was not what it used to be.
- There was a perception that PCD governance was not as responsive and effective as it could be.

## **How the Task Force Worked**

The Task Force organized its work into three task-specific phases:

Phase 1: Conduct research

Phase 2: Study findings and draw conclusions

Phase 3: Submit recommendations to the EC and the PCD community

The following sections provide details about the work performed in each phase.

### ***Phase 1: Conduct Research***

Between May and December of 2003 the Task Force:

- Divided itself into small teams to conduct interviews and do other research.
- Interviewed PCD's dancers, performers, organizers, and volunteers to gather comments and suggestions about what PCD should continue doing, start doing, and stop doing.
- Consulted with the Country Dance and Song Society (CDSS) for advice about current practices at dance organizations with histories similar to PCD's. One of CDSS's key recommendations was that PCD examine the writings of John Carver, an expert on nonprofit organizations, and consider using his "Policy Governance Model" as a paradigm for change at PCD.
- Using questionnaires and interviews, the Task Force gathered information from other dance organizations that have successfully dealt with histories and challenges similar to PCD's. It learned how these groups have responded to organizational midlife crises in terms of their governance models, methods, and operations
- Four members of the Task Force successfully ran for election to the 2004-2005 PCD EC in the spring of 2004. Many of the observations and recommendations contained in this report are based on the knowledge and experience they have gained while serving on the EC over the past year.

### ***Phase 2: Study Findings and Draw Conclusions***

Between May and December of 2003 the Task Force:

- Held monthly meetings of the entire group to organize the small teams' research into findings, to deliberate about the implications of these findings, and to make recommendations.
- Arrived at a consensus within the group that:
  - The most effective way to resolve the challenges faced by PCD was not to address issues piecemeal, but through a fundamental re-conceptualization of the entire organization.

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- PCD could successfully overcome many of its current challenges by adopting a more up-to-date and more structured model for governing itself and meeting the needs of the PCD community.
- The new organizational model – and the principles and practices that inspired the model – should be encapsulated in a new PCD constitution.
- Decided that to develop a new constitution the Task Force needed to:
  - Start with the founding goals, principles, vision, and values defined in the 1984 PCD Constitution, and find ways to preserve and strengthen them in the current PCD environment.
  - Add a more formal and structured framework of roles, responsibilities, and practices.
  - Address the reality that, as of 2003, PCD had outgrown its historical reliance on an informal network of personal relationships, and informal processes of decision-making and communication. The Task Force felt that PCD's old ways of doing things put PCD at risk of losing its ability to tap into the creativity and energy of the community it serves, and into the pool of volunteers it relies upon to operate effectively. In the Task Force's view, PCD needed to adapt and change to successfully respond to the challenges resulting from changes in the community.
- Developed a proposal for a new PCD constitution.
  - Published a draft of the new constitution on the PCD website.
  - Made copies of the new constitution draft available at the welcoming table at PCD dances.
  - Delivered a presentation about the Task Force's goals and methods at the Head for the Hills (HFTH) weekend in 2003, and solicited comments and suggestions from the PCD community.
  - Hosted a potluck and open meeting for the general PCD community to gather comments and suggestions regarding the proposed constitution.
  - Hosted a joint meeting with the 2003-2004 PCD EC to gather comments and suggestions regarding the proposed constitution.

### ***Phase 3: Submit Recommendations to the EC and PCD Community***

- The proposed new PCD constitution is the formal implementation of the Task Force's recommendations.
- The report you are now reading attempts to capture some of the thinking behind the proposed new PCD constitution. It also attempts to offer a window into the process through which the Task Force arrived at the conclusions that led to the proposal of the new constitution.
- Source material and reference material used by the Task Force – such as its correspondence with CDSS and the questionnaires it used to survey practices at other dance organizations – have been archived.
- The archived documents – including meeting notes and the pamphlets and books consulted by Task Force members as part of their research – are available on request.

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## Findings and Conclusions

### ***PCD's Founding Vision and What It Has Brought About***

PCD's success over the past 25 years should be obvious to anyone who considers what goes on in the PCD community today. Here is what the Task Force found:

- **An Extended Self-Selected Community** - The people of PCD make up an extended community of an estimated 300-400 past and present area dancers, musicians and callers, drawn together by a common interest in traditional music and dance. Not all of these people are actively involved in PCD in 2005, of course, but they represent a sizable reservoir of talent and good will PCD could potentially draw upon. PCD has an open door membership policy, but no formal membership requirements, such as paying dues. Participation is open to anyone, and subject only to conventional standards of appropriate personal conduct.
- **A Tradition of Sharing the Work and the Fun** - PCD continues to pursue its historic goals, and to function in ways that are remarkably consistent with its founding vision and values. By tradition, the people of PCD have pooled their collective skills, creativity, time and energy to create a community that makes music together, dances together, and organizes and runs events together. This community also teaches and learns from one other, entertains one another, has fun, and enjoys one another's company. All of these elements of PCD's history and culture remain alive today. They have become the glue that holds PCD together.
- **Weekly Dances** - PCD currently organizes and runs approximately 65 regular weekly dances a year in a contra series, an ECD series and a community dance series for families. Although average attendance is down from a high of 55 or 60 dancers in the late 1990s, it has stabilized at approximately 38 for the past few years. The hall PCD currently rents for these dances is large enough to allow PCD to significantly increase current attendance. The goal of having more dancers is generally considered desirable, but current attendance appears adequate to sustain the dances financially.
- **Special Events** - PCD currently organizes and runs four annual special events:
  - HFTH weekend
  - R&O Halloween dance
  - Winter Cotillion
  - February Fling (co-sponsored with LCD)Attendance is adequate (and in some cases, more than adequate!) to sustain these events financially. R&O faces some longstanding and unique challenges trying to manage its expenses, and the EC is actively working with the R&O committee on ways to solve this problem.
- **Other Activities** - PCD dancers and musicians participate in a wide variety of other activities and subgroups that have evolved within the PCD community over the years. These activities include ritual dance teams, bands, and singing groups, as well as many privately organized social events. The Task Force believes that the emergence and persistence of all of these activities can be viewed both as a sign of PCD's success, and as the source of some of PCD's primary challenges as a community:
  - Each time PCD spins off a new activity, members of the community who get involved with that activity tend to have fewer resources to devote to other activities

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that have been central to PCD's history, such as its weekly dance series and special events. Having so many activities to choose from has generated a centrifugal effect within PCD. That is, the collective time and energy in the community has tended to disperse outward, and become less focused.

- Some members of the task force felt that many activities and social events were originally open to a much higher proportion of the community than they are today. They expressed concern that, as the community has evolved, these activities and events have not evolved to keep up, and that PCD has become split into two groups: an "in-group" and an "out-group."
- **Demographic Shifts** - The demographics of the PCD community have changed in significant ways.
  - In its early years, PCD was largely made up of people in their 20s and 30s, many of them single and footloose, with abundant free time, talent, energy, and enthusiasm to share.
  - Today, the majority of the people actively involved in PCD are in their 40s and 50s. They often have careers, families, and other responsibilities that make significant demands on their time and energy. Many are experienced dancers, but they do not attend dances as often as they did in the past. They also do not volunteer as regularly as they used to. Many tend to be more intolerant of inept dancing and poorly organized volunteer work. At midlife, many PCD members – oldtimer and newcomer alike – have acquired substantial skills and experience in the workplace or in other volunteer organizations. With this level of experience, they are potentially valuable, productive volunteers for PCD in areas such as performing, policy, planning, project management and operations, education, finance, publicity, and communications.
  - Despite being located in a town that's home to more than one university, PCD has not attracted and retained the number of younger dancers and musicians that could be expected to participate, relative to the number of young people who attend contra and community sponsored by other dance organizations.
  - The number of active participants in PCD is declining. One factor is loss by attrition, for reasons such as moving out of the area. The fundamental problem, however, is that PCD is not attracting newcomers at the same rate (or faster) that it is losing existing members.
- **Financial Health** - PCD is in stable financial condition. Its bookkeeping practices are detailed, timely and thorough, and enable the EC to make effective financial decisions. Thanks to some policy changes in 2003 (such as raising admission prices at the weekly dances), PCD was able to stop drawing down money from its savings account while its regular venue (Suzanne Patterson Center) was under construction. In 2004, PCD managed to balance its budget, without having to dip into savings. (Note: Technically, 2004 saw a small loss of under \$500 on a total operating budget of \$37,000.) It is anticipated that PCD's 2005 income will meet expenses, and that PCD's financial reserves will remain stable and adequate to meet any emergency expenses.

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## *Analysis and Conclusions*

### **PCD's Founding Principles Continue to Guide the Organization**

One of the Task Force's general conclusions from these findings is that a direct correlation exists between PCD's successes and PCD's ability to stay true to the spirit of the organization's original vision and values. These values, many of which can be found in PCD's 1984 Constitution, include:

- Learning about, preserving, enjoying, teaching, and promoting traditional forms of Anglo-American music and dance
- Building an open community; one that allows everyone an equal opportunity to participate and contribute, and allows their contributions to be recognized and valued
- Running PCD as a participatory democracy, where the decision making and the information needed to run the organization are shared
- Connecting with others and having fun together
- Making volunteering at PCD a rewarding personal experience
- Working cooperatively, with the understanding that more can be achieved collectively than by working on one's own
- Working considerately, with the understanding that it is sometimes necessary, in the context of a group project, to put the interests of the community before one's personal interests.

### **PCD's Strengths Can Be Readily Applied to Its Areas for Improvement**

The Task Force believes PCD can successfully address many of its key challenges by concentrating on its strengths, and taking advantage of the traditions and resources that already exist within PCD. The Task Force identified five areas for improvement.

- 1. Local performers remain the core of the PCD community. Many of the policies and practices they have developed over the years would be worth emulating in other areas of PCD.**
  - PCD's performers – with their enthusiasm and sense of purpose, their creativity, their ability to collaborate and work together cooperatively, and their capacity to enjoy themselves and those around them – probably contribute more to the “feel” of PCD's culture than any other single group within PCD.
  - Although out-of-town performers are regularly hired, most of the bands and callers at PCD dances are local. In many cases, the local performers also contribute substantial amounts of their time and energy to PCD in other ways. They tend to play key roles (often leadership roles) in PCD's governance and operations. While PCD cannot exist without its dancers (who also volunteer extensively), one of PCD's primary assets is its ability to attract and retain local performers.
  - One of the things PCD has to offer to local performers is access to regular venues and a ready-made audience of dancers to play for. (Where else is a caller or a fiddle player – or a Molly dancer – going to find regular gigs in downtown Princeton?) PCD also offers performers ample and convenient opportunities to meet and play with other performers.
  - For a large part of its history, PCD callers and musicians donated their skills and talents and performed for free. In recent years, PCD instituted a policy of paying local performers at the weekly dances a modest fee (currently between \$10 - \$40).

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It is not clear whether payment is even necessary to get people to play, although payment certainly demonstrates how much musicians' contributions are valued at PCD.

- PCD performers have established a culture – and a set of practices – that nurture and develop callers and musicians, and provide them with opportunities to contribute to PCD at higher levels as their skills advance. These practices could serve as models for other areas of PCD. This is especially true in areas of PCD that need to train their own volunteers, to make the best use of people's skills and talents, and to find ways to bring everyone along in the process.
2. **Education and Training have played a major role in PCD's success. A renewed commitment to PCD's mission as a teaching organization would yield both immediate and long-term benefits.**
- As stated in its 1984 Constitution, PCD exists, in part, to help promote the traditions of the types of music and dancing done at PCD. The founding strategy was to carry out this educational mission, both for the sake of the traditions themselves, and for PCD's own enjoyment, and its ongoing success as an organization. PCD has a lot to gain from making education and training a higher priority than it has been in recent years. It would help PCD continue to expand and develop its performer base, and it would help PCD develop much-needed development programs for its dancers and volunteers.
  - PCD dances currently have a reputation for excellent music, good calling, and OK - - but not great – dancing. The excellence of its music is in part the result of PCD's tradition of developing its musicians. PCD has a strong history of providing training for its musicians, together with offering them opportunities to advance and participate at increasing levels of responsibility as their skills and abilities grow. PCD also has a tradition of training and developing its callers. These traditions have been good for the callers and musicians, and they have been good for PCD. Other areas of PCD's operations would undoubtedly benefit from following these examples, by making a greater investment in training and developing the people who participate in those areas.
    - The R&O orchestra is committed to an open door, equal opportunity policy for musicians at all levels. The R&O bandleader – and the members of the individual sections of the orchestra – make a regular habit of teaching and encouraging those who are less experienced, sharing their knowledge and skills with them during practice sessions and rehearsals. As proficiency increases, the less experienced musicians have the opportunity to advance toward the front rows in the orchestra. The result has been the creation of a loyal community of performers, and musical excellence (at NEFFA, the R&O orchestra has been known to receive an ovation from the crowd before it even begins playing!). R&O's training workshops only run for 6 weeks each year, but they have a far-reaching impact. R&O's mentoring process, and the opportunities for advancement that come with it, have become an important and self-perpetuating part of the R&O culture. This culture is infectious, and it has a positive effect on PCD as a whole. The R&O orchestra tends to function, for example, as a greenhouse, and an informal feeder or farm system, for developing the pickup band musicians and leaders who perform at PCD's regular weekly dances.

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- PCD's callers have a tradition of conducting teaching workshops for new callers. These workshops have enabled PCD to successfully attract and maintain a regular rotation of skilled callers at its weekly dances. The callers have also established a mentoring program for recent workshop graduates. The mentoring program offers additional feedback, teaching and guidance. It also sets standards for quality, and gives new callers an opportunity to advance to the point where they can confidently call a full evening of dances on their own.
  - PCD's dancers, by and large, do not have access to the same sort of learning opportunities the musicians and callers have. This is sometimes evident on the PCD dance floor. The dancers have essentially needed to teach themselves to dance, or to learn elsewhere. Other than the short introductory workshops conducted before the weekly dances, PCD currently offers no regular program of instruction for its dancers. A quality-of-dancing group was recently formed to address this problem. It is currently working with the PCD callers group to establish a mentoring program and a series of instructional workshops for dancers.
  - No formal training and orientation program currently exists for new volunteers at PCD. The EC is in the process of developing procedural guides for some volunteer jobs, such as scheduling performers, managing dances, and managing sound at dances. Much work remains to be done throughout PCD to develop needed orientation and training programs in these and other key areas.
3. **PCD governance and operations continue to follow the informal, circle-of-friends, model from the organization's early years. There would be much to be gained from extending PCD's well-developed network of personal relationships outward, so that it included more newcomers. There would be much to be gained from PCD's moving to a more formal and structured organizational model, to better align itself with its changing demographics, and to make opportunities for becoming involved in PCD more visible.**
- PCD functions as a loosely structured, informal, self-governing, organization, much as it did in its early days. Decision-making and communications are mostly done in person, over the phone, or via email through an informal network of personal relationships. These relationships tend to be well established and have long histories. The network does not extend to – and effectively bind together – everyone in the community, particularly newcomers.
  - Roles and responsibilities within PCD are casually defined. Until recently, there was no official listing of all of the tasks within PCD, and the names of the people who coordinate them. Deadlines also tend to be regarded somewhat casually. Coordination is sometimes effective, sometimes haphazard. Decision making and task completion are sometimes driven more by events (and crises), than by organizational priorities and planning. The idea of holding a fundraiser to recover a loss, for example, seems to come more naturally than doing the planning and budgeting that would have prevented the loss in the first place.
  - Until recently, the EC has not been particularly consistent about holding regular meetings and publishing meeting minutes. This has the effect of leaving many people in the dark. People often do not know what PCD's policy is on some matter. They often do not know the current status of some process they are participating in. In some cases, they do not even understand what the overall process is. For one, the Task Force felt that the EC itself would achieve more success making timely, well-

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informed, decisions – particularly policy decisions – if it had a permanent written record of prior EC decisions to guide it. Some years have been better than others in this regard, but such practices like regular meetings and archived meeting notes offer many advantages. They may have been unnecessary in PCD’s early years, but they have become more important today, when more information needs to be communicated and shared with more people.

- People in key positions of responsibility within PCD sometimes remain in the same roles for extended periods, often years. This longevity tends to build knowledge and expertise, and provide continuity of operations from one year to the next. There are no written job descriptions and, until recently, no written policies and procedures. There are no term limits, and no formal mechanisms for mentoring and job succession. The Task Force observed that, if new people do not rotate into a role on a regular basis, PCD runs the risk that knowledge about performing that role does not get disseminated widely and preserved. There is also the risk that PCD could be unwittingly shutting itself off from the fresh perspectives and innovative ideas that often enter and reinvigorate an organization when jobs pass to new owners.
- While doing its research on how other dance organizations worked, the Task Force learned that when decision-making became concentrated in the hands of a few people, some dances turned into something of a Banana Republic. Coming to understand what life in a Banana Republic was like only increased the Task Force’s appreciation of PCD’s democratic traditions. Here is what typically happens when a dance turns into a Banana Republic. (Consider this a cautionary tale, and a good example of what is NOT happening at PCD!): At a Banana Republic dance, decisions tend to increasingly reflect only the tastes and preferences of those making the decisions. The decision makers talk mostly among themselves, and rely mostly on historical precedent to make decisions. They tend to ignore or dismiss the viewpoints of others, and become resistant to change. Within the community, many decisions are regarded as arbitrary, capricious or self-serving. Apathy sets in among dancers, performers and volunteers. Over time, the dance’s governing organization becomes more and more insular, and cuts itself off from the creativity and energy of the community it is supposed to be serving. The dances themselves typically start to feel more impersonal, as the network of personal connections that once gave them their vitality contracts. The dancers come to view the dances as consumer products, rather than community events. The decision makers come to view the dancers as customers, and claim to know what is good for them. The Task Force believes that PCD can prevent these things from happening in Princeton, by continuing to remain true to its guiding principles.
- Most people currently attending the weekly dances appear to have some awareness of what PCD does, and who some of the key players are within PCD. But they are generally unaware of the specifics of PCD’s operations and its governance. Some people do not seem to appreciate the extent to which PCD is intended to be “their dance” – or could be, if they wanted. Despite PCD’s emphasis on running “welcoming” dances, and its ongoing attempts to reach out and attract new volunteers, most people outside the core PCD network of personal relationships seem to lack a working understanding about how PCD is actually organized, what needs to get done, and who does what. Although PCD dances probably feel friendly to most insiders and many newcomers, it appears that it is not always easy for

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outsiders to personally identify opportunities to contribute, and to establish the informal personal connections they would need to get involved. More of them undoubtedly would, if they could.

4. **Over the course of 25 years, PCD has gained extensive experience running an organization based on volunteerism and teamwork. This experience provides PCD with a significant asset it can build upon to strengthen the organization, and to re-invigorate and expand the community it serves.**
  - PCD's tradition of using many hands to lighten the load plays a central role in its culture, and is the way virtually everything gets accomplished throughout the organization. Like many community organizations, PCD has had to contend with a shortage of volunteers in recent years. It has also had to contend with some of the usual problems associated with volunteer dissatisfaction and burnout.
  - PCD's volunteer shortage is somewhat offset by the fact that many of the people who do volunteer are highly dedicated, hard working, and committed individuals. Some volunteers tend to be a bit overworked, but they still manage to accomplish what needs to be done to keep PCD going.
  - Some volunteers report feeling frustrated about a lack of delegation and micromanagement. They say they initially volunteered expecting that they would be part of a group that would be given full responsibility for planning and running some aspect of PCD. They say they were looking forward to the sense of personal ownership and satisfaction that comes from seeing a project through from start to finish. Once they got involved with the work, however, they were disappointed to discover that many of the key decisions had already been made by others, and all that remained for them to do was the grunt work. If volunteers resign from dissatisfaction or burnout, a group usually recovers, but slowly. The group tends to fall behind in its work and become more difficult to serve on.
  - The Task Force observed that the coordinators for some volunteer groups might be able to increase their own effectiveness and satisfaction (and their group's) by improving their skills in areas such as time management, project management, team building and communications. In their day jobs, many PCD volunteers are likely to have learned to appreciate the value of working with people who possess these skills, and would prefer to find them in their volunteer work as well.
  - Volunteer satisfaction appears to be higher on some PCD working groups than it is on others. The HFTH committee, for example, seems to have few problems finding people to help organize and run its event. It has a high volunteer retention rate and a remarkable degree of organizational continuity from one year to the next. These factors may be related to the extent to which the HFTH committee has chosen to delegate much of its decision making to a set of sub committees. These sub committees have clearly defined responsibilities for carrying out various tasks associated with planning and running HFTH. The HFTH committee chair – which rotates every year or two -- is primarily responsible for coordinating the interdependencies between the sub committees, and for tracking and reporting the overall status. Priorities and strategies for the upcoming year are determined by the committee as a whole, which tends to be receptive to new ideas.
5. **The EC is extensively involved in running the weekly dances. This limits its ability to govern PCD as broadly and effectively as it could. Turning responsibility for running dances over to a separate committee would free up the EC to focus on its oversight role as PCD's elected Executive Committee.**

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- The EC currently spends the majority of its time and effort planning and running the weekly dances. It also plays a major role in planning most special events, with the exception of HFTH and the ritual dance team performances. The Task Force believes that there are enough qualified and experienced people within PCD -- people who have already shown an interest in operating the dances, and the ability to do so – to form a separate dance committee, and to give it the authority to plan and run the weekly dances.
- One of the consequences of the EC's need to coordinate and manage 65 dances every year is that it is often unable to adequately focus its attention and resources on its oversight role. The Task Force believes the EC needs to disengage from dance operations, so it can focus on policymaking, strategic planning, community and organizational development, and other tasks that are typically performed by a governing body. Focusing the EC on these responsibilities would enable the EC to strengthen PCD's infrastructure, so that PCD can evolve, in response to changes in its social and cultural environment.
- There are qualified and experienced people within PCD who are interested in serving on the EC to research, plan and coordinate programs to improve PCD over the long term. Many have neither the time, nor the interest, nor the ability to get involved with the logistics of running the weekly dances. Some of them need to travel extensively as part of their jobs, for example, and are often unable to come to SPC on a weekday night to manage a dance. However, the nature of the work the EC needs to do in its oversight role would allow these potential EC members to participate when they are out of town. For example, they can work with other EC members via email and conference calls.

### **Recommendations**

The Task Force believes PCD has outgrown its original informal decision-making and communication model. It feels that PCD's 1984 Constitution, which may have been all that was needed to get PCD up and running in its early years, fails to provide sufficient guidance about how to run PCD today. Although the 1984 Constitution identifies many familiar elements of PCD (such as an executive committee, a treasurer, a "head" caller, pickup bands, weekly dances, and annual elections), it says very little about the ways these elements are supposed to interact with one another to run PCD.

This section briefly describes the proposed new constitution, and highlights some of the specific ways in which the Task Force believes the new constitution would serve better than the existing constitution at meeting PCD's current needs.

### ***Open Up the Decision-making and Promote Accountability***

- The new constitution instills a more formal structure to volunteering at PCD. It makes transparent all the tasks and responsibilities of the EC, and of the sub-committees to which the EC could delegate key components of a successful community.
- The new constitution allows for accountability of its officers to the community. It provides sub-committees with clear definitions for their responsibilities, and offers potential volunteers an open and clear view of how they may participate in the success of the organization.

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- The Task Force recommends that PCD establish the EC as a larger governing board with more time and energy to attend to the overall operation and health of PCD and all its activities and requiring less responsibility for day-to-day organizational activities.
- With sub-committees handling the week-to-week tasks of running dances, the new constitution allows the EC to concentrate upon ‘big picture’ issues in the community. The proposed liaison structure of the new EC promotes EC responsiveness to the needs of each sub committee, allowing EC to openly hear and address issues, and to assist the sub committees with coordinating among themselves.
- The new constitution is intended to open up volunteerism to all in the community, preventing the exclusiveness that is perceived.
- Sub committee decisions are made where the action and the work will be done, rather than being directed by one small group of people, wherein so many decisions need to be made that the effect is to postpone some while work proceeds, sometimes at a pace that is unrecognizable to those awaiting decisions.
- The new EC structure provides a reusable framework that promotes the leader-server model of the Carver governance methodology recommended by CDSS. It delineates clear lines of responsibility, provides continuity of operations, and offers multiple volunteer entry points and clear paths for volunteers to advance into roles of greater responsibility.

### ***Create a More Transparent and Responsive Organization***

- The proposed new structure serves to shift the EC and its processes away from the obscurity of personalities to the clarity of task-oriented points of contact. With policies clearly delineated, a new volunteer doesn’t have to be a long-time PCD member to know how to support an activity or take a new idea into practice. We no longer need say, ‘If someone has been around long enough, they will know what to do.’ New volunteers will know from the moment of their introduction into the community what is possible for them to contribute, and how to do it.
- The Task Force recommends that the PCD community consider electing officers, not just EC members. This structure allows for clear duties and responsibilities for officers and promotes responsiveness and accountability.
- The Task Force recommends that PCD become a membership organization with annual member dues and member benefits and responsibilities. Non-members would be welcome at all PCD events, at a slightly higher entrance fee where there is a fee. Establishing membership criteria for PCD allows the community to: establish a list of “interested” people to draw from for volunteer positions, grant priority for PCD activities should they be oversubscribed, and ensure that people who vote in PCD elections are interested and aware of the goals of the organization and the challenges it faces.
- The Task Force recommends that EC members serve up to a term limit to be determined, with elections to the EC arranged in such a way as to guarantee continuity on the committee.
- The Task Force recommends:
  - Establishing various sub-committees to handle the many events held in the community and the functions that are common to all. Prime among these

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- committees is a nominating committee that recruits volunteers to populate the other committees.
- Establishing a committee to manage each of the different functions and events: Wednesday night dances, Saturday dances, Community dances, HFTH, Rum & Onions, Cotillion, February Fling.
  - Establishing committees to handle publicity for all events, to create an overall calendar of events, to distribute calendars and other promotional information, and to coordinate the work of dance managers and sound managers.
  - Each member of the EC serves also as a liaison with the functional and event committees within PCD. As liaison the EC member would meet with the committee but not chair. The EC member would provide guidance and support, but not direction from the EC.
  - Each committee is tasked with organizing its own continuity and succession.
  - The new EC:
    - Encourages the development of documentation that provides operational guidelines for each of these sub-committees. These documents will institutionalize “how to” instructions (including checklists) for producing and promoting events. These instructions will establish the “best practices” in each area.
    - Establishes the practice of providing an annual report on the state of PCD that addresses the status of the organization’s finances, attendance, volunteerism, and, in a general sense, the “quality” of PCD events, music, calling, teaching and dancing.

## References

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