

CHARTER
OF
THE EDUCATIONAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE
WOODS HOLE OCEANOGRAPHIC INSTITUTION

April 1975

Revisions approved by WHOI Board of Trustees Executive Committee.

Revised - February 17, 1988

Revised - September 4, 1990

Revised – August 11, 2000

Revised – August 5, 2005

Revised - July 24, 2026

The Educational Assembly
of the
Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution

I. Purpose

The Educational Assembly is established to ensure full and responsible staff participation in determining the policies and practices that guide the Institution's educational programs. Analogous to a faculty in a university, the Educational Assembly is a deliberative body through which the staff members responsible for the conduct of the educational programs attempt to attain common agreement regarding educational philosophy and objectives. To enforce these agreements on its own members, the Educational Assembly, like a faculty, is also a legislative body in that it is responsible for determining standards for admissions, educational content, counseling and degree requirements. The Educational Assembly operates under authority that is delegated by the President and Director and Board of Trustees.

II. Purview

1. The purview of the Educational Assembly covers all continuing educational programs that have been established by the Board of Trustees. Existing programs include:
 - a. Joint Graduate Program with MIT
 - b. Cooperative Graduate Programs with other Universities
 - c. WHOI Doctoral Program
 - d. Cooperative Undergraduate Programs with other Colleges and Universities
 - e. Summer Student Fellowship Program
 - f. Postdoctoral Programs
 - g. Guest Student Accommodations or Programs
 - h. Secondary School Programs
2. The Educational Assembly, on the basis of its studies and deliberations, may make recommendations to the President and Director and Board of Trustees regarding the establishment of new educational programs.

III. Responsibilities

1. With respect to existing degree-granting programs for which WHOI is the sole degree granting institution, the Educational Assembly has the following responsibilities:
 - a. To determine admissions requirements and policies
 - b. To determine degree requirements
 - c. To approve all courses offered by WHOI
 - d. To approve the advising system and its policies
 - e. To set guiding principles for general and qualifying examinations and the thesis
 - f. To recommend the awarding of degrees to candidates who have met degree requirements
 - g. To recommend criteria for awarding financial support

2. For established joint programs with other institutions, it is understood that the Educational Assembly's responsibility extends only to the establishment of WHOI's policies and positions. In such cases, educational requirements must be jointly agreed upon. These responsibilities include:
 - a. To recommend admissions requirements and policies
 - b. To recommend degree requirements
 - c. To recommend approval of all courses offered by WHOI
 - d. To provide guidance on the advising system and its policies
 - e. To provide guiding principles for general and qualifying examinations and the thesis
 - f. To recommend the awarding of degrees to candidates who have met degree requirements
 - g. To recommend criteria for awarding financial support

With respect to existing non-degree programs, the Educational Assembly is responsible for approving the objectives, the general content of the programs, and the standards and requirements for both admissions and staff participation.

3. The Educational Assembly may identify new educational needs and opportunities for the Institution and make appropriate recommendations for implementation.
4. The Educational Assembly, because of its responsibility for the quality and effectiveness of the Institution's educational programs, may make recommendations to the President and Director and Board of Trustees on any matter of Institutional policy which directly affects the educational programs.
5. Actions of the Educational Assembly must be consistent with the resources available for the educational programs and with general institutional policies.

IV. Mode of Operation

1. The Educational Assembly will meet at regularly scheduled times at least twice each year and on other occasions as the agenda requires. The Assembly will operate primarily through an executive committee called the Educational Council. The Assembly will be chaired by the Vice President for Academic Programs and Dean. Educational Assembly meetings will be moderated by the Assembly Moderator and will use standard parliamentary rules for discussion and voting upon motions presented to it.

The agenda for each meeting will be prepared by the Educational Council and distributed in advance. The Educational Council will place on the agenda any item submitted in writing at least three weeks in advance of the meeting and signed by five members of the Assembly. Business on the agenda may be introduced from the floor and discussed; voting, however, will be deferred until the next meeting if the matter affects educational policies or degree requirements.

2. The Educational Council membership will consist of:
 - a. the Dean, as Chair
 - b. the Associate Dean
 - c. any Assistant Deans
 - d. the five Education Coordinators

- e. one member from each of the five departments and Marine Policy Center (MPC) appointed by the Department Chair or MPC Director.
 - f. one non-voting student member elected by and from the student members of the Assembly
 - g. one non-voting Postdoctoral Association member elected by the Postdoctoral Association representatives
3. Terms will be October 1st to September 30th of the following year, except as provided for in appointments of the Vice President for Academic Programs and Dean, Associate Dean, Assistant Deans, and J. Seward Johnson Chair and Education Coordinators. The elections of the student and postdoctoral members to the council will take place annually in August or September. Appointed or elected members may serve for up to three successive years. The normal selection process for full term appointments will fill vacancies during the year.
 4. The Educational Council provides advice to the Vice President for Academic Programs and Dean about the formation or dissolution of standing committees and receives reports, as needed, from established standing committees (such as those on Admissions, Fellowships and the WHOI membership of the Joint Committees). In addition, the Educational Council provides advice to the Vice President for Academic Programs and Dean for establishing ad hoc committees, which may be required to make studies and recommendations on specific issues. Members of standing and ad hoc committees are appointed by the Vice President for Academic Programs and Dean in consultation with Department Chairs and the MPC Director with attention to appropriate representation of the Departments and MPC for specific committees.
 5. Established Roles of the Ed Assembly
 - a. The Associate Dean will serve as Secretary to the Assembly and its committees.
 - b. The Registrar will serve as Recording Secretary.
 - c. A member of the Education Council will serve as the Assembly Moderator. The Assembly Moderator will be responsible for finalizing the agendas and moderating the Assembly meetings. The Assembly Moderator will be responsible for recognizing the perspectives of both voting and non-voting members. This may include informal polling of the combined voting and non-voting members. The Assembly Moderator will be determined by rank choice vote of Education Council voting members from amongst the Education Coordinators and representatives of the departments and MPC who are members of Education Council.
 6. All meetings of the Educational Assembly will be open to all voting and non-voting members, registered students, and postdoctoral appointees. Individuals who are not otherwise members of Educational Assembly may be extended the privilege of attending and of speaking at a meeting of the Educational Assembly upon the recommendation of the Vice President for Academic Programs and Dean and approval of Educational Council.
 7. The quorum of the Assembly and other necessary rules of operation will be a minimum of two voting members from each department. Provision should be made whereby critical decisions can be made by written vote of Assembly members.

V. Membership

1. The membership of the Educational Assembly each year will consist of:
 - a. All voting members of the Scientific Staff who are joint program or sole-WHOI faculty.
 - b. Those voting members of the Technical Staff who are joint program or sole-WHOI faculty.
 - c. Other non-voting members of the Technical Staff, Administrative Staff, and Emeriti who participate in the Institution's educational programs through one or more of the following: classroom teaching, supervising and counseling students, serving on student thesis and examining committees, mentoring postdoctoral researchers, and serving on departmental or Institutional educational committees.
 - d. Eight non-voting graduate student members elected by and from those graduate students enrolled in WHOI degree programs. They will be elected in a way so as to ensure at least one student from each of the five departments.
 - e. Seven non-voting representatives of the Postdoctoral Association of WHOI elected according to the Charter of the WHOI Postdoctoral Association.

VI. Duration and Review

The Educational Assembly represented a new experiment for the Institution when the Assembly was established in April 1975. The Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees reviewed the Charter of the Educational Assembly and voted on May 16, 1978 “To continue the Charter of the Educational Assembly without modification.” Since that time, the President/Director of WHOI has brought forward recommendations from the Educational Assembly for modest modifications of the Charter on February 17, 1988, September 4, 1990, August 11, 2000, and August 5, 2005 to facilitate the Educational Assembly’s ability to effectively and efficiently pursue the mission of the Institution within the framework of evolving external and internal opportunities.

The experience of the first 50 years of the Educational Assembly suggests that a review of the Charter of Educational Assembly by the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees on a decadal basis, or when requested by the President/Director of WHOI and/or the Educational Assembly, would be good governance practice. Such a review as part of the normal Self Study for re-accreditation would be appropriate.

Ann Tarrant

Secretary, Educational Assembly