

SOP # 11 **Revision:** 2-22-16
Effective Date: 7-7-10

Prepared by: Policy and Procedure/Bylaw Committee
Approved by: Board of Directors

Title: SANTA ROSA PLATEAU FOUNDATION (SRPF) - INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

Policy: Internal communications with and between fellow Board members, committee members and staff will be clearly defined and will adhere to the highest ethical and professional standards.

Purpose: To encourage internal communication procedures that welcomes alternative perspectives, invites and encourages participation at all levels, minimizes defensiveness and, builds and maintains camaraderie with a culture of respect and good will. To clearly define appropriate communication protocols.

Scope: Procedure shall apply to all activities of the Board and Board committees and will be included in the annual Board training and in new Board member orientation.

1.0 PROTOCOL

- A. Unlike a corporation having a top/down structure, the bulk of SRPF's nonprofit work is done through standing committees where detailed discussion of issues take place. Recommendations for action arise out of that process and are communicated at regular Board meetings for general discussion and approval or disapproval.
- B. To ensure all subjects, concerns and questions are included in a Board meeting, All Board members are encouraged to submit topics for discussion to the President or a member of the Executive Committee in advance of the Board meeting. If the topic requires an in-depth discussion and/or research then it will be referred to the appropriate committee and follow the procedure described in 1.0, A. Clarifying questions are welcomed at the Board meeting as are discussions that do not prevent the Board meeting from proceeding in a timely manner.
- C. Individual Board members, the Executive Director (ED), and staff should exercise much caution when discussing important issues via email. Emails can be misinterpreted as they do not convey accurate tone, body language, mood nuances, and speech. Email "discussions" do not provide an opportunity for full and timely discourse that are clearly aired in a manner that will benefit everyone. Therefore, important issues will not be discussed online as that, in essence, *constitutes an unsanctioned Board meeting.*

2.0 COMMUNICATION ETIQUETTE

- A. The SRPF promotes internal communication that welcomes alternative perspectives, invites and encourages participation at all levels, minimizes defensiveness, and builds and maintains camaraderie. Effective communication is prevented when Board members indulge in using profane or abusive language, or admonish, and berate one another either via email or in person. Therefore, such behavior is cause for remedial action in order to prevent a divisive atmosphere that distracts the Board from its mission and from efficiently conducting its business.
- B. In order to stay on mission, to maintain the Board's strength and integrity, and to prevent divisiveness Board members are encouraged to "speak with one voice", and to avoid lobbying fellow Board members to promote individual causes. Further SRPF Board members' promotion of individual interests or agendas is counter-productive and does not promote SRPF's mission.

3.0 BOARD AND STAFF COMMUNICATION

- A. The ED oversees and directs staff. Communication regarding Board matters is conducted with staff by the Executive Director. Inadvertent conversations between a Board member and staff regarding job responsibilities, task clarifications, etc. should be avoided, but if they occur, the ED should be immediately informed.
- B. Personnel grievances must go through the channels specified in the personnel policies. Board members should direct staff complaints to those channels.
- C. SPPF abides by a whistleblower policy to protect staff and comply with federal law.
- D. The SRPF Board is open to hearing serious concerns/complaints from staff such as sexual harassment, improper use of SRPF funds, or financial problems being hidden from the Board. All such concerns/complaints must go through the Board President or the Executive/Personnel Committee.