

**Akropolis Quintet, Inc.
Culture and Systems Handbook**

Contributors

Bill Booth, Independent Lead Consultant

Akropolis Reed Quintet
Author: Matt Landry (Executive Director)

Additional contributions: Kari Landry (Marketing and Development Manager), Ryan Reynolds, Andrew Koeppe, Timothy Gocklin (Artistic Co-Directors)

**Reviewed by
Akropolis Quintet Inc Board of Directors
January 28, 2019
March 31, 2019
September 21, 2019 (approved)**

Akropolis Quintet, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization governing the Akropolis Reed Quintet, an internationally acclaimed music ensemble of five musicians performing on wind instruments, formed in 2009 at the University of Michigan. Akropolis' mission is to create a more vibrant society by progressing and sustaining exceptional classical music and educating the next generation of musicians and music appreciators.

The purpose of this handbook is to outline the systems Akropolis Quintet, Inc. will use to develop strategy, overcome challenges, and act on our mission to be a successful, public-serving nonprofit. These are also the organization's human resources policies, but those are redacted in this version.

Contents

3...aligning systems and culture to create impact and results

4...core values

5...culture and norms

6-7...systems and procedures

Core Purpose—What We Do

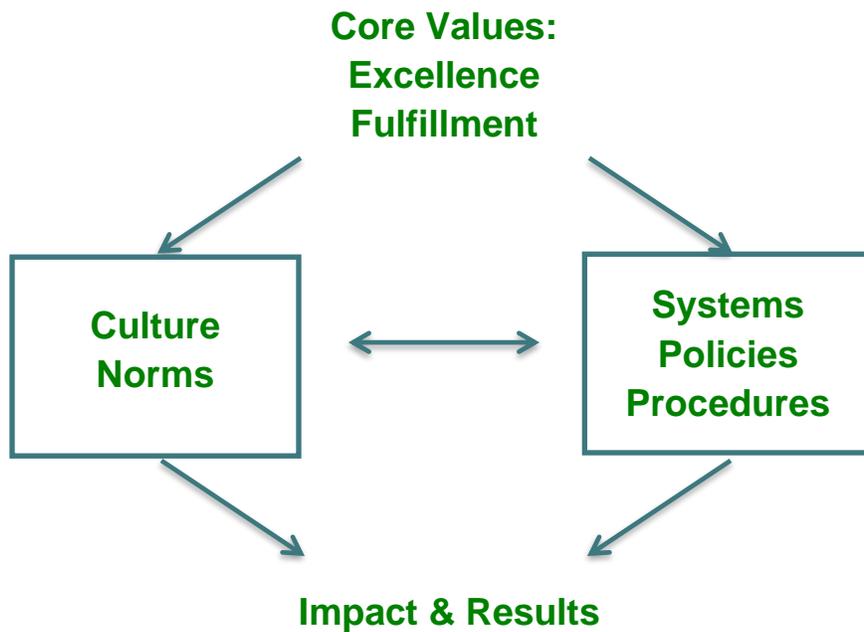
**Sustain and Progress Exceptional Classical Music &
Educate the Next Generation of Musicians and Music Appreciators**

In order to

Create a More Vibrant Society

How We Do It

Utilize core values and a balance of rich culture and measured systems to create impact and results.



Core Values

Akropolis' core values were determined in a strategy meeting in 2017 utilizing Jim Collins' Vision Framework method.

Excellence

- Persistent practice and improvement musically and professionally
- Taking time and making this and other sacrifices
- Planning ahead
- Doing our most authentic art
- Willingness to debate, discussing quality and artistic goals
- Trust in each other to have these same goals and put forth the same effort toward them

Personal Fulfillment

- Devotion of time and mental willingness to this work
- Having creative control of projects
- Always learning, growing and raising the bar
- That we make sure each voice and opinion is heard
- That we incorporate Akropolis into our changing lives

Akropolis will always be guided by its core values, especially in managing the balance between its culture and its systems.

Culture and Norms

In an open discussion we excavated Akropolis' culture and norms over its first 10 years, the cultural elements of our organization that have been the most meaningful and resulted in the most productive moments for our organization.

The stories and moments that came to the fore were those in which we worked together toward common goals and achieved them, and those during which we displayed the highest level of accomplishment artistically and professionally.

Conclusion: Akropolis Quintet, Inc.'s culture is that the organization always supports team members and in turn is supported by team members. Togetherness is how results are achieved and impact is made, and fulfillment comes from achieving those results and impact.

Systems, Policies, and Procedures

An atypical organization formed from the ground up, Akropolis must formally but organically establish systems, policies, and procedures for dealing with personnel decisions, crisis management, and strategy development. We determined that many systems were in place informally.

We determined that it was important that our culture and our systems be guided by and inform each other, together guided by our core values, for the systems to work.

This document applies to Akropolis' current employees, but extends to its Board of Directors and to any future employees, be they artistic, administrative, or both. Ergo we recognize that the addition or change of employees or board members may require changes to this document.

Developing Strategy

Internal Reviews

Once per year, quintet members will hold an annual review discussion. During the meeting, quintet members will individually record, then share and discuss, the areas they felt were strongest for themselves and the organization, and why; the areas in which they both excelled and need improvement, personally; and organizational decisions where they felt the organization could have done something different, and how, or improved, and how.

This meeting will be held at an annual winter retreat to take place at the end of the calendar year, or early the following calendar year.

All meeting notes will be recorded and shared with the Board of Directors who will then be given the opportunity to offer their own feedback.

An every-6-months check-in between the Executive Director and each employee will take place where the ED and employees may offer each other feedback and share any important information or updates.

Dealing with Disputes

We determined that disagreements should be brought to the fore and addressed, rather than swept aside, no matter the nature of the disagreement. We use the word "dispute" to describe a wide range of issues on which any and all Akropolis team members, from interns to board members, can disagree.

The resolution process is to 1. Listen wholly and without any interruption while all members involved in a dispute describe their viewpoint on any issues involved in the dispute, and secondly, what they would ideally like to see changed to address it. 2. If possible, involve all employees to determine what changes or sacrifices, by anyone involved in the dispute and organizationally, should be made to resolve the dispute in the organization's best interest, and 3. If necessary, consult outside, independent counsel.

We recognize that the resolution of a dispute may be the removal of an employee, but that this is a last resort. Our focus is to grow stronger through disputes, not to use employee changes as a means of resolution.

Beating and Recovering from Challenges

Challenges include significant mistakes made by members professionally and personally (understanding that mistakes will be made by all), and other foreseen or unforeseen obstacles preventing our culture and systems from working together to create impact and results.

To determine a plan to successfully overcome and recover from challenges, we determined that first, a conversation between quintet members must take place to establish 1. That no blame will be placed on any individual for the challenge having arisen and that no guilt should be felt, 2. That support will be given by all to all to help each individual address the challenge from their perspective, and 3. That trust must be practiced by all toward all in order to adhere to numbers 1 and 2 above.

A solution for beating and then recovering from a challenge will then be forged by discussing possible solutions that 1. Adhere to what is established in the conversation above, and 2. Adhere to our organization's core values. Solutions must comply with the organization's human resources policies.

A challenge resulting from an employee's repeated transgression may yield a solution in which that employee is removed from the organization, but this is a last resort. Our focus is to grow stronger through challenges, not to use employee changes as a means of resolution.