

Institution-wide Policy Manual Service

Stevens *Strategy* specializes in organizing and preparing systematized and comprehensive policy manuals suitable for searchable use on an institution's Intranet (assuming the institution has the proper indexing system and firewalls). Our experience developing policy manuals related to faculty, students, governing boards, administrative staff, and general institutional policies, has given us the unique ability to quickly assess, organize, and modernize an institution's policies. As part of this process, we ensure that our clients have policies in place that are consistent with higher education best practice and address federal department of education requirements and regional accreditation standards.

We have found it useful to organize an institution's policies in discrete volumes. The volumes are typically structured as follows (we note that the structure for each client will be based upon its particular needs):

- Volume I Governance and Administration Policies**
All information regarding institutional governance and organization including the constitution and bylaws of the Board, Faculty, Staff, Students and Alumni as applicable as well as descriptions of all of the institution's committees
- Volume II Campus Community Policies**
Policies that pertain to all members of the campus community
- Volume III Institutional Employment Policies**
Policies that pertain to all employees of the institution
- Volume IV Faculty Personnel Policies**
Policies that pertain only to faculty members
- Volume V Academic Policies**
Academic policies such as those provided in the institution's catalogs
- Volume VI Student Life Policies**
Policies that pertain only to student life issues
- Volume VII Business and Financial Affairs Policies**
Policies that pertain to the institution's business and financial affairs

The process of preparing an institution-wide policy manual begins by organizing, auditing, and updating the client's current policies and, if applicable, eliminating any redundancies or inadvertent contradictions. As part of the auditing and updating process, we introduce new best practice policy and procedures that address U.S. higher education best practices, as well as Department of Education requirements and regional accreditation standards. As a result of this process, the institution will mitigate risk, enhance stakeholder relationships, and create streamline administrative operations. When complete, all (or in some instances, select) members of the campus community will have access to a "living" policy manual in which there is only one policy on each addressed topic.

We recognize that each of our clients is unique, and its current handbooks, policies, and catalogs reflect its individual culture. In introducing new policies and offering suggested changes to current policy, we will not impose boilerplate language or "cut and paste" template policy language. Rather, Stevens Strategy will provide model policies based on best practices in "Track Changes" text for the Client's consideration when we determine that the institution would benefit from additional policies that do not appear to be in place. When warranted, Stevens Strategy will also supplement current client policy (also in "Track Changes" text) and point out when the client has more than one policy on the same topic, so it may choose the preferred policy. In other instances, Stevens Strategy will provide a "best practice" policy below a current policy so that the client may compare policies, and adopt the policy best suited to its needs. As explained below, we will then work with Volume Review Teams to refine, modify and tailor these best practice policy suggestions to ensure that the client has a customized set of policies.

The Process

Phase One – Introduction, Identify Needs, and Document Collection (One Month)

We begin our engagement with an initial campus visit to meet with and explain our Institution-wide Policy Manual process to key campus stakeholders, who we will identify with the client prior to our visit. Specifically, Stevens Strategy consultants will present a power point presentation that explains the Institution-wide Policy Manual service and outlines in detail the various project phases. We then will transition into strategy sessions with key campus administrators, which serve to identify and discuss the client's areas of needs and help further frame the content of the initial volume drafts presented during Phase Two. We also identify relevant policy documents necessary for Stevens Strategy consultants to begin Phase Two of the process. Other key components of the initial visit are to work with the President or other appropriate administrator(s) to develop a detailed project schedule and to begin the process of identifying an Institutional Project Manager, as well as Volume Review Team members.

The Institutional Project Manager, who should be well organized and have strong communications skills, will work closely with Stevens Strategy consultants throughout the project and be charged with the responsibilities listed below:

- Sending all Institution Correspondence and Documents to Stevens Strategy
- Receiving and Distributing Stevens Strategy Correspondence and Materials to Appropriate Parties for Review
- Ensuring Client Compliance with the Project Schedule
- Supporting and Coordinating Review Team Efforts
- Organizing and Scheduling Campus Meetings
- Managing Campus-wide Communications Regarding the Project
- Identifying and Solving Problems/Conflicts

The Volume Review Team members will be tasked to vet drafts of assigned volumes of the policy manual submitted by Stevens Strategy during Phase Two. Their comments and guidance are critical to process and ensure that proposed model policies and suggested changes made to existing client policy are tailored to meet the culture and needs of the institution. Ultimately, the policies developed by Stevens Strategy in collaboration with the Volume Review Teams will be recommended to key governance bodies, the President, and the Board of Trustees for formal adoption.

Typically, the following individuals are assigned to the Volume Review Teams:

Volume I	Governance and Administrative Policies Client Executive Officers, Relevant Faculty Committee (to review faculty governance matters), Alumni President (to review alumni governance matters)
Volume II	Campus Community Policies Human Resources, Student Development Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Advancement Officer, IT Director, Communications Officer, Director of Facilities, Security Director
Volume III	General Institutional Employment Policies Vice President for Human Resources, Chief Financial Officer
Volumes IV and V	Faculty Personnel Policies and Academic Policies Chief Academic Officer, Deans, Vice President for Enrollment Management, Registrar, Librarian, Relevant Faculty Committee(s)

Volume VI	Student Policies Student Development Officer, Residence Life Director, Student Service Directors
Volume VII	Business and Financial Affairs Policies Chief Financial Officer, Advancement Officer

Following our departure from campus, Stevens Strategy submits a proposed project schedule for review and approval. In addition, we request that the Institutional Project Manager collect and deliver electronically all relevant policy documents to Stevens Strategy. Below please find examples of documents typically collected after the initial campus visit:

1. Current Governance Documents (Board Bylaws, Charter or Articles of Incorporation, Board policies, the constitutions and bylaws of faculty, staff, student and alumni organizations as applicable to the extent they are not included in other documents);
2. Organizational and committee information such as any available descriptions of the make-up and purpose of the institution's committee structures and organizational charts;
3. The Faculty Handbook, including any separate handbooks for separate schools, departments or divisions, adjunct faculty or other non-traditional faculty members;
4. The Employee Handbook, including any separate handbooks for part-time employees or student employees;
5. All current or "in development" Catalogs;
6. The Student Handbook, residence hall and athletic policies;
7. Other policies not included in the documents listed above such as travel policies, purchasing, financing and accounting policies, institutional advancement policies, technology use policies, library policies, and the like.

From this point forward, Stevens Strategy will develop the institution-wide policy manual only in the Microsoft Word template and all document editing will utilize Microsoft's "Track Changes" software or otherwise indicate when changes have been made.

Phase Two – Manual Preparation (Four to Six Months)

At the beginning of Phase Two, Stevens Strategy consultants conduct a review of the client's existing policies and organize them by volume. Once organized, Stevens Strategy consultants then begin the development of the initial draft of the Institution-wide Policy Manual. Our **five-step drafting process** in Phase Two proceeds as follows:

1. Ensure that all policies are consistent (e.g., only one harassment and discrimination policy); proposes grammar changes that have legal import (e.g., replace “by” with “on or before” for deadlines); ensure consistency in tense, etc.;
2. As part of the audit process, propose changes to current client policy or introduce new model policies responsive to non-profit higher education industry best practices, relevant federal higher education requirements, and regional accreditation agency standards;
3. Present proposed changes or introduce new model policy utilizing “Track Changes” so Volume Review Team members know when Stevens Strategy is proposing a change to current text or introducing new policy;
4. In initial drafts, footnote the text taken from the client’s current policies so that reviewers know where the policy originated;
5. Prepare and distribute review copies of each volume of the policy manual to the Institutional Project Manager outlining the open issues in each volume about which members of the institution need to make decisions.

The initial volume drafts are presented to the Institutional Project Manager three months after the beginning of Phase Two. The Volume Review Teams appointed in Phase One will then meet over the next several weeks under the leadership of the Institutional Project Manager, following which Stevens Strategy consultants will visit the campus to provide comprehensive facilitation services for each Volume Review Team. During these meetings, each policy will be reviewed and discussed with the members of the relevant review teams. While off-site, Stevens Strategy representatives will be in constant communication with the Institutional Project Manager to determine which teams need most of our facilitation attention.

Following the facilitation meetings, Stevens Strategy, armed with feedback and comments from the Volume Review Teams, will spend the next month developing 2nd drafts of the volumes. Upon completion, Stevens Strategy will deliver 2nd volume drafts to the Institutional Project Manager for distribution to the Volume Review Teams, which will review the drafts over the next several weeks and provide final comments and requested changes to Stevens Strategy. Stevens Strategy will then implement any changes requested by the teams over the following two week period and deliver a third draft. Upon receipt, applicable volumes should be submitted to appropriate governance bodies for approval in accordance with current institution practices (i.e., faculty governance body). Local legal counsel will also need to be involved during this stage of Phase Two to, at minimum, review new policies and proposed changes to old policies of legal import since *Stevens Strategy is not a law firm, is not a substitute for an attorney or law firm, and its professional personnel cannot provide legal advice.*

Phase Three – Final Approval Process (Two Months)

Phase Three begins with Stevens Strategy's delivery of the final draft of the Institution-wide Policy Manual. This final draft, which incorporates the Volume Review Teams, legal counsel (as applicable), and appropriate governance bodies' final comments, is delivered to the president for review and comment. Following the president's review, Stevens Strategy will make any requested changes and then deliver the presidential approved Institution-wide Policy Manual for Board of Trustee approval. Stevens Strategy representatives also will conduct a final campus visit, upon the request of the client, to attend the Board of Trustees meeting at which the president presents the manual for the Board's review, all in accord with the schedule approved during Phase One.

When Stevens Strategy provides the client with a final version of the seven volumes described above in Microsoft Word Template with automatically generated tables of contents and makes its final visit to the campus in Phase Three, in accord with the approved schedule, the project is completed.