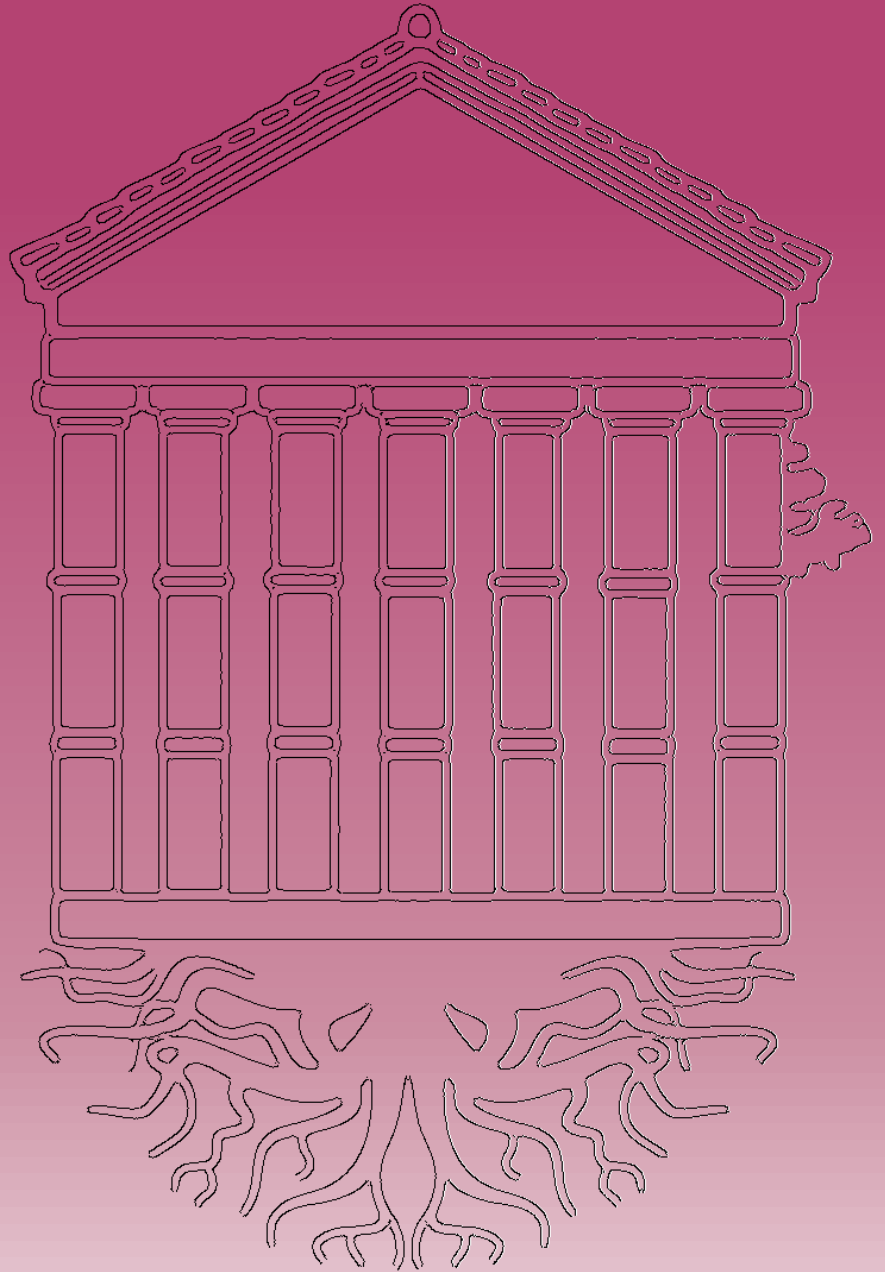


# Building Together: A Guide Through the Shared Governance Model

Community-Informed Design Considerations  
for Canada's National Ballet School's  
Campus Optimization



## Overview

Canada's National Ballet School (NBS), in collaboration with Mass Culture, engaged in exploring and identifying key elements of a shared governance model for artists and cultural organizations to facilitate the sharing of space.

Utilizing NBS' existing feasibility study and Campus Optimization Plan, Mass Culture developed a framework that is rooted, inspired, and co-created by members of NBS, and the dance and arts community.

Through a community-informed process over six months, it included 10 core committee meetings, 22 exploratory Governance Talks and an interactive and immersive table read – a structured reading of a script of three scenes – with facilitated discussions, we've learned that a shared governance model for NBS requires us all to *look beyond the assumptions of [our] form*.

### **Building Together: A Guide Through the Shared Governance Model**

consists of seven pillars and 21 core elements to inform the ways NBS will engage authentically in the optimization of its campus. The model provides considerations for structures and processes to navigate successful shared governance.

- Governance Stewardship
- Decision-Making Process
- Communication Process
- Succession & Nomination Process
- A Meaningful & Equitable Partner in Shared Governance
- Flexibility & Long-Term Viability

Thank you to NBS for entrusting Mass Culture to lead this process of exploration for an envisioned future of sharing dance, and to our community for their generosity and contributions to the formation of this shared governance model.

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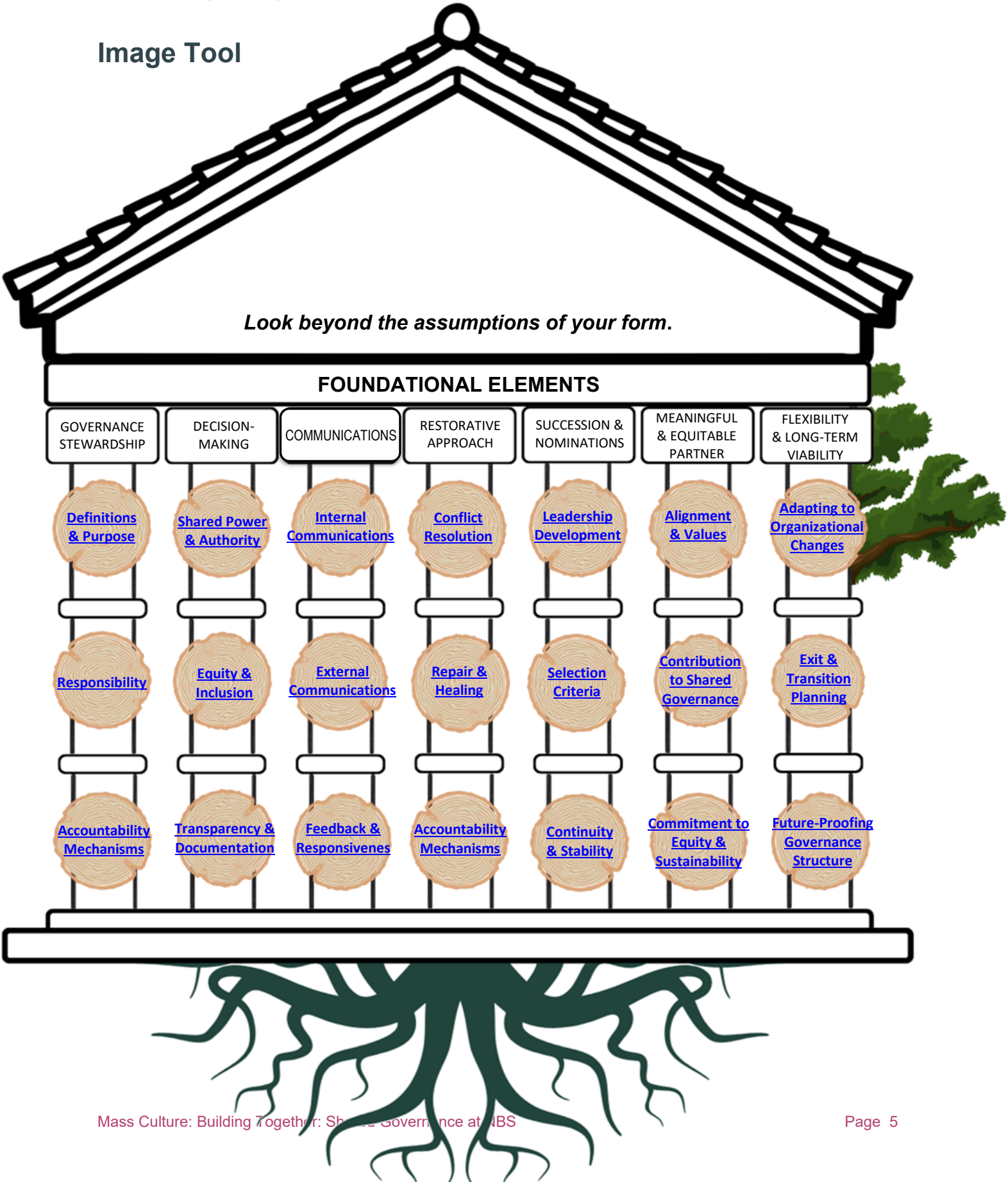
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# Building Together: Shared Governance Model

Image Tool



# Governance Stewardship

## Focus: Definition & Purpose

What does governance stewardship mean?

*“Governance is how we live, how we share, and how we make decisions together.”*

**PLEASE NOTE:** It is important to clarify that this Shared Governance Model is designed to operate alongside rather than replace NBS’s existing board structure. While Mass Culture firmly believes that many components outlined in this model, such as values-driven leadership, participatory decision-making, and mutual accountability, could certainly inform how a traditional nonprofit board functions, the focus of this study is distinct. It centers on a shared governance model in which multiple organizations, each with their own boards, and individuals from the broader dance community come together to co-create and steward a shared space. This model is rooted in shared values, not legal hierarchy, and intended to support cross-organizational trust, collective visioning, and equitable participation beyond formal board governance.

### A Summary of What We Heard

Governance stewardship is the ongoing, adaptive process of guiding collective decision-making in a way that honours both structural accountability and community-rooted relational values. This model of shared governance reimagines governance by positioning itself as a facilitative leadership that centers trust, reciprocity, and cultural grounding. Rather than commanding authority, stewardship enables shared autonomy, advances inclusive participation, and supports transparent, evolving practices that respond to diverse community needs and histories. It is a practice of holding space, not owning it, where the role of governance is to nurture belonging, sustain collaborative relationships, and embed joy, care, and ceremony into how decisions are made. Ultimately, governance stewardship is not just about how things run, but about how people relate, build trust, and co-create a shared, equitable future.

### How Will These Community Insights Shape the Design of NBS’ Shared Governance Model

This model presents “a way of working” and not just structural design.

- A living, movement-inspired structure that must be generative, iterative, and attuned to relational trust.
- NBS serves as the **Institutional Trust Holder**: The catalyst for the shared governance model and, over time, one of many facilitators stewarding the conditions for its flourishing. Rather than directing decisions, NBS’ role is to initiate, nurture, and sustain a governance environment grounded in trust, reciprocity, and community-rooted leadership.
- **Partners in Trust** are those who maintain an ongoing, meaningful relationship with the space. This includes anchor organizations with long-term leases, as well as collectives, individual

artists, elders, and students who engage regularly through recurring collaborations. While not all hold formal tenancy, all Partners in Trust are actively involved in shaping the culture, values, and direction of the space. They contribute to the broader dance ecosystem not only by occupying space, but by helping to co-create its governance and community life. Each partner retains their unique identity while being part of a shared commitment to reciprocity, care, and collective purpose.

- **Cultural rituals embedded in the governance process**, for example check-ins, co-authored ceremonies, and joyful governance practices.

**Tools to support:**

- Co-created charter of shared values and operating principles (a foundation and living document).
- Governance Primer: Onboarding & Orientation Toolkits.
- A glossary of governance terms.
- Governance Ritual Toolkit: Includes collection of check-ins, movement-based practices, ceremonies, and joy-centered rituals.

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## GOVERNANCE STEWARDSHIP

### Focus: Responsibilities

Who is responsible for upholding governance integrity?

*“Each company or individual artist is going to come with a unique ask and a unique offer.”*

#### A Summary of What We Heard

Governance integrity requires both structural clarity and relational fluency. A **Governance Steward**, a dedicated, resourced role newly created, not appended to existing NBS staff positions.

The Governance Steward is not an administrator, but a facilitative leader and relational strategist, responsible for synthesizing information, wrangling next steps, and ensuring that governance processes are transparent, inclusive, and aligned with both practical operations and cultural principles. The steward must navigate the complexities of inter-organizational dynamics, constantly attuned to “what’s being offered in the space” from different tenants, and facilitate a system of co-created charter of shared values and operating principles.

This role is deeply embedded in a network of relationships. It requires a clear understanding of the distinct needs, histories, and contributions of all partners, as well as attention to non-standard forms of participation, such as space-sharing, mentorship, or cultural knowledge. The steward also supports psychological safety, accessibility, and alignment across frontline staff in service to culture and inclusive communication.

Importantly, stewardship must resist transactionalism. It is not about over-curating activity or controlling access, but about removing barriers, enabling authentic participation, and nurturing a wider ecosystem of shared responsibility.

#### How Will These Community Insights Shape the Design of NBS’ Shared Governance Model

Upholding governance integrity is both a relational and structural responsibility, held most directly by the **Governance Steward**, but meaningfully shared across all who participate in the governance model. The steward is a dedicated, resourced role, not an administrative add-on, but a facilitative leader grounded in care, cultural fluency, and deep community engagement.

Tasked with weaving together people, processes, and purpose, the Governance Steward synthesizes information, coordinates direction, upholds the shared charter of values and principles, and nurtures the relational infrastructure that holds it all together. They anchor momentum, build alignment, and ensure that accountability is not merely documented, but lived.

Yet stewardship does not reside in one person alone. Governance begins with a singular, trust-building body, a collective committed to shared leadership, co-decision-making, and the co-creation of equitable systems. As the model matures, this foundational group will evolve into three interdependent working groups, each holding decision-making power and shared responsibility for

guiding the system forward.

One group will steward communications, ensuring transparency, alignment, and coherence across all partners. A second will guide engagement, cultivating relationships, accessibility, and participatory culture within and beyond the space. The third, focused on practice and accountability, will steward the implementation of values, track progress, and support the alignment of day-to-day operations with long-term governance commitments.

Together, these bodies form a responsive and relational infrastructure designed not to control, but to nurture, monitor, and evolve a governance system rooted in trust, care, and shared ownership.

**Tools to support:**

- A co-created Charter of Shared Values and Operating Principles (a foundation and living document).
- An NBS Board & Shared Governance Liaison Policy, naming board and representatives responsible for exchanging information.
- Partner Agreements: Terms of Reference for the governance group(s), including roles, responsibilities, and term limits.

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## Focus: Accountability Mechanisms

How do we ensure transparency and ethical leadership?

*“Something you can trust but also evolve.”*

### A Summary of What We Heard

Accountability in this governance model must be mutual and embedded in both structure and relationship. Participants emphasized the need for documented processes, clear delegation, and trust-building as the foundation for ethical leadership.

Governance structures must be fluid and adaptive, revisited regularly through intentional check-ins, and grounded in ongoing dialogue, mutual accountability, and permeable frameworks that evolve with community needs.

Dedicated relationship management roles are essential, not just for scheduling but for fostering long-term engagement and feedback loops across organizations with shared goals. Participants advocated for clear definitions of partnerships rooted in cohabitation and mission alignment, as well as transparent criteria for institutional support, partner selection, and engagement terms, including review and renewal mechanisms.

Equitable governance also requires checks and balances beyond unilateral control; for example, shared decision-making bodies should handle disputes to ensure distributed power. Calls were made for neutral oversight to counteract unconscious bias and uphold fairness.

Finally, there is a strong emphasis on ensuring that governance processes are visibly inclusive, provide meaningful recognition for contributions, and materially respond to capacity disparities and historic harm, underscoring that accountability must be mutual and participation must never be performative.

### How Will These Community Insights Shape the Design of NBS’ Shared Governance Model

**The Seeding Circle** establishes the groundwork for a governance system that is both mutually accountable and adaptive. Serving as a cross-functional steward of values, it guides early decision-making while embedding relational trust, historical responsiveness, and structural clarity into the foundation of the model. By practicing 360° accountability through reciprocal feedback, the Seeding Circle sets the standard that all roles are open to mutual evaluation, reflection, and continuous evolution.

Once the foundational agreements and shared language are established, the Seeding Circle transitions its role by distributing leadership across three dedicated governance circles, each responsible for ongoing accountability within their specific area. While these circles operate independently, the Seeding Circle reconvenes all members twice a year to ensure continuity, support cross-circle

knowledge exchange, and collectively discuss and plan for future nominations, transitions, and evolving governance practices.

#### **Communications & Alignment Circle:**

This circle is the story weaver of the governance system, maintaining clarity and coherence in how information is shared, and decisions are communicated. It ensures:

- Transparent, consistent communication of who is doing what, how decisions are made, and when feedback loops are open.
- Documentation of governance updates and review/renewal schedules.
- Public storytelling around the partnerships within the space
- Hosting platforms (e.g., newsletters, open meetings, digital dashboards with a calendar)

#### **Engagement & Access Circle:**

This is the relational engine of governance. It ensures that participation goes beyond consultation to include co-creation. This circle:

- Coordinate orientation to governance practices with intentional attention to different learning styles and accessibility needs.
- Facilitates restorative justice processes for addressing harm or breakdowns in trust.
- Determines co-learning events to nurture cross-organizational understanding and experimentation with new decision-making models.
- Develops practices for embedding artistic approaches, cultural protocols, and accessibility standards into all governance activities.

#### **Practice & Accountability Circle:**

This circle acts as the living mirror of governance. Its job is reflective accountability, asking not just *“are we doing what we said?”* but *“are we being who we intended to be?”* This circle:

- Maintains records of commitments made by each partner, including shared agreements around space use, reinvestment, and support mechanisms.
- Facilitating 360° evaluation practices with external support to maintain integrity.

While the governance steward ensures consistent communication across all circles, the three groups formally reconvene as the Seeding Circle twice a year (or as needed) to share progress, align on collective learning, and facilitate structural adaptations or the on/off boarding of new partners. This periodic convergence reinforces coherence across the governance model and allows for responsive evolution grounded in shared accountability.

#### **Tools to Support:**

- A glossary of governance terms.
- Predictable capital reinvestment formulas: A transparent agreement that outlines how future costs related to the upkeep and improvement of space such as repairs, maintenance, upgrades, or infrastructure investments will be covered.
- Restorative Justice Approach.

- A 360° Evaluation Framework.
- A digital dashboard for the shared space - To share internal news/stories.

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# Decision-Making Process

## Focus: Shared Power & Authority

Who has decision-making power & how is it distributed?

*“We’re not pretending consensus always exists. We negotiate authority and set up who decides what.”*

### A Summary of What We Heard

Participants consistently expressed concern that, even with the best intentions, NBS’ institutional position could inadvertently lead to disproportionate influence over decision-making. The framing of space as something “given” by NBS risks reinforcing a saviour narrative and perpetuating inequity.

To address this, several mechanisms were proposed to ensure meaningful participation in decision-making. These included proportional representation models that tie voting power to equitable criteria, and the development of “decision type maps” to clarify which decisions are advisory, which are binding, and who ultimately holds decision-making authority.

Participants also advocated decision-making that balances financial investment with non-monetary contributions such as lived experience, community engagement, and long-term involvement. Tools like a transparent, real-time resource booking system were recommended to support fairness in space access, scheduling, and prioritization.

Importantly, shared authority was recognized not just as a structural change, but as a cultural shift that evolves over time. Power-sharing was seen as a gradual process, often informal but still impactful. The move from consultation to co-authorship signals a strong desire for community-led leadership, particularly in decisions around space usage. The concept of cyclical governance—“Govern – Reflect – Adjust – Repeat”—captures the adaptive nature of this work.

Underlying these discussions there is a clear tension between the need for operational efficiency and the imperative for participatory governance. While technical and logistical responsibilities may require centralized oversight, areas such as space allocation, scheduling, and vision-setting demand authentic community input. A growing consensus suggests these domains should be guided by a shared governance model, with NBS adopting a supportive rather than directive role.

### How Will These Community Insights Shape the Design of NBS’ Shared Governance Model

NBS shifts from an executive role to that of a trust holder and facilitator. Rather than directing decisions, it creates the conditions for others to lead, holding the memory of collective commitments while providing logistical, financial, and structural support.

Within this governance model, decision-making is a multi-directional, iterative process embedded across multiple touchpoints. The Seeding Circle sets the tone by establishing shared values and

initiating 360° feedback practices where all participants engage in mutual reflection, accountability, and growth. Once foundational agreements are in place, the Seeding Circle transitions into a convening body, while three specialized circles take on leadership within their respective domains.

For example, a decision about allocating shared space for a Sunday dance community hub might be initiated by the Engagement & Access Circle, communicated transparently by the Communications & Alignment Circle, and assessed for alignment with values and commitments by the Practice & Accountability Circle. Each circle has clearly defined scopes of authority, but decisions are shaped by ongoing cross-circle communication and regular check-ins, supported by the Governance Steward ensuring coherence and responsiveness.

Shared decision-making hinges on clarity: who decides what, how, and when. This clarity is supported by tools like a Decision Type Map, which outlines whether a decision is consultative, collaborative, delegated, or retained. A digital dashboard provides transparency into active decisions, responsibilities, and open feedback loops, while also serving as a storytelling platform.

Importantly, authority in this model is not just procedural, it is relational. Partners gain influence through ongoing participation, demonstrated trustworthiness, and contributions to a shared culture. This relational foundation is activated through:

- Recognition of non-monetary contributions such as cultural stewardship, lived experience, and relational labour as legitimate sources of governance power.
- Embedded restorative justice practices that prioritize healing and repair over exclusion when conflict or harm arises.
- Co-learning spaces and governance rituals that support deep listening, co-visioning, and embodied practices of shared power.

Governance gatherings are not solely functional; they are also ceremonial. Meetings often begin with check-ins and co-authored rituals that ground participants in presence and mutual regard. Artistic practices are embraced as valid forms of governance that are tools for sense-making and decision-shaping.

**Tools to Support:**

- Decision Type Maps: Distinguish between advisory, consultative, and binding decisions.
- Proportional Representation Framework
- A digital dashboard for the shared space: real-time resource booking system and internal news.
- Restorative Justice Approach

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## DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

### Focus: Equity & Inclusion

How do we ensure diverse voices are represented?

*“For some of these folks, this is their complete livelihood...  
We have organizational stakes. They have personal stakes.”*

#### A Summary of What We Heard

The insights gathered on equity and inclusion in decision-making point to a comprehensive, values-driven reimagining of how governance must evolve to truly reflect the voices, needs, and contributions of diverse communities. At the heart of these conversations is a clear recognition that equity must be structurally embedded, relationally enacted, and continuously tended through reflection and accountability.

A prominent recommendation was the implementation of “Proportional Representation”, a tool designed to ensure that decision-making power is not monopolized by traditional leadership structures. This model introduces minimum representation thresholds for equity-deserving groups, such as requiring that a certain percentage of decision-makers be partners (co-tenants), BIPOC individuals, NBS students (a minimum of three) and members from the dance community. The aim is to prevent tokenism and elevate community input to the level of co-authorship in decisions that impact them directly.

The feedback also emphasized that inclusion must go beyond consultation. To be meaningful, community members, particularly from equity-deserving groups, must be engaged as decision-makers, not passive recipients of institutional decisions. This includes providing direct access to those with authority, reducing bureaucratic barriers, and ensuring that the shared governance model has real power, not symbolic roles. Importantly, the call for co-decision-making between NBS staff and community partners was consistently reinforced, underlining that shared governance must be based on trust, transparency, and a commitment to shared outcomes.

At a deeper level, inclusion was framed as a relational and cyclical practice—not a one-time checkbox. This requires ongoing reflection on power dynamics, positionality, and the lived realities of different groups. For example, BIPOC-led organizations were identified as strong candidates for early governance pilots—not as stand-ins for the entire community, but as experienced partners who could model inclusive practices while helping NBS build internal readiness.

True equity means compensating for systemic imbalances rather than pretending all stakeholders begin from an equal starting line. For this reason, ideas such as partners (co-tenants) serving as bridges for other community groups emerged as strategies for building layered, interconnected participation over time.

Moreover, the sustainability of equitable governance was repeatedly tied to the principle of mutual benefit. As one participant noted, inclusion must not result in dependency or extractive dynamics; it

must foster shared investment, autonomy, and long-term collaboration. Inclusion, in this context, is not proximity to power, it is power itself, shared, practiced, and redefined. Indigenous leaders also underscored the importance of decentering institutional authority, particularly in efforts of reconciliation, asking NBS to step back to make space for others to lead.

Finally, there was acknowledgment that equity must be balanced with feasibility and grounded in a long-term vision. Several discussions invoked the idea that decisions should be made with the next seven generations in mind, not just immediate convenience or optics. This long view affirms that equity in governance is essential not only for justice, but for the survival and vitality of the shared model into the future.

In sum, the feedback calls for a shift from inclusion as invitation to inclusion as infrastructure, a system that redistributes power, centers community voices, and sustains itself through intentional design, continuous learning, and shared commitment.

### **How Will These Community Insights Shape the Design of NBS' Shared Governance Model**

Rooted in both justice and joy, the governance model will embed Proportional Representation as a foundational design principle across all circles. This ensures that key constituencies: Partners in Trust representing co-tenants, BIPOC individuals, NBS students (with a minimum of three), and members of the dance community are guaranteed meaningful seats at the decision-making table. Their presence will shape how committees are composed, how votes are weighed, and how decisions are validated. This structure safeguards against tokenism and ensures governance reflects the diverse lived experiences of those most impacted by its outcomes.

Inclusion within this model is not treated as a one-time achievement but as a relational, cyclical practice that demands continuous attention to power dynamics and positionality. This includes:

- Regular reflection and evaluation cycles to examine how power is being shared and to ensure a wide range of voices are being heard and valued.
- The engagement of BIPOC-led organizations as early Partners in Trust, modeling inclusive practices and helping to build the internal readiness of the governance system.
- Intentional onboarding and orientation pathways that support all participants in understanding the governance structure and their agency within it.

Recognizing that not all partners enter this system from the same starting place, the model will actively work to address systemic inequities. This will take shape through:

- Resource-sharing mechanisms that acknowledge varying capacities across partners.
- Support for Partner in Trust organizations to serve as bridges, helping others enter the space and navigate governance processes with confidence.
- A firm commitment to mutual benefit, ensuring that power is shared in ways that foster autonomy and reciprocity, not dependency.

As part of this shift, NBS will intentionally decenter itself within the governance model. Staff and Board members are encouraged to participate, but their involvement will be distributed across

governance circles, reinforcing a model in which no single entity dominates the process.

Finally, the model will be grounded in a long-term, intergenerational vision, calling on leaders to consider the impact of decisions for generations to come. This will guide how decisions are recorded, how institutional memory is maintained, and how future leadership is cultivated. The result will be a governance structure built not only for today's needs, but for the continued flourishing of those who will steward the space in years to come.

**Tools to support:**

- Proportional Representation Framework: Defines how representation is allocated across governance circles.
- Decision Type Maps
- Governance Primer: Onboarding & Orientation Toolkits
- A 360 Evaluation Framework: Includes an impact tracker of decisions being made.
- Governance Ritual Toolkit: Includes collection of check-ins, movement-based practices, ceremonies, and joy-centered rituals.

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## Focus: Transparency & Documentation

What processes need to exist to document and share decisions?

*“There has to be flexibility... but also a structure people can trust.”*

### A Summary of What We Heard

Across all the research conducted, a powerful and consistent theme emerged: for shared governance to succeed, it must be grounded in clear, transparent, and trust-based structures that actively confront institutional inequalities and operational tensions. Participants emphasized the importance of formalized agreements around key issues such as space use, financial contributions, and intellectual property. Equally vital was the call for honest communication about NBS’ own financial motives and limitations, such as the need for rental income and operational sustainability, as a foundation for building credibility and mutual understanding.

To prevent favouritism or perceived bias, interviewees repeatedly called for consistent and documented processes for selection, participation, review, renewal, and exit. This includes the development of precise agreements that outline expectations, shared responsibilities, exit strategies, and forecasted cost-sharing arrangements. Participants stressed that these agreements must not rely on informal networks or personal connections, “not relying on knowing the right person”, but instead be guided by transparent criteria, clear timelines, and accessible mechanisms.

Concerns were also raised about the risk of erasing institutional memory and lived experience. Without intentional mechanisms for engagement, long-time contributors, elders, and foundational community members may be excluded from future processes, despite their critical role in shaping the space. This highlights the need for explicit communication protocols that ensure these individuals are seen, respected, and connected, even beyond their direct involvement. In this context, transparency is not just about how decisions are made, but about who is remembered, valued, and kept in the conversation.

To support adaptability, participants proposed structured moments of reflection, such as scheduled “Rebalancing Periods,” where all partners could revisit and renegotiate roles, responsibilities, and agreements. This points to a broader desire for structured flexibility, a governance model that is responsive to evolving needs while remaining dependable and fair.

Finally, interviewees strongly emphasized the need for clarity on what is negotiable and what is not, from the outset and throughout the process. Without this, participants may mistakenly believe they hold decision-making power where they do not, which can lead to confusion and erode trust. As such, structured transparency must include honest communication about the boundaries of authority, supported by regular reporting cycles and open channels for feedback.

## How Will These Community Insights Shape the Design of NBS' Shared Governance Model

In the early stages of the governance model, the Seeding Circle, in collaboration with the Governance Steward, will co-create a Charter of Shared Values and Operating Principles. This foundational document will be accompanied by a suite of formalized agreements and structured processes that ensure clarity, fairness, and accountability across all forms of participation. These agreements will include scheduled windows for reviewing roles, responsibilities, and partnerships, building adaptability and responsiveness into the system from the outset.

Each agreement or process will include a “negotiability status tag” (e.g., *Open for Community Input*, *Co-Decision Required*, *Institutionally Held*) to clearly communicate the level of influence participants can expect to have. Every individual or organization engaging in the space whether as a Partner in Trust (co-tenant), collaborator, or advisor will enter through clearly documented expectations covering:

- Space use
- Financial contributions
- Maintenance responsibilities
- Branding and intellectual property
- Renewal and exit terms

To ensure equity in how these occupancies of studio space are granted, a Partner in Trust Selection Framework will guide decisions. This framework will be rooted in transparent criteria and decision logic, helping prevent bias or favouritism.

With support from the Communications & Alignment Circle, a Digital Governance Dashboard will provide centralized access to key resources, including:

- Contact directories (e.g., for scheduling, maintenance, or grievances)
- Office hour schedules with decision-makers
- Current timelines for governance decisions and opportunities for input
- Shared documentation, such as policies, updates, and governance agreements

The Governance Steward, alongside the Engagement & Access Circle, will also ensure the model honours the past by celebrating those who have contributed to shaping the space.

Whether through public acknowledgements, rituals, or legacy storytelling, these efforts ensure that as the governance model evolves, elders, long-time contributors, and foundational community members remain visible and respected, grounding future decisions in a rich history of lived experience.

To maintain the integrity and responsiveness of the model, the Practice & Accountability Circle will implement a 360° Evaluation Framework. This tool will serve as a regular pulse-check, gathering:

- Multi-perspective feedback from staff, community partners, and space users.
- Assessments of how well agreements are upheld and values enacted.
- Evaluations of power dynamics—who hold decision-making authority, how it is exercised, and whose voices are shaping the outcomes.

The findings from these evaluations will be published in an annual Shared Governance Report and

reviewed collectively during reconvening of the Seeding Circle. These sessions will provide a space for reflection, course-correction, and recommitment to the shared values.

In this model, transparency is no longer just an aspiration or a value on paper. It becomes a practice that is lived, embedded in infrastructure, manifested in culture, and sustained through intentional relationships.

**Tools to support:**

- Governance Primer: Onboarding & Orientation Toolkits
- A Co-Tenant Selection Framework: A clear set of criteria and processes that determine how and why co-tenants have been given space.
- Structured Rebalancing Periods: Scheduled reviews where roles and agreements can be revisited and revised collaboratively.
- Decision Type Maps: Outlines negotiability status tags
- Digital Governance Dashboard: with contact directory and office hours
- Restorative Justice Approach
- An NBS Board & Shared Governance Liaison Policy, naming board and representatives responsible for exchanging information.
- Partnership Agreements on Lease, Renewal, and Exit Terms: Standardized documents that define terms
- A 360 Evaluation Framework: Reflects the relational, cyclical, and trust-based nature of governance, capturing not only what is done, but how it is done, who is impacted, and how power is shared.
- A celebration or acknowledgment of those who have contributed to shaping the space

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# Communication Process

## Focus: Internal Communications

How do staff/ tenants/ NBS Board stay informed?

*"It's a lot of work when it's not just you."*

### A Summary of What We Heard

It became clear throughout the research process that information-sharing is a cornerstone of connection, transparency, and shared responsibility. Communication was repeatedly emphasized as more than the act of distributing updates. It is about creating an environment where people feel safe, seen, and empowered to participate meaningfully. This requires intentionally designed meetings, check-ins, and planning processes that invite a diversity of perspectives and actively work to mitigate internal bias. From seasonal cross-network check-ins to reflection lounges during emotionally charged moments, and "rallies" that immerse board members in the model, these practices are intended to build trust and decentralize leadership by supporting authentic, relational engagement.

Internal communications must speak clearly to both the values-driven intent of the shared governance model and its strategic significance. Framing this collaborative work as both a business case and an equity imperative helps align institutional goals with community needs, while also helping to avoid perceptions of mission drift. This dual framing offers a consistent narrative for staff, board members, and partners, reinforcing the integrity of the governance model across all levels of engagement.

To maintain alignment, internal communication must be multi-directional and consistent. Tools such as live calendars, tenant meetings, maintenance ticket systems, and centralized board portals are seen as essential to ensuring day-to-day operational clarity. In parallel, mechanisms like quarterly financial check-ins and community governance feedback circles provide avenues for transparency, reflection, and continuous learning. These strategies help ensure that everyone involved, from students and tenants to faculty, has meaningful, timely access to information, and feels included in shaping the governance environment.

Participants also emphasized the importance of explicit expectations, particularly for partner organizations. Clear communication around the nature, duration, and scope of relationships is essential to avoid misunderstandings and support predictability.

Finally, there was strong advocacy for transforming siloed meetings into collaborative planning spaces. This shift reflects a broader desire to see communication as an active, co-creative process, not just a functional task. As one participant aptly put it, "It's a lot of work when it's not just you", a reminder that shared governance relies on intentional, inclusive internal communication strategies that support collective effort, distributed leadership, and mutual accountability.

## How Will These Community Insights Shape the Design of NBS' Shared Governance Model

Internal communications in practice within this shared governance model embody a culture of relational accountability and shared meaning-making. Beyond distributing information, communication becomes a connective tissue woven through rituals, digital tools, intentional check-ins, feedback systems, and inclusive language that holds the governance ecosystem together.

The Governance Steward and Communications & Alignment Circle work in partnership to create and maintain communication outputs that not only explain what is happening, but also why it matters. This values-based framing is essential for building alignment and shared understanding.

A Digital Governance Dashboard, curated by the Communications & Alignment Circle and maintained by the Governance Steward, provides real-time access to:

- Governance timelines
- Live calendars (e.g., tenant meetings, board events)
- Office hours with decision-makers
- Active feedback loops, reflection prompts, and insights from prior feedback
- Maintenance ticketing and space-use alerts

This dashboard serves as a central hub for transparency and engagement, designed to be accessible and easy to navigate. To ensure the dashboard is not just a static tool, but a living part of everyday governance practice, it will be actively referenced in meetings, integrated into orientation and onboarding, and used as a launching point for reflection, evaluation, and planning across all governance circles. Updates will be maintained on a regular cadence and tied directly to governance rhythms such as agenda setting, issue tracking, and reporting, so that it becomes a routine touchpoint, not an afterthought. Its design and function reinforce the model's commitment to relational accountability, visibility, and continuous responsiveness.

To avoid reinforcing hierarchies or confusion, internal communications prioritize clarity, inclusiveness, and psychological safety. This includes the consistent use of non-othering, equity-centered language across all documents, agreements, and verbal exchanges.

Each circle's meetings incorporate check-ins and time for reflection, embedded within communal experiences such as shared meals. These practices are not viewed as add-ons, but as essential communication rituals that affirm value, build trust, and foster belonging across generations and roles.

With the support of the Governance Steward, internal communications also transform siloed meetings into collaborative governance planning spaces. In these sessions:

- Governance circles report out using a shared storytelling template: *"What did we try? What did we learn? What's next?"*
- Financial performance updates and cost-to-benefit reviews are shared with openness and relevance to all partners.
- New initiatives and challenges are introduced early, allowing for meaningful feedback and co-design, which strengthens shared ownership and alignment.

Communication strategies also intentionally amplify the work of co-tenants, NBS students, faculty,

and community collaborators as stories of collective progress. These are captured in annual reports and storytelling formats, shared in multiple accessible modes such as written, visual, and verbal to ensure the information is inclusive and resonant across the full spectrum of participants.

In essence, internal communication is not a function, it is a practice. A dynamic, relationship-centered infrastructure that keeps governance legible, participatory, and grounded in shared purpose.

**Tools to support:**

- Governance Primer: Onboarding & Orientation Toolkits
- Glossary of governance terms
- Digital Governance Dashboard
- Governance Circle Report Out Template
- Co-created Charter of Shared Values and Operating Principles
- NBS Board & Shared Governance Liaison Policy, naming board and representatives responsible for exchanging information
- 360° Evaluation Framework: To track value alignment and satisfaction levels

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## COMMUNICATION PROCESS

### Focus: External Communications

What are the strategies for engaging in the broader community?

*“Being in the building means being part of a wider responsibility to others and the land.”*

#### A Summary of What We Heard

Interviewees emphasized that communication with external audiences must go beyond simply broadcasting information. It is about building trust, signaling belonging, and inviting participation in ways that reflect humility, accessibility, and accountability. A key takeaway was the importance of clearly communicating the “why” behind who the Campus Optimization includes, particularly to donors, supporters, and community members to avoid misconceptions about mission drift. External communications must prioritize mutuality over branding, and depth over appearance, centering substance, active listening, and honest reflection.

Accessibility and inclusivity were repeatedly named as essential, not only in language but in how physical space and policy decisions are communicated. Contributors underscored that space design, branding, and public messaging are never neutral. They send symbolic signals about who belongs and who is truly invited in. For instance, branding that reflects shared values (such as “Sharing Dance”) connotes a sense of community ownership and cultural alignment. Similarly, ideas like tenants hosting “open door” days were proposed as ways to democratize access, enhance pride, and make the space feel more open and welcoming to the broader public.

There was also strong advocacy for external communication practices that include acknowledging the land, honouring commitments to community well-being, and avoiding overstated claims of institutional leadership in collaborative work. A Values Charter was recommended as a grounding tool, co-created by community members, to guide how the space and its vision are introduced to the wider dance sector.

Finally, maintaining communication loops with non-governing advisors was seen as crucial. Even if these individuals do not hold formal decision-making power, their insights and feedback should remain integral to shaping the space’s external voice and relationships.

In short, external communications should tell the story behind the model, not just promote outcomes.

#### How Will These Community Insights Shape the Design of NBS’ Shared Governance Model

Guided by the ethos of “Sharing Dance,” external communications will be embedded within the shared governance infrastructure, collaboratively stewarded by the Communications & Alignment Circle and supported by the Governance Steward. Their collective role is to build authentic, long-term relationships with communities, donors, artists, and the broader dance ecosystem.

At the heart of all the messaging will be a clear and accessible narrative(s) that articulates who is

shaping the space and how they are animating the principle of "sharing dance." These stories will speak to both values-based intentions (such as equity, reconciliation, and accessibility) and strategic priorities (such as sustainability and partnership-building), helping external audiences, including donors and funders understand how these aims are interwoven, rather than at odds.

With guidance from the Governance Steward, this narrative will be documented and updated regularly in an External Communications Messaging Plan. This plan will be developed in alignment with the Charter of Shared Values and co-led by the Communications & Alignment Circle (for messaging integrity) and the Engagement & Access Circle (for community-facing outreach).

All messaging will be reviewed through the lenses of inclusivity, plain language, and cultural humility. Space design, signage, and branding will be approached as intentional acts of communication, sending clear signals of openness, belonging, and cultural alignment to the wider public.

Outgoing communications will first be shared internally with NBS (as the Institutional Trust Holder) and the Partners in Trust, who will be invited to simultaneously amplify these messages publicly. This decentralized model resists the idea of a single institutional voice, instead celebrating the collective voices and contributions of all partners. Communications will highlight shared leadership, mutual learning, and collaborative success.

To support this decentralized communication approach, several strategies will be employed, including:

- Rotating organizational spotlights, showcasing different Partners in Trusts
- Stories surfaced through the Digital Governance Dashboard, highlighting everyday examples of shared leadership in action
- "Open Door Days" hosted by NBS and the co-tenants, offering the wider community opportunities to experience the space, meet its stewards, and witness the shared space in practice

External communications will also prioritize two-way engagement. The Engagement & Access Circle may host public listening sessions and open feedback loops, inviting insights from external contributors, audiences, and non-governing advisors. This feedback will inform governance cycles and be incorporated into an annual report, demonstrating how community voices have shaped practice and policy.

In addition, communications will include land acknowledgments, updates on commitments to equity and reconciliation, and transparent reporting on challenges as well as successes. This approach reinforces a commitment to humility, accountability, and public trust, shifting external relationships from transactional to transformational.

Finally, recognizing the collaborative nature of this model, comprising a consortium of dance organizations and individuals, external communications will make a deliberate effort to reach beyond traditional arts audiences. This includes developing outreach strategies that engage new and diverse communities, extending the reach of dance, and widening the circle of participation and belonging.

**Tools to support:**

- Co-created Charter of Shared Values and Operating Principles

- Glossary of governance terms: Ensures plain language
- External Communications Messaging Plan
- Digital Governance Dashboard: Includes a Media & Messaging Calendar
- Restorative Justice Approach: Includes communication when responding to difficult topics or community concerns
- 360° Evaluation: Include a process for open feedback loops

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## COMMUNICATION PROCESS

### Focus: Feedback & Responsiveness

How do we ensure two-way communication and address feedback?

*“A culture where raising concerns, giving feedback, and offering ideas is welcomed, normalized, and safe.”*

#### A Summary of What We Heard

Interviewees consistently emphasized that feedback and responsiveness must be embedded into the everyday culture of the shared governance model, not treated as periodic or peripheral exercises. A responsive governance model should actively welcome concerns, ideas, and critique, and must be structured in a way that allows community input to result in meaningful change.

It was shared that this model should evoke a culture of informed empathy, where different users' roles, challenges, and contributions are understood and respected, and where communication promotes shared learning rather than rigid formality.

One of the clearest messages was that feedback loops should be continuous, two-way, and culturally embedded. These do not always require high-tech systems; instead, the emphasis is on creating relational, low-barrier opportunities for reflection and responsiveness. Tools like anonymous surveys were recommended to make feedback a normalized part of governance. Brave spaces such as listening circles and structured community care check-ins were also encouraged, ensuring that feedback is not only safe to give, but celebrated as a core part of community life.

There was strong support for the development of shared principles or rules of engagement, co-developed and reviewed regularly, to guide how feedback is invited, given, and acted upon. This includes recognizing the labour involved in giving feedback, particularly for communities historically excluded or overlooked and ensuring that contributions are acknowledged and valued.

Critically, participants stressed that feedback must lead to concrete adjustments. Governance should model a culture where community input results in visible, systemic improvements, whether through language changes, signage revisions, or more equitable decision-making processes. The Micro-Adjustment Protocol was proposed as a tool to allow partners to flag issues such as misrepresentation or outdated practices and see them addressed in real time, without requiring cumbersome formal review processes.

Participants also noted the value of structured models like the Engagement Ladder, which outlines various levels of partnership (e.g. access-only, co-programming, governance seat). This helps ensure that feedback mechanisms are appropriate to the level of engagement and that all partners, regardless of their role, have access to meaningful avenues for influence.

Finally, feedback should be integrated into regular evaluation cycles. For example, an annual self-evaluation survey could assess the effectiveness of the governance structure and collect feedback from all participants. The information gathered would then be incorporated into shared governance

planning and reported back to the community through transparent updates, reinforcing that responsiveness is a living practice, not a checklist.

In sum, what we heard affirms the need for a governance culture where feedback is relational, continuous, acted upon, and embedded in the fabric of the governance model. It is through this responsiveness that shared governance becomes adaptive, inclusive, and truly community-led.

### **How Will These Community Insights Shape the Design of NBS' Shared Governance Model**

A cornerstone of the Shared Governance model will be the development and implementation of a 360° Evaluation Framework, a tool designed to embed reflection, accountability, and learning into the everyday culture of governance. A draft of this framework will be reviewed, tested, and approved by the Seeding Circle to ensure it aligns with the shared values and principles foundational to the model. Once approved, the Governance Steward will lead its implementation, in ongoing collaboration with the Practice & Accountability Circle, which will steward its continuous evolution and use.

This framework will be designed to gather insights into how shared values are upheld, assess what is working and what needs adjustment, and track the progression of collaborative practices. Its purpose is not only to evaluate performance, but to support a culture of learning, responsiveness, and collective growth.

The findings from evaluative practices will be synthesized by the Governance Steward and reviewed by the Practice & Accountability Circle. These evaluation share backs will offer a transparent account of how feedback has influenced decisions and policy and will be shared through the Digital Governance Dashboard.

Importantly, feedback will not be confined to annual moments, it will be continuous, accessible, and embedded across governance practices. Responsive communication channels will include:

- Periodic one-question anonymous surveys sent to the Institutional Trust Holder, Partners in Trust, collaborators, and dance community
- Co-learning spaces supported by the Engagement & Access Circle, offering supportive, dialogic opportunities to share feedback
- Check-ins integrated into regular governance circle meetings
- A real-time changelog, where both Institutional Trust Holder and Partners in Trust can flag issues or concerns and receive timely responses without needing to wait for formal review cycles

Every piece of feedback received will move through a clear process:

1. Acknowledgment – Feedback is received, documented, and logged (anonymously if requested)
2. Analysis – The Practice & Accountability Circle identifies patterns and areas requiring action
3. Application – Time-bound, concrete adjustments are proposed and implemented
4. Reporting Back – Updates and outcomes are communicated via the Dashboard and shared in governance convenings to ensure full transparency

This evaluation framework will be adaptive by design. As new partners join, roles evolve, or community needs shift, the Practice & Accountability Circle will revisit and revise the evaluation tools to ensure they remain relevant, inclusive, and relationally grounded.

**Tools to Support this Work:**

- 360° Evaluation Toolkit:
  - Includes core evaluation domains, key questions, collection methods, and share-back formats
  - Designed for different levels of engagement
- Digital Governance Dashboard:
  - Hosts evaluation findings, summaries, and community-facing insights
  - Includes a changelog that tracks flagged concerns and corresponding updates

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# Restorative Approach

## Focus: Conflict Resolution

How do we address harm, grievances and disputes?

*“Diplomacy is part of our practice. Not every disagreement is a conflict, but we treat it as a point of care.”*

### A Summary of What We Heard

Drawing on research from the [Restorative Lab](#) at Dalhousie and insights from interviews, conflict should be approached as a natural and necessary element of shared work, one that is anticipated, prepared for, and embraced as an opportunity for care, accountability, and collective growth.

A key recommendation was to prepare for conflict from the outset, including making it a formal part of onboarding and orientation. Participants stressed the importance of clarifying roles, responsibilities, and boundaries early to prevent misunderstandings and tensions down the line. Conflict resolution training, particularly grounded in anti-oppression and anti-racism principles, was suggested as an annual practice for staff and governance participants alike. This training would uphold values such as non-disposability, accountability, equity, self-regulation, and recognition of invisible and emotional labour.

Participants also emphasized that psychological safety must be an essential component of the governance culture, particularly for equity-deserving groups who may have prior negative experiences with institutions. Creating this safety means providing clear, codified processes for restorative conflict resolution, not leaving resolution to personal discretion or informal authority. To that end, many supported the development of procedural safeguards and restorative facilitation roles or third-party mediators who can support conflict resolution in a neutral and compassionate way.

Rather than treating every disagreement as a crisis, contributors encouraged a mindset of diplomacy and care, noting that not all disagreements are conflicts, but they should still be acknowledged, engaged with, and learned from. Common areas of tension—such as cleaning duties, noise levels, or booking space were cited as predictable friction points that require clear, pre-established pathways for resolution.

### How Will These Community Insights Shape the Design of NBS’ Shared Governance Model

Rooted in restorative principles and a commitment to shared leadership, conflict resolution will be co-stewarded by the Engagement & Access Circle and the Governance Steward. Rather than viewing conflict as disruption, this model treats disagreements, whether about space use, communication norms, power dynamics, or decision-making as essential opportunities to clarify expectations, repair

relationships, and deepen collective trust.

As a foundational step, members of the Engagement & Access Circle and the Governance Steward will participate in a restorative practice workshop. This learning process will lead to the co-creation of a living document that outlines a suite of tiered conflict resolution pathways designed to address interpersonal, operational, and systemic tensions. These pathways will be proactively rehearsed and normalized through ongoing co-learning spaces, creating shared fluency in how to navigate discomfort and disagreement.

Should tensions exceed the capacity of dialogue-based processes, a third-party mediator may be engaged to support resolution in a neutral, non-punitive way. At any time, grievances can be brought directly to the Governance Steward or a member of the Engagement & Access Circle, ensuring multiple trusted avenues for raising concerns.

To support early intervention and everyday responsiveness, the changelog feature on the Digital Governance Dashboard will provide a low-barrier method for flagging and tracking small but meaningful issues. In parallel, regular check-ins within circle meetings will provide dedicated time to surface tensions, name power dynamics, and express unmet needs before they escalate.

Throughout the year, members of the governance model may also identify needs for additional workshop opportunities, such as anti-oppression facilitation, trauma-informed practices, or boundary-setting. These learning moments will be woven into the rhythm of governance, reinforcing a culture of ongoing care and reflection.

Importantly, conflict resolution within this model is tied directly to collective learning and action. Outcomes from resolved conflicts will be:

- Shared with the Practice & Accountability Circle, who will use reflections to inform future governance practices and process design
- Posted to the Digital Governance Dashboard, when appropriate, to visibly demonstrate responsiveness and model transparency
- Reviewed periodically to identify patterns or recurring tensions, ensuring the system learns from conflict and evolves rather than reproduces harm

**Tools to support:**

- Governance Primer: Onboarding & Orientation Toolkits: Include Conflict Resolution Pathways
- Restorative Justice Approach: Include different pathways to address conflict
- Co-learning spaces supported by the Engagement & Access Circle, offering supportive, dialogic opportunities to share feedback
- Digital Governance Dashboard: Include learnings from conflict when appropriate
- 360° Evaluation Framework: Provide structured opportunities for participants to reflect and surface tensions early on

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## RESTORATIVE APPROACH

### Focus: Repair & Healing

What structures support reconciliation and relationship-building?

*“It’s easy to undervalue... how high the stakes are for people trying to survive off their practice.”*

#### A Summary of What We Heard

Participants across conversations emphasized that for shared governance to be meaningful, it must intentionally address historical and ongoing harms not just through conflict resolution, but through a deeper practice of restorative repair. A recurring theme was the need to acknowledge institutional and systemic inequities, particularly those embedded in NBS’ history, and to actively integrate mechanisms of repair into the governance structure itself.

This includes recognizing both physical and symbolic exclusions and fostering governance environments that prioritize honest dialogue, trust-building, and structural change. Participants noted that restorative approaches are not about applying the right tools, but about cultivating a culture grounded in shared values, emotional intelligence, and mutual care. When relationships don’t work out or tensions arise, the model must offer pathways for mutual reflection, accountability, and realignment, rather than retreating into silence or disposability.

The concept of progressive repair, which is repair as an ongoing, evolving practice, was a central idea. This requires governance to be responsive to broken promises, delays, or exclusions, particularly where harm has real emotional, cultural, or economic impact. As one participant noted, “It’s easy to undervalue how high the stakes are for people trying to survive off their practice,” emphasizing the need for sensitivity and timely action.

Interviewees emphasized that governance should normalize repair as a fundamental aspect of shared leadership, grounded in honesty, humility, and relational accountability. In one discussion, it was lightheartedly suggested the creation of a button that can be pushed that says, “I know you’re a good person, but I’m going to call you on it,” capturing the spirit of calling in with care rather than conflict. This sentiment underscores that apology, acknowledgment of harm, and ongoing trust-building must be embedded into the governance culture, not as exceptional responses, but as consistent, everyday practices.

Ultimately, what we heard affirms that repair is not a single act, but a sustained commitment. It requires leadership to be emotionally intelligent, values-aligned, and unafraid to confront harm with care, openness, and structural accountability. In doing so, shared governance becomes not only inclusive, but healing.

#### How Will These Community Insights Shape the Design of NBS’ Shared Governance Model

Building on this restorative ethos, the Campus Optimization’s shared governance model will integrate repair and healing as ongoing, relational practices, woven into the daily rhythms of decision-making,

communication, and collective accountability. Rather than being reserved for moments of crisis, these practices will be a core expression of care, reflection, and transformation, practiced by everyone involved in governance.

This commitment is grounded in the co-created Charter of Shared Values and Operating Principles, which explicitly names repair and healing as essential to the integrity of the governance system. These values will be brought to life through rituals, infrastructure, and tools that anticipate the emotional complexities of working across differences, legacy, and hierarchy.

**Tools to support:**

- Co-created charter of shared values and operating principles: Embeds repair and healing within its values
- Governance Ritual Toolkit: Offers arts-based engagement strategies that create space for acknowledgment, reparation, and healing

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## RESTORATIVE APPROACH

### Focus: Accountability Mechanisms

How do we track and assess the effectiveness of efforts?

*“Mutual accountability should be embedded and reflect contributions, shared values, and expectations.”*

#### A Summary of What We Heard

Interviewees emphasized that a restorative approach to governance must be supported by clear, structured accountability mechanisms that uphold fairness, equity, and relational integrity. While restorative values prioritize care and reflection, they must be matched by formal policies and evaluation systems that ensure these values are practiced consistently and not left to discretion or informal judgment. For example, tools like the “tenant progressive termination policy” were referenced as models that formalize conflict resolution while maintaining procedural fairness and clarity for all involved.

Accountability, interviewees stressed, should be mutual and transparent, embedded through formal agreements that clearly outline each party’s contributions, expectations for equity and respect, and alignment with shared values. These agreements create a baseline for trust and a framework for addressing harm when it occurs. Additionally, the importance of clearly defined governance boundaries and participatory processes was raised, emphasizing that everyone involved must understand their roles, responsibilities, and rights within the system.

Interviewees called for regular assessments that capture honest feedback, helping to track the integrity of the model and support necessary course corrections. These evaluations are a key mechanism for holding everyone accountable and ensuring that governance structures evolve in line with equity commitments.

Finally, the role of a neutral Governance Steward, with clearly defined and community-approved authority, was highlighted as a critical anchor for restorative practices. This role could help facilitate restorative justice processes with impartiality and care, reinforcing that accountability is not punitive, but a path toward reflection, repair, and shared growth. In sum, accountability in a restorative model requires both structure and spirit, which includes a balance of policy, evaluation, and relational integrity.

#### How Will These Community Insights Shape the Design of NBS’ Shared Governance Model

When viewed through a restorative lens, accountability becomes a shared and continuous responsibility, rooted in care, trust, and a collective willingness to address harm with transparency and humility. Rather than functioning as a reactive system of enforcement, accountability in this model is reimagined as a proactive framework for reflection, responsiveness, and repair.

The **Seeding Circle** sets this foundation by advancing the development of both the Co-Created Charter of Shared Values and Operating Principles and the 360° Evaluation Framework. These early efforts establish a shared language, set clear expectations for mutual accountability, and affirm that no individual or institution is above accountability. In later stages of the governance model, the Restorative Justice Approach will be developed with specific accountability measures embedded into its structure and practice.

As the relational engine of governance, the **Engagement & Access Circle** plays a central role in holding space for emotional complexity, harm acknowledgment, and cultural healing. Its accountability measures include:

- Facilitating restorative justice processes that prioritize dialogue, healing, and collective repair
- Identifying when situations may require third-party mediation
- Supporting co-learning spaces that equip partners to navigate conflict and harm through shared understanding and skill-building

The **Practice & Accountability Circle** ensures that restorative accountability moves beyond rhetoric and is actively upheld. Its responsibilities include:

- Reviewing agreement templates to reflect evolving insights and shared values
- Maintaining records of commitments and adaptations made by all partners
- Supporting the implementation of the 360° evaluation processes across roles and relationships
- Surfacing systemic patterns that point to deeper structural issues in need of intervention

The **Communications & Alignment Circle** ensures that accountability is transparent, coherent, and visible to all stakeholders. It does this by:

- Sharing, when appropriate, updates and reflections through newsletters, storytelling, and open meetings
- Maintaining a Digital Governance Dashboard, including a changelog that tracks how concerns are raised, addressed, and resolved over time

**Tools to support:**

- 360° Evaluation Framework: Provide structured opportunities for participants to reflect and surface tensions early on
- Transparent Agreements: Included on Lease, Renewal, and Exit Terms
- Glossary of Governance Terms: Clarifies language used around power, equity, repair, and process so that expectations are transparent and consistent
- Digital Governance Dashboard: Includes Insights and changelog
- Predictable capital reinvestment formulas: Ensure financial commitments are clearly articulated, particularly in the event of conflict around resourcing or responsibility

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# Succession & Nomination Process

## Focus: Leadership Development

How do we identify and nurture future governance leaders?

*“They trusted me... and that trust enabled so much.”*

### A Summary of What We Heard

Throughout the research process, interviewees acknowledged the challenging reality that not every organization or group will be selected as a co-tenant. This raised critical concerns about transparency in decision-making, equitable access, and how to communicate selection processes in ways that build trust rather than reinforce exclusion. The shared emphasis was clear: inclusion must be intentional, reciprocal, and rooted in alignment with shared values, not simply offered based on interest or need.

Participants expressed a strong desire for a criteria that assesses fit through values alignment, specifically evaluating a potential partner’s ability to contribute meaningfully to the shared purpose of the space, not just occupy it. This included mapping mission alignment, where tenants are seen not as passive space-users but as autonomous, reciprocal contributors to the broader vision of the space and their own.

To operationalize this ethos, tools such as annual tenant surveys and clear terms of reference (e.g. being in good standing, with no unresolved tenancy issues) were suggested to ensure integrity and prevent governance roles from being misused to settle personal grievances. The idea of a Reciprocity Menu was also introduced, an intentional mapping of what each partner brings to and receives from the collective, reinforcing the principle that shared governance is co-created, not granted.

Moreover, participants emphasized the importance of recognizing sovereignty, the need for each partner to maintain their own artistic and organizational autonomy while still participating meaningfully in a shared ecosystem. This balance between autonomy and interdependence was seen as central to authentic collaboration.

Ultimately, the governance model must be grounded in clarity, contribution, and care. This includes being transparent about why someone is invited in, what is expected of them, and how their presence strengthens the whole. By reframing members as “builders” rather than recipients, and by emphasizing co-creation over tokenism, the model affirms that it’s about cultivating a thriving, mission-driven community.

### How Will These Community Insights Shape the Design of NBS’ Shared Governance Model

Leadership within the shared governance model is understood as a distributed, relational, and evolving practice. Central to this approach are the roles of the Institutional Trust Holder and the Partners in Trust, whose leadership is expressed not through hierarchy, but through engagement in

governance circles, co-creation of structure, and collective responsibility for the model's growth and integrity.

As the Institutional Trust Holder, NBS serves as both the initial catalyst and a long-term steward of the governance environment. Its leadership is facilitative rather than directive, focused on holding institutional memory, maintaining continuity, and resourcing the conditions in which shared governance can flourish. NBS provides logistical, financial, and administrative support while intentionally making space for others to lead.

In practice, NBS' leadership is expressed through:

- Initiating and supporting core governance processes, including paying the salary of the Governance Steward and participating in the Seeding Circle to co-develop the Charter of Shared Values and Operating Principles, the Governance Primer, and the 360° Evaluation Framework
- Maintaining a "backbone" role, upholding structure and accountability without dominating outcomes
- Participating in governance circles as one of many voices, without centralizing authority
- Engaging and informing internal decision-makers, such as the Board, donors, or funders, when appropriate, to ensure transparency and alignment
- Modelling humility, transparency, and responsiveness to feedback, setting the tone for ethical leadership

Over time, NBS' role is designed to shift from primary steward to one of many, contributing to an increasingly decentralized model of leadership.

**Partners in Trust do not need to be co-tenants to participate in the governance model.** They can include co-tenant organizations, but also collectives and individuals, such as artists, elders, students, and other members of the dance community who engage meaningfully with the space, its values, and its purpose. What defines a Partner in Trust is not formal tenancy, but a demonstrated commitment to the shared mission. They are invited into governance as *builders*, not beneficiaries, contributing insight, care, and leadership to the ongoing shaping of the space. Regardless of whether they hold a lease or occupy space regularly, Partners in Trust retain their organizational or individual autonomy while playing an active role in co-creating and stewarding the shared governance system.

In practice, Partners in Trust demonstrate leadership by:

- Participating in governance circles and decision-making, aligned with their capacity and interest
- Contributing to the cultural and operational life of the space through programming (e.g., Open Door Days), community engagement, and resource sharing
- Upholding and evolving the Charter of Shared Values and Operating Principles
- Actively engaging in evaluation activities, helping to shape accountability and improvement
- Modelling reciprocity and co-leadership, supported by shared governance tools
- Serving as conduits to broader communities, helping ensure the space reflects diverse realities

Leadership among Partners in Trust is non-hierarchical and participatory, with room for varied

expressions whether through facilitation, storytelling, visioning, or community stewardship. The Governance Steward will work in ongoing dialogue with Partners in Trust to determine their level of engagement and ensure balanced participation. More than one representative from a Partner in Trust may be involved, provided participation is distributed across circles.

This model recognizes that leadership is developmental and relational. It evolves through practice, reflection, and shared learning, supported by the Governance Steward and mechanisms such as:

- Co-learning spaces focused on equitable leadership, shared governance, and restorative practices
- Evaluation and reflection tools that support collective growth and accountability
- A commitment to joyful governance, where leadership includes space for care, creativity, and embodiment

In this ecosystem, the Institutional Trust Holder leads by resourcing and releasing power, while Partners in Trust lead as co-authors of culture, structure, and vision. Together, they cultivate a model where leadership is shared, values-driven, and oriented toward collective well-being.

**Tools to support:**

- Governance Primer: Onboarding & Orientation Toolkits - Establishes what's involved
- Co-created charter of shared values and operating principles:
  - Defines what ethical, values-aligned leadership looks like
  - Set expectations for participation, reciprocity, and trust
  - Grounds leadership in mutual responsibility and shared vision
- Transparent Agreements: Includes reciprocity menu
- Partner Typology Map that classifies roles (e.g., Co-Tenants, community user) with corresponding decision rights
- Digital Governance Dashboard: Central communication platform
- 360° Evaluation Framework: Gathering multi-perspective feedback on how individuals and groups are upholding values, relationships, and the model's effectiveness
- Terms of Reference for the governance group(s), including roles, responsibilities, and term limits
- An NBS Board & Shared Governance Liaison Policy, naming board and representatives responsible for exchanging information
- Decision Type Map: Where leadership authority resides across different types of decisions

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## SUCCESSION & NOMINATION PROCESS

### Focus: Selection Criteria

What values and qualifications guide nominations?

*“Sharing Dance embodies inclusive values and artistic collaboration.”*

#### A Summary of What We Heard

In shaping a shared governance model, interviewees emphasized the importance of intentional and values-aligned partner selection based on a shared commitment to collaboration, equity, and community impact. A key theme was the need to recruit for impact, prioritizing organizations and individuals who bring not only relevant expertise but also a willingness to navigate the startup-like challenges of building and sustaining a new governance model. Those who are flexible, solutions-oriented, and committed to experimentation were seen as especially valuable during early stages.

Early partnerships with equity-focused, experienced dance organizations were recommended as essential for setting a strong foundation and modelling inclusive governance practices. These groups can serve as cultural stewards and co-creators, helping shape the governance ethos from the outset. The importance of shared values and governance readiness was repeatedly stressed, ensuring that selected partners are not only mission-aligned but prepared to engage in leadership, accountability, and shared decision-making.

Participants also affirmed the need for community-controlled nomination and review processes for residency and co-governance roles. This approach decentralizes selection power, reinforces transparency, and aligns with the broader call for inclusive, participatory leadership pathways. Rather than being hand-picked by NBS or any central authority, partners should be invited through processes that reflect collective input and community trust.

Lastly, the idea of *Sharing Dance* was offered as a symbolic and practical framework for selection, emphasizing a collective, co-created narrative where Partners in Trust are not simply hosted by NBS, but actively contribute to and shape a shared identity and space. This framing helps ensure that selection is not about gatekeeping, but about cultivating a diverse, values-driven ecosystem of co-builders.

#### How Will These Community Insights Shape the Design of NBS’ Shared Governance Model

*Note of clarification:* This section is not intended to determine who will occupy the space as long-term co-tenants. While there is often a significant overlap between those who co-govern and those who co-occupy, the focus here is specifically on selection criteria and relationship development for participation in the shared governance model. Determining tenancy is a separate, though related, process.

Participation in shared governance will follow a relational, staged approach, grounded in values alignment, demonstrated commitment, and governance readiness. Rather than selecting participants

solely based on reputation, tenure, or profile, the model emphasizes that partners grow into governance roles through experience, trust, and contribution over time.

The selection process will prioritize individuals and organizations who:

- Demonstrate clear alignment with the Charter of Shared Values and Operating Principles
- Are solutions-oriented, collaborative, and capable of navigating the emergent, “startup-like” nature of building shared governance
- Exhibit governance readiness, including a willingness to learn, participate in decision-making, be accountable, and support collective leadership
- Offer both tangible contributions (e.g., expertise) and intangible assets (e.g., community relationships, cultural stewardship)

The Seeding Circle will be the first governance circle to take shape. It is responsible for co-creating foundational tools and principles. Its composition will reflect a range of relationships and lived experiences, including:

- The Governance Steward by the Seeding Circle, once hired, will support facilitation and coordination
- Up to two representatives from the Institutional Trust Holder (NBS)
- A mix of Partners in Trust, including:
  - One representative from each co-tenant organization with a long-term lease
  - Collectives and individual artists with strong, recurring collaborations with the space
  - Three NBS students who reflect the learner voice in the governance process
  - An elder or cultural keeper, to provide grounding in community memory and wisdom

Once the Seeding Circle has established key governance foundations and practiced working together, it will distribute into the three permanent circles—Communications & Alignment, Engagement & Access, and Practice & Accountability—based on members’ interests, strengths, and evolving capacities.

A nomination and invitation process will be developed and coordinated by the Seeding Circle, in collaboration with the Governance Steward. This process will:

- Invite current members to be self-nominated or be nominated by peers for ongoing leadership in one of the three circles
- Use clear criteria based on the governance model’s shared values and the responsibilities of each circle
- Prioritize distributed representation to ensure balance between NBS staff and Partners in Trust
- Make space for new participants to join, including those who have grown into readiness through collaboration or recurring involvement

**Tools to support:**

- Charter of Shared Values and Operating Principles
- Partner Typology Map that classifies roles (e.g. Co-Tenants, community user) with corresponding decision rights
- Governance Participation Interest Form: To support an open call for interest

- Nomination Matrix: Clear criteria for eligibility and fit
- Governance Primer: Onboarding & Orientation Toolkits
- Proportional Representation Framework

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## SUCCESSION & NOMINATION PROCESS

### Focus: Continuity & Stability

How do we ensure smooth transitions and knowledge transfer?

*“Value mentorship, intergenerational dialogue, and capacity-building.”*

#### A Summary of What We Heard

There was widespread support for term-based leadership, with suggestions such as two-year term limits for circle members to prevent entrenchment and create space for new voices, fresh thinking, and broader participation. Rotation was not viewed as destabilizing, but rather as a tool for sustainability provided it is accompanied by robust knowledge transfer processes and relationship continuity practices.

Interviewees advocated for tools and roles that would ensure organizational memory is preserved and shared, not informally hoarded or passed down through inaccessible channels. One idea was the creation of a Partner Memory Keeper role, responsible for tracking key relationships, agreements, and governance protocols across time. This would prevent repeated re-asking of permissions, minimize re-traumatization of partners, and support incoming leaders to engage with full context.

Mentorship, intergenerational dialogue, and capacity-building were also emphasized as critical to long-term continuity, particularly when selecting or onboarding new co-tenants. These values support leadership development that is relational, not just operational, and ensure that transitions are woven into the governance culture rather than treated as disruptions.

Additionally, participants called for embedded protocols to revisit policies and practices as people and contexts change. This reinforces a governance model that is living and adaptive, able to evolve without losing coherence. A proposed solution was a continuity planning tool or template, which could help the shared governance model map transitions in advance, document key insights, and maintain alignment with shared values.

In summary, what we heard affirms that continuity and stability in shared governance require intentional design, proactive tools, and a culture of collective stewardship. When done well, leadership transition becomes an opportunity to reinforce trust, diversify participation, and deepen the integrity of the model over time.

#### How Will These Community Insights Shape the Design of NBS’ Shared Governance Model

Rather than treating leadership transitions as disruptions, the model embeds systems of mentorship, documentation, and relational memory that allow governance to evolve while remaining rooted in shared purpose.

A central feature of this approach is the Partner Memory Keeper; a defined role housed within the Communications & Alignment Circle. This individual (or small team) is responsible for tracking and

stewarding institutional memory, including key decisions, relationship histories, protocols, and permissions. Their work is supported by the Digital Governance Dashboard, where changelogs, governance updates, and policy revisions are logged in real time. This ensures that incoming partners or leaders can understand not just what decisions were made, but why and how they came to be, minimizing confusion and maintaining alignment with foundational values.

To further support continuity, the governance model encourages rotating roles through 2-year terms, allowing for fresh perspectives while avoiding entrenchment. For groups that feel they require a designated chair, the model recommends establishing two co-chair positions, ensuring that leadership is shared, not centralized, and that transitions are more easily supported through overlap and mutual learning. Term limits are balanced with protocols for mentorship and knowledge transfer, making transitions relational and intentional rather than abrupt. These values are especially reflected in the role of NBS students within the governance body, who, through their rotation and learning focus, are ideally positioned to serve as peer stewards of institutional memory. Students may also play a key role in leading onboarding and orientation for new co-tenants and recurring collaborators, helping to pass along the history, values, and governance practices that define the shared space.

In addition to this infrastructure, the governance model embeds policy review cycles as a core part of its evaluation practice, supported by the Practice & Accountability Circle to regularly revisit and adapt shared agreements in response to changing contexts. This ensures that the governance system remains flexible and responsive, without losing coherence or drifting from its values.

**Tools to support:**

- Governance Primer: Onboarding & Orientation Toolkits
- Digital Governance Dashboard: Include alerts when policies and practices need to be reviewed, archive of activities
- Succession Planning Template: Include outgoing and incoming roles, key relationship hand-offs, outstanding tasks
- Role: Space Transition Coaches (paid honoraria)

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# A Meaningful & Equitable Partner in Shared Governance

## Focus: Alignment with Values

How do we assess cultural and artistic fit?

*“You’re not just renting; you’re shaping the space.”*

### A Summary of What We Heard

Rather than prioritizing access alone, it was shared that decisions on who occupies the space must be assessed by whether potential partners align culturally and artistically with the space’s shared values and long-term vision. Alignment is not about conformity but about shared purpose, recognizing that those invited into governance or co-tenancy roles are not simply users of the space, but contributors to its identity and community.

Cultural and artistic fit, therefore, is assessed through a lens of reciprocity, autonomy, and mission alignment. Partners should not be passive beneficiaries, but integral, self-directed collaborators who advance both their own work and the collective mission of the space. This includes honouring artistic sovereignty while supporting organic collaboration and shared responsibility. The Reciprocity Menu was referenced as a useful tool to make these contributions visible by articulating what each partner offers (such as programming, knowledge, community connection) and what they receive in return.

Interviewees also stressed the need to differentiate between valuing contribution and conferring authority, especially in environments where power dynamics are sensitive or historically uneven. This means being clear from the outset why someone is invited to participate, what they are being asked to contribute, and how their voice fits within the broader governance structure. Terms of Reference, including criteria such as being in good standing and having no unresolved tenancy issues, were seen as necessary to maintain integrity and avoid personal agendas from compromising collective goals.

Finally, conversations highlighted the importance of ongoing reflection and review to ensure the evolving composition of the space continues to reflect its artistic and cultural vision. The goal is not just to fill space, but to cultivate a community of “builders,” partners who are deeply invested in shared success and leave a meaningful mark on the space over time.

### How Will These Community Insights Shape the Design of NBS’ Shared Governance Model

At the outset, all potential partners will be introduced to the Charter of Shared Values and Operating Principles as a foundational document. This charter will serve not only as a declaration of the governance culture, but as a touchstone for assessing fit. Partners will be asked to reflect on how their own work aligns with these shared values, and how they see themselves contributing to a co-created

space for dance.

Partners in Trust who are not yet co-tenants but demonstrate strong alignment may begin by being involved in the shared governance model, allowing them to build trust and demonstrate commitment over time. The Reciprocity Menu contained within the agreements will support this process, mapping both tangible and intangible contributions and ensuring that participation is rooted in mutual benefit.

**Tools to support:**

- Charter of Shared Values and Operating Principles
- 360° Evaluation Toolkit: To assess value alignment
- Partnership Agreements: Standardized documents that define terms

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## Focus: Contribution to Shared Governance

What role should partners play?

*“Being an active partner means showing up with ideas... not just calling when the plumbing breaks.”*

### A Summary of What We Heard

Interviewees affirmed that shared governance is not a one-size-fits-all model; it must accommodate different types of tenant and partner relationships, each with their own capacities, contributions, and areas of focus. The key is to create pathways for meaningful participation based on alignment, readiness, and demonstrated commitment, not merely occupancy.

It was emphasized that partners who hold more permanent or recurring relationships with the space, such as co-tenants or regular collaborators, should have opportunities to co-create usage guidelines, shape cultural practices, and engage in governance processes especially around space use, scheduling, and shared values. Models like subsidized tenancy with governance responsibilities were seen as promising approaches that invite structural contributions from partners, while acknowledging the need for flexibility, particularly for artists who wish to focus on their creative missions rather than operational management.

Importantly, the discussions distinguished between governing space and managing access. Effective governance means helping to determine who has access, under what conditions, and how that aligns with the broader ecosystem, rather than becoming entangled in the minutiae of daily operations. This supports the idea that governance participation for this particular model is about strategic decision-making and cultural stewardship, not logistical oversight.

In sum, what we heard was that Partners who participate in decision-making should do so not just because they occupy space, but because they are active contributors to the shared mission, culture, and sustainability of the space. Governance should reflect shared responsibility, not just tenancy, allowing partners to move from access to influence in ways that are earned through relationship and contribution.

### How Will These Community Insights Shape the Design of NBS’ Shared Governance Model

In the shared governance model, contribution is a relationship-based indicator of readiness, alignment, and shared investment. Importantly, contribution is not limited to tenancy; it includes cultural leadership, relational work, programming alignment, knowledge sharing, and community trust-building.

Governance participation is not just about shaping policy; it is about co-stewarding the culture of the space. Partners contribute to governance through:

- Participating in governance circles at a level of engagement based on capacity and governance

readiness

- Mentoring new collaborators or providing historical context
- Taking part in evaluation processes
- Supporting rituals and co-learning spaces that reinforce cultural cohesion
- Uphold agreements tied to space use, values alignment, and community responsibilities

This model emphasizes that every act of leadership whether artistic, relational, or structural is a governance act, and therefore, a contribution.

**Tools to support:**

- Partner Typology Map: Clarify Roles
- Partnership Agreements: Including the reciprocity menu
- Digital Governance Dashboard: To profile partnerships
- Decision Type Maps: Distinguish between advisory, consultative, and binding decisions

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## Focus: Commitment to Equity & Sustainability

How do partners support a thriving, inclusive space?

*“It’s a missed opportunity if we don’t design this as a place where cultures converge.”*

### A Summary of What We Heard

It was stressed that tenants must be more than renters, they must be active contributors to the equity and sustainability of the space and the broader dance community. This means supporting not only the artistic and operational life of the building, but also the relational infrastructure that makes shared governance possible. A meaningful partner is one who brings their full, distinct identity into the space, contributes to its collective health, and invests in the long-term vision of inclusivity, cultural safety, and shared stewardship.

A central tension repeatedly surfaced between organizational use and community access was how to ensure that tenants and those regularly using the space, while advancing their own missions, do not eclipse access for independent artists or historically marginalized communities. To address this, participants called for ongoing equity evaluation, rooted in the question: *“What are we all bringing?”* This evaluation must recognize contributions including cultural labour, mentorship, infrastructure-building, and community trust. In turn, it must avoid flattening or tokenizing differences; authentic recognition of cultural specificity and sovereignty is essential. As one participant put it, *“Partners must retain their distinctiveness while enhancing the shared environment.”*

Several discussions affirmed the value of models such as subsidized tenancy, shared ownership, and co-investment, where community organizations not only benefit from the space but help shape its sustainability through financial participation, strategic decision-making, or capacity-building work. This could include collective fundraising efforts, shared funding proposals, or long-term equity partnerships that provide wealth-building opportunities for equity-deserving groups. Participants also noted the importance of investing in governance infrastructure itself, resourcing coordination, advisory honoraria, onboarding support, and staff time to ensure that the shared model is not reliant on unpaid or invisible labour.

The governance model must be culturally safe, joyful, and structurally embedded with equity. This includes addressing historical privileges and shifting power by recognizing the imbalance between NBS and the dance community over the years. As one contributor said, *“This should be seen as returning the space.”* That return must be not only symbolic, but operational and material manifested in who has access, who is visible, and who shares in the benefits and responsibilities of the space.

To support this, tools like the Reciprocity Menu, Partner Typology Map, and Branding Policy (which ensures partners are credited and seen in all branding, marketing, and signage) were lifted up as critical. These tools ensure transparent acknowledgment of each partner’s contributions and autonomy, helping prevent assimilation and reinforcing the principle that collaboration is not co-optation.

## How Will These Community Insights Shape the Design of NBS' Shared Governance Model

This component begins with an orientation grounded in the Charter of Shared Values and Operating Principles, where expectations around inclusion, accessibility, and cultural safety are explicitly named. As part of their entry into the governance ecosystem, each partner will complete a Reciprocity Menu, outlining their contributions and what they receive in return. This becomes a living agreement and reference point for relational accountability, revisited throughout the partnership.

Recognizing that contribution extends beyond occupying space, the Governance Steward will collaborate with Partners in Trust to determine their appropriate level of engagement within the governance model and its activities. This approach ensures participation is grounded in capacity, alignment, and interest—not assumed or imposed.

Looking ahead, the model leaves room for future financial frameworks such as subsidized tenancy, co-investment in infrastructure, or even shared ownership. While these models are not activated immediately allowing time for relationships to mature—they are noted as part of the long-term vision. In the meantime, the model will implement Predictable Capital Reinvestment Formulas: transparent agreements that outline how future costs related to repairs, maintenance, upgrades, and infrastructure will be covered. These agreements acknowledge that some partners may contribute financially, while others offer equally valuable support through audience development, community engagement, or cultural leadership, all of which must be equitably considered in sustainability planning.

To support these efforts, the Institutional Trust Holder (NBS) will resource the governance infrastructure. This includes the Governance Steward's salary and office space, honoraria for advisory contributions, and strategies to sustain governance participation. NBS will maintain transparency with partners about these resource investments, reinforcing a shared understanding of how governance is being supported financially.

Commitment to equity will be practiced through ongoing cycles of reflection, feedback, and responsive action. Partners will be asked to actively participate in governance activities that:

- Ensure all voices are included in decision-making
- Review space use and access patterns for equity
- Assess how contributions are balanced across the ecosystem
- Adjust practices based on collective input and lived experience

Finally, programming and governance rituals will reflect the cultural richness and diversity of all partners, embedding joy, ceremony, and celebration of difference as core strengths.

### **Tools to support:**

- 360° Evaluation Framework: Addresses equity considerations “What are we all bringing”
- Partnership Agreements: Include Reciprocity Menu
- Partner Typology Map
- Branding Policy
- Governance Ritual Toolkit: Includes collection of check-ins, movement-based practices, ceremonies, and joy-centered rituals

## Flexibility & Long-Term Viability

### Focus: Adapting to Organizational Changes

How do we accommodate shifts among partners?

*“Creating a system that dances with the dance world.”*

#### A Summary of What We Heard

As organizations change—whether through growth, leadership transitions, funding shifts, or new collaborations, the governance structure must be robust enough to maintain coherence while remaining nimble and responsive to context.

There was a strong call for governance that accommodates phased implementation, role evolution, and the possibility of sunseting responsibilities over time. This includes building mechanisms for renegotiation, rebalancing, and reflective evaluation, particularly through tools like town halls, tenant meetings, and feedback loops that promote transparency during moments of transition.

Participants also advocated for dual access models, one that supports long-term, term-based partnerships, and another that allows for open-call access or spontaneous collaborations. This “both/and” approach was seen as essential for welcoming new energy while maintaining the integrity of sustained relationships. Interviewees said that a responsive governance model must be able to “dance with the dance world,” meaning it should embrace both structure and spontaneity.

At the operational level, space-sharing partners, particularly those newer to institutional environments, will need support. Capacity-building, risk management training, and shared operational education (including clarity on contracts and cost recovery) were identified as essential for reducing friction and promoting informed participation. Tools like space transition coaching were suggested to help staff and partners navigate the emotional and logistical complexities that come with change.

To guide this evolution, participants proposed using evaluation frameworks with regular feedback cycles, enabling the model to track alignment with community needs over time. This commitment to learning ensures that the governance structure can respond not only to internal shifts, but also to broader sectoral changes.

In essence, what we heard is a call for adaptability that is structured so that the model remains resilient, inclusive, and equipped to grow with its people.

## How Will These Community Insights Shape the Design of NBS' Shared Governance Model

The spirit behind the Partners in Trust within this shared governance model is rooted in mutual care and a collective commitment to one another's success. *The campus optimization is not an incubator; it is an interconnected cohabitation built on reciprocity and shared responsibility.* To uphold this principle in practice, the model embeds intentional structures, dedicated roles, and responsive tools that allow the system to remain flexible while safeguarding clarity, trust, and equity.

A key practice will be the built-in flexibility of roles and participation pathways. The governance model will accommodate both long-term co-tenants and short-term or emerging collaborators (renters, residencies) through a dual structure: one pathway anchored in term-based partnerships, and another that allows for open-call or invitation-based participation. This ensures that the space remains responsive to new relationship building while protecting the integrity of sustained relationships.

The Practice & Accountability Circle plays a central role in enabling this adaptability. Members of this circle will serve as Space Transition Coaches, supporting incoming and outgoing partners through moments of change. Their responsibilities include:

- Hosting orientation or offboarding sessions that ground partners in the Charter of Shared Values and existing agreements
- Offering emotional and operational guidance during transitions, acknowledging that changes in tenancy or governance participation can carry deep personal and institutional meaning
- Facilitating reflection sessions for teams navigating changing roles, helping to close one chapter while preparing for another

Additionally, all shared governance partnership agreements will include terms, space use, and decision-making rights and will include review and renewal periods. These "structured rebalancing periods" allow all partners to revisit roles, responsibilities, and resource-sharing arrangements at regular intervals and adjust them in response to evolving capacities or missions.

To ensure that adaptability is aligned with shared values, the 360° Evaluation Framework will be used to identify broader trends or tensions that suggest a need for structural evolution. Insights from this process will be reviewed by the Seeding Circle during its twice-yearly convenings, allowing for collective sense-making and system-wide updates.

In terms of communication, the Digital Governance Dashboard will serve as a central platform for documenting these transitions. It will include:

- A changelog of shifts in roles, tenancy, or governance participation
- Updated contact directories and decision timelines
- Archived agreements and updated documents for transparency and continuity

To support partners in understanding the operational landscape, the Governance Steward, with support from the Engagement & Access Circle, will host co-learning spaces for diversifying revenues, risk management training, etc.

Through clearly defined support roles, built-in reflection points, and a commitment to transparent documentation, the Governance model ensures that change is supported with care, accountability,

and clarity.

**Tools to support:**

- Role: Space Transition Coaches (paid honoraria)
- Governance Primer: Onboarding & Orientation Toolkits
- Charter of Shared Values
- Partnership Agreements: Include terms, space use, and decision-making rights
- 360° Evaluation Framework: To surface trends, tensions and changes in relationships
- Digital Governance Dashboard: changelog, archive, news of changes

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## FLEXIBILITY & LONG-TERM VIABILITY

### Focus: Exit & Transition Planning

How is continuity ensured?

*“Exit strategies should avoid signaling distrust while still safeguarding everyone.”*

#### A Summary of What We Heard

The research underscored the importance of embedding clear, respectful, and relationally grounded exit and transition pathways within the shared governance model. As much as shared governance is about co-creation and long-term partnership, there was widespread recognition that change is inevitable, values may shift, goals may diverge, and partnerships are not meant to last indefinitely. To sustain trust and continuity, the system must accommodate these transitions with transparency and care.

One model suggested was a “tenant progressive termination policy.” Inspired by labour practices, this multi-step approach outlines clear notification processes and performance review mechanisms before any termination of tenancy occurs. This model prioritizes fairness, clarity, and opportunity for course correction, helping to safeguard relationships and protect the integrity of the space.

Participants also emphasized that governance agreements must include explicit mechanisms for withdrawal, succession, and reapplication, allowing partners to exit without stigma or surprise. These mechanisms should support relational reassessment, recognizing that partnerships evolve and create room for mutual reflection if priorities or values are no longer aligned. Importantly, exit clauses must be framed in a way that does not signal distrust, but rather reflect maturity, clarity, and care within the governance model.

In addition to termination policies, some suggested the use of structured term limits or endowed space use rights—models that provide partners with either a clear residency arc or longer-term continuity without formal ownership. These strategies acknowledge the power asymmetries between NBS’ institutional stability and the precarity faced by many community partners, particularly those without real estate equity or long-term financial backing. Framing tenancies as capacity-building launchpads rather than permanent placements can help balance these dynamics while preparing partners for growth beyond the space.

To support this process, participants proposed tools such as Partner Lifecycle Maps, which chart different stages of engagement—from initial collaboration to co-governance to eventual transition. These maps would help normalize evolution, guide expectations, and ensure that transitions are not abrupt or personal, but part of a larger, thoughtful system.

In summary, what we heard is that designing for change is part of a healthy, responsive governance system.

## How Will These Community Insights Shape the Design of NBS' Shared Governance Model

The shared governance model, exit and transition are understood as natural components of a healthy and evolving system and as opportunities for reflection, realignment, and growth.

All Partners in Trust entering formal governance relationships will sign Partnership Agreements that include clearly defined entry, renewal, and exit pathways.

To support consistency and fairness, these agreements will reference tools like the Partner Lifecycle Map, which charts terms and a Reciprocity Menu, which indicates areas of engagement.

Where challenges arise, or when a partner no longer aligns with shared values or expectations, the model will utilize a Partnership progressive transition process, a multi-staged process overseen by the Practice & Accountability Circle and Governance Steward. This process will:

- Provide early notification and opportunities to address concerns
- Emphasize dialogue, reflection, and restorative approaches before formal offboarding
- Include support for partners to prepare for a thoughtful and supported departure

This approach ensures that partners aren't abruptly removed or quietly edged out, but instead are respected throughout the exit process, with attention to reputation, legacy, and continued community connection.

Space Transition Coaches will facilitate exit and entry meetings to reflect on contributions, needs, and hopes for continued connection.

Outgoing partners may also be invited to contribute to rituals, legacy storytelling, or documentation efforts, ensuring they remain visible in the community's collective history.

Governance terms (two years) allow for reflection, new energy, and leadership development. At the end of each term, partners can:

- Renew involvement with a re-committed agreement
- Shift to a different level of engagement (e.g. a different circle or updating their Reciprocity Menu)
- Transition out entirely with celebration and acknowledgment

All transitions, whether planned, progressive, or celebratory, will be:

- Logged in the Digital Governance Dashboard
- Shared during Seeding Circle convenings

These public, predictable communications help maintain transparency, reduce uncertainty, and reinforce that governance is a living system designed to grow and shift with care.

Transitions in this governance model are treated not as ends, but as continuations of relationships in a different form. Through clear agreements, coaching support, and a shared commitment to dignity and equity, partners can step into or out of roles without losing connection to the community they helped

shape.

**Tools to support:**

- Partnership progressive termination policy
- Partnership Agreements: Include: Partner Lifecycles, Reciprocity Menu
- Role: Space Transition Coaches (paid honoraria)
- Digital Governance Dashboard: News of changes

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## Focus: Future-Proofing Governance Structure

How do we ensure this model remains relevant and effective?

*“Governance should account for evolution, not perfection.”*

### A Summary of What We Heard

The research reinforced that a shared governance model must be designed not as a fixed solution, but as a living, evolving system. One that grows organically reflects community realities and adapts to change with care and intentionality. Futureproofing, in this context, means centering relationship-building, reflection, and responsiveness as core functions of governance.

There was widespread support for incremental development, with many advising that the model begin with a small group of established, equity-aligned partners who could pilot the approach over 12–18 months. This “startup-like” phase was seen as an opportunity to test, adapt, and learn before scaling the model. Participants were clear: trying, failing, reframing, and growing are all essential aspects of innovation, and shared governance must hold space for that kind of iterative, courageous learning.

Rather than aiming for perfection, the model should focus on cultural and relational readiness, recognizing that strong partnerships are built over time, and that governance must reflect this gradual deepening. Conversations encouraged the creation of governance structures that are self-aware and designed to evolve, supported by tools like Relational Check-In Toolkits and Micro-Adjustment Protocols, which allow for low-burden, participatory evaluations and real-time course corrections.

There was also strong support for integrating organic cultural practices, the informal rituals and relational habits that already exist within the community, into the formal governance process. Participants asked, “What natural rituals are already occurring, and how can they be nourished?” This call to integrate joy, embodiment, and ceremony into governance reinforces the importance of relevance, sustainability, and belonging.

Futureproofing also requires transparent conversations about resources. Participants stressed the need for shared financial modeling to be embedded into the governance structure itself. This includes resource forecasting, shared cost responsibilities, and potentially building pathways toward shared ownership or wealth-building, especially for community-based partners who contribute deeply but lack access to capital.

Finally, there was a clear warning against ad hoc power shifts. As governance evolves, it must do so with clear processes, relational continuity, and equitable participation, ensuring that shifts in leadership or decision-making are guided by intention, not expedience. In this sense, future-proofing is about people, relationships, and the collective willingness to evolve together.

## How Will These Community Insights Shape the Design of NBS' Shared Governance Model

In practice, future-proofing the governance structure begins with the generative design of the Seeding Circle, the initial governance body tasked with laying the foundation for a system that is both values-driven and responsive to change. Designed to grow organically, the Seeding Circle begins as a small, intentional group that advances a set of foundational documents and sets the tone for adaptive, iterative governance.

As trust deepens and foundational agreements take shape, this circle expands to include more voices and eventually transitions into a convening body. At that point, leadership is distributed across three specialized governance circles, each holding distinct areas of accountability while remaining connected through biannual convenings as the Seeding Circle.

When the Seeding Circle reconvenes, these sessions serve as moments of alignment, reflection, and recalibration. Here, members share findings from evaluation tools, discuss transitions, propose structural adaptations, and nominate or onboard new participants. This cycle—Govern, Reflect, Adjust, Repeat—is not simply a feedback loop but a relational governance rhythm designed to sustain momentum and relevance.

To further embed adaptability, the governance structure uses lightweight, participatory evaluation tools like Check-Ins and the changelog, enabling the system to respond in real time to emergent needs, cultural tensions, or operational shifts. These are paired with more formal, periodic tools such as the Shared Governance Report and updates from the circles to the Digital Governance Dashboard, which document changes in decision-making, partnership terms, and evaluation insights.

Finally, the model centers organic cultural practices and rituals. The informal ways of building trust, joy, and belonging that already exist in the dance community. These are not just acknowledged, but woven into governance routines through shared meals, co-authored ceremonies, and space-based storytelling. This cultural embedding ensures that the model remains emotionally resonant, not just procedurally sound.

Future-proofing the governance model means designing not just for today's challenges, but for tomorrow's unknowns. Through embedded roles, relational cycles, adaptive tools, and ritualized reflection, the governance system becomes a living framework that can evolve with its people, protect its values, and remain grounded in shared purpose over time.

### **Tools to support:**

- Governance Ritual Toolkit: Includes collection of check-ins, movement-based practices, ceremonies, and joy-centered rituals
- Predictable capital reinvestment formulas: Ensure financial commitments are clearly articulated, particularly in the event of conflict around resourcing or responsibility

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# Insights - Raw data

## Framework: Governance Design Considerations for NBS

To help guide understanding in the development of shared governance model

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### GOVERNANCE STEWARDSHIP

<b>Definition &amp; Purpose:</b> What does governance stewardship mean	<b>Responsibilities:</b> Who is responsible for upholding governance integrity?	<b>Accountability Mechanisms:</b> How do we ensure transparency and ethical leadership?
<p>A shifting away from traditional power-dominant governance models</p> <p>Must remain accountable to the diverse communities it aims to serve?</p> <p>A governance mechanism that prevents siloed operations</p> <p>Source: Kick-off Meeting Jan 2025</p>		
<p>Governance should steward relationships and remain flexible and adaptive, supporting communication and collaboration across different organizations and structures.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>The <b>governance steward</b>: the main synthesizer of information and wrangler of next steps: 0.67 FTE role (it works out to 3 days per week, requiring flexibility for meetings)</p> <p>At least one individual is a board director and tenant</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documented processes and clear delegation</li> <li>• provides honoraria</li> </ul> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>

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	<p>Various management roles report to assigned committees (example: Financial reporting)</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	
<p>Governance must move away from institutional dominance toward community empowerment. NBS should act as a backdrop rather than a central figure—providing space without controlling its narrative or credit. Governance stewardship here means facilitating autonomy, not commanding authority.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Need for explicit oversight of inter-organizational relationships</p> <p>Role would focus on "connecting, constantly thinking about what's being offered in the space from different tenants</p> <p>This is "definitely a job" requiring at least one dedicated person</p> <p>Financial component needs dedicated attention depending on the complexity</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Dedicated relationship management role(s) who doesn't just book meetings but devise continuous engagement strategies and feedback loops</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>
<p>A model that builds authentic community relationships and ensures transparency in the space allocation process.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>underscored the need for a dedicated governance steward — a new position, not appended to current staff duties. This person would manage relationships, represent NBS where necessary, and facilitate co-created "rules of engagement" that respect both practical needs and cultural principles.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Define relationship: multiple entities that have similar objectives - cohabitation</p> <p>Map goals and missions across organizations sharing the space</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>
<p>Accountability must include responsiveness to historical harm and a commitment to inclusive practices.</p>	<p>The need for a dedicated facilitator who not only manages administrative tasks but actively engages</p>	<p>Advocated for transparency in how partners are selected and how terms of</p>

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<p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>with diverse community members. This includes addressing psychological safety and ensuring that the physical and cultural design of space (e.g., accessible entryways and accommodating various dance forms) reflects community needs.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>engagement are structured (e.g., review periods, renewals). Also mentioned that such governance should connect formally to the NBS board, either through representation or a new board committee.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>
<p>A shift from siloed operations to collaborative negotiation among multiple entities.</p> <p>Views it as “a very wonderful and happy place,” but also one with “tricky things we need to navigate,” reflecting the ambitious but fragile nature of multi-tenant governance</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>The importance of understanding the needs and operations of all tenants early on to avoid toxic misunderstandings, underscoring the need for intentional stewardship.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Governance should be adaptive and consistently revisited through intentional check-ins.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>
<p>Governance as relationship-based, culturally grounded stewardship. Challenges the colonial systems imposed on Indigenous communities and champions land, lineage, and spiritual connection as foundations for governance.</p> <p>Enabling autonomy, not command</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>The importance of facilitative governance roles—seeing boards and structures as hosts of governance, not its home.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p> <p><b>"Home of governance"</b> suggests that governance lives solely within the board — centralized, static, and possibly hierarchical. All authority and decisions are expected to be rooted there.</p>	<p>The need for transparency and recognition. Communities want assurance that participation won't be performative—governance processes must be visibly fair, responsive, and inclusive, with appropriate credit and recognition for contributions.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>

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	<p><b>"Host of governance"</b> implies that the board creates the conditions for governance to thrive across the entire organization. It facilitates and supports governance activities but does not monopolize or contain them. This approach enables leadership, decision-making, and collaboration to occur at various levels and roles, allowing for shared power and participatory processes.</p>	
<p>We need a governance council with intergenerational representation where all voices are equal.</p> <p>governance as facilitative, community-driven stewardship rather than hierarchical control.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Values-aligned responsibility: Governance should “facilitate co-created ‘rules of engagement’”</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Receiving administrative support from NBS demonstrates how governance can materially respond to capacity disparities - a responsiveness to historical harms</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>
	<p>Multiple speakers emphasized the need for a <b>facilitator/steward role</b> to ensure smooth functioning, trust-building, and neutral oversight of governance processes (e.g., tracking deadlines, guiding decision-making, and maintaining cultural principles)</p> <p>Source: Staff Meeting April 2025</p>	

<p>"Community-centered governance must be embedded in the design and programming of NBS."</p> <p>The report stresses that governance must reflect the principle of '<i>nothing without us</i>', meaning people affected must be at the center of decisions</p> <p>Governance should reflect reciprocity, relationship building, and cultural teachings, not just operational efficiency</p> <p>Feasibility Study 2025</p>	<p>Deep mutual understanding between NBS and any partners is essential.</p> <p>Governance responsibilities should include recognizing and valuing the different organizational needs, histories, and resource contributions each party brings.</p> <p>Source: Staff Meeting April 2025</p>	<p>Governance should be fluid, able to evolve based on community needs, and open to experimenting with different decision-making models over time.</p> <p>Feasibility Study 2025</p>
<p>Move away from traditional, power-centered governance toward reciprocal, relational, and community-centered stewardship.</p> <p>Need for flexibility, relationship management, and constant adaptation</p> <p>Governance should empower, celebrate, listen, adjust, and facilitate, not control.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Described the role of relationship-building and collaboration, especially referencing the condo analogy where shared community values co-exist with individual autonomy. Recommends <b>relationship-based governance roles</b> that synthesize needs across partners.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Transparent, documented processes and dedicated stewardship roles are essential.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>
<p>Embed Joy and Cultural Celebration in Governance</p> <p>End meetings with a dance circle or drumming. Joy must be a governance value.</p>	<p>Responsibility: organizations in residence supporting other artists with access to the space, reflecting the steward's responsibility for nurturing a wider ecosystem. (network of networks)</p>	<p>The interviewee stressed the need to avoid cultures of "haves and have-nots."</p>

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<p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>		<p>transparent decision-making and equitable participation structures. Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>
<p>Space-sharing must honour distinct identities while seeking opportunities for authentic synergy, rather than blending organizations into one another or enforcing sameness.  Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Stewardship requires proactive, resourced, and sustained relationships, not just symbolic representation. A governance steward must be embedded in these relational structures with cultural fluency and institutional support.  Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Checks and balances that go beyond NBS' unilateral intervention rights. For example, if a tenant is “too loud,” it was suggested that complaints go to a multi-org governance committee, not NBS alone. This strengthens the idea of equity and power distribution within stewardship  Source: Staff Meeting March 2025</p>
<p>Governance must steward <i>safe, welcoming environments</i> and move beyond simple information transmission. Inclusive tenant meetings show governance as relationship-building, not just operations.  Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Suggests stewards must guard against transactionalism and ensure all parties align on values and goals.  Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Called for transparency and criteria around who receives institutional generosity:  “I hope it won’t be too much navel gazing... there needs to be an awareness or consideration for the broader community.”  Source: Staff Meeting March 2025</p>
<p>the space should feel like home for all, not an NBS space others are “allowed into.”</p>	<p>Ensure frontline staff are trained on inclusive language and service culture aligned with the governance ethos.</p>	<p>Calls for consideration of an external, neutral governing body to avoid unconscious internal bias.</p>

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<p>Noted an absence of real-world models reinforcing the need for intentional and adaptive design.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Oversight and neutrality are key. Without safeguards, historical institutional privilege may go unchallenged.</p>
<p>concerns around future-proofing agreements so that power isn't re-centralized by future leadership (e.g., someone “ripping up the agreement” in 30 years). This adds a temporal accountability lens.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>“Each company or individual artist is going to come with a unique ask and a unique offer.”</p> <p>Stewards must recognize and coordinate non-standard contributions, including space, knowledge, or mentorship.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Advocates for delineated risk protocols, especially around damage, repair costs, and capital reinvestment.</p> <p>An agreement might include: A Predictable Capital Reinvestment Formula which is a structured and transparent agreement that defines how future costs for repair, maintenance, upgrades, and improvements to a shared space will be shared among partners.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>
<p>A nuanced, relationship-specific model that still operates under a coherent, equitable umbrella.</p>	<p>Reinforced the need to clearly define mutual obligations, so that partnerships aren't just about access to space, but reciprocal investment—organizationally, programmatically, and relationally.</p>	<p>“We want to make sure we’re not privileging a couple of people at the exclusion of others... that we have a very good answer when someone asks: why them?”</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>

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<p>“Governance stewardship here means facilitating autonomy, not commanding authority.”</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p><b>Tool:</b> Develop a Board–Community Liaison Policy, naming board and staff stewards responsible for surfacing community input.</p>	<p>“Something you can trust, but also evolve.”</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>
<p>Reinforces the centrality of relationship-building with host nations before any programming or governance structure is activated. (not sure what this looks like for NBS, but as an idea, there should be some ceremonial piece - maybe a discussion or interpretation exercise that is always revisited with the new painting in the main lobby that Sapna mentioned)</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025 &amp; Robin Idea</p>	<p><b>Tool: Roles &amp; Responsibilities Matrix</b></p>	<p>language should be precise and reflect legal boundaries while upholding collaborative intent.</p> <p>Tool: Glossary of Governance Terms to clarify the meaning of phrases like “shared power,” “decision-making,” “advisory,” and “authority.”</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>
<p>Emphasizes that mutual trust and safety must be foundational:</p> <p>“The only way this is going to work is if the people coming into the space trust their place here and feel safe... and that NBS can trust that it’s a safe step.”</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Emphasizes that the role of stewards is to remove barriers, not impose structure. Avoid gatekeeping by over-curating partner activity.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Accountability includes <b>ongoing dialogue</b>, clear expectations, and permeable structures.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>

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<p>Governance must signal true partnership—not symbolic inclusion.</p> <p>Stewardship is not just spatial or symbolic; it’s policy-deep and relationally accountable.</p> <p>“If we’re truly going to say ‘come on in’ with a big hug, then all our policies have to reflect that.”</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Participants touched on the need for someone not merely to "book meetings" but to design engagement strategies. This indicates that the steward may need more authority or structural embeddedness.</p> <p>Source: Staff Meeting May 2025</p>	<p>Affirms that accountability cannot be one-sided; it must be mutually developed protocols, especially around sensitive materials or shared space.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>
<p>Stewardship must include a balance of <b>fiduciary responsibility</b>, protecting long-term viability through realistic structuring of ownership, liability, and cost-sharing.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Stakeholders will be paying attention to who uses the space and how it is shared</p> <p>Source: December 2023 – Monumental Report</p>	
<p>Governance stewards must not only oversee, but adapt structures to dynamic community and artistic realities.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>		
<p><b>Tool:</b> Shared Governance Orientation Toolkit for internal and external stakeholders.</p>		

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<p><b>Tool:</b> Include a Governance Structure Overview in the framework, distinguishing between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Legal decision-making (retained by the board)</li> <li>● Community-informed decision-shaping (via advisory structures)</li> </ul>		
<p>“We shifted from a steering committee to a movement.”</p> <p>Reinforces the need for governance that facilitates participation and nurtures autonomy, not command-and-control.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>		
<p>Interviewee’s model reframes institutional stewardship as custodianship on behalf of communities, not ownership.</p> <p><b>Tool: Values Charter</b></p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>		
<p>“Governance is how we live, how we share, and how we make decisions together.”</p>		

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**DECISION-MAKING PROCESS**

<b>Shared Power &amp; Authority:</b> Who has decision-making power & how is it distributed?	<b>Equity &amp; Inclusion:</b> How do we ensure diverse voices are represented?	<b>Transparency &amp; Documentation:</b> What processes need to exist to document & share decisions?
Acknowledge the varying degrees of dismantling power structures  Source: Kick-off Meeting Jan 2025		
Proportional Representation Membership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o The representation or voting power of each group is allocated based on predefined proportions, which could be tied to: The number of members in each group OR the level of investment or participation (e.g., square footage occupied by tenants, staff seniority, etc.) OR Equity-based considerations to ensure marginalized groups have adequate voice.</li> </ul> Source: Governance Talks 2025	Proportional Representation Membership  Often used to ensure that underrepresented voices (such as tenants or community members) are not overshadowed by traditional power structures like boards or management.  Can include minimum thresholds (e.g., ensuring at least 30% of the membership are tenants or 50% are BIPOC individuals).  Source: Research on Proportional Representation Membership	Acknowledge institutional inequalities (e.g., resource disparities)  <b>Proactively address operational tensions:</b> Space-use priorities, financial implications, and intellectual property/branding require clear agreements.  Source: Governance Talks 2025
A governance structure might include a community committee that decides on the use of excess or community-dedicated spaces without impacting the NBS’ core functions.	[Tenant] input in decisions that impact the whole  Focus on intentional engagement where stakeholder input can close specific gaps  Source: Governance Talks 2025	Emphasized establishing clear processes around selection, reviewing timelines, and renewals to avoid confusion or perceived favouritism.  Source: Governance Talks 2025

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<p>Advisories need a clear "locus of control" and objectives</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Some NBS programs are more open to collaboration than others - suggests a sensitivity to different capacities within NBS to engage equitably in governance</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Regularly check on how governance values and commitments are reflected in policy and practice</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>
<p>Decision-making processes that genuinely reflect grassroots input.</p> <p>The discussion exposes a tension between the traditional top-down approach (handling technical and operational tasks) and community-led governance (e.g., scheduling, physical space modifications). This calls for a model where authority is more evenly shared.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Strongly supported co-decision-making, involving both internal staff and community members, to ensure decisions aren't tokenistic and truly reflect community priorities.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>NBS's credibility depends on being open about motives (e.g., financial sustainability) and clearly communicating how decisions are made. This includes policies that define shared space use and partnerships.</p>
<p>Must establish trust and shared principles first</p> <p>For dedicated shared-use spaces, NBS should not direct usage but participate in a consultative or representational role.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Requires continuous learning, reflection, and intentional discussion about power and positionality.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>"We need simple, transparent rental and maintenance systems not relying on knowing the right person."</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>

<p>Shared governance is implied through the demand for real decision-making, especially regarding scheduling and space distribution.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Engage equity-deserving groups as decision-makers, not recipients.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Stressed the need for clear articulation of partner responsibilities, especially acknowledging that full shared governance (e.g., with Indigenous communities) may not be realistic immediately. Honesty about readiness and limitations is key to avoiding harm.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>
<p>Emphasizes true reciprocity and shared authorship of visioning and decisions, not just consultation.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Recommended piloting governance with established BIPOC-led orgs who can model inclusion while helping NBS build internal readiness.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Without transparent, documented processes for inclusion, communication, and role evolution, long-standing dance companies in the space can be invisibly phased out.</p> <p>Formal mechanisms for continued engagement or acknowledgement are needed to avoid undermining trust but also erasing institutional memory and lived experience.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>
<p>Emphasis on clarifying what decisions are shared vs. retained by NBS</p> <p>Source: Staff Meeting April 2025</p>	<p>Direct access to decision-makers is critical; committees must have real authority and be trusted.</p> <p>Create structures where tenants, artists, and community members can reach the actual decision-makers directly, without excessive layers or bureaucracy.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Explicit communication protocols that ensure elders, long-time contributors, and community builders remain informed and respected. Even long after they are gone.</p> <p>Transparency isn't just about decisions. It's about who is seen, who is heard, and how relationships are maintained over time.</p> <p>Source: Robin's idea</p>

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<p>Building governance models that embed decision-making authority with equity partners.</p> <p>Recognizing operational tensions like space use and offering strategies to share power authentically.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Advocated for cyclical, relational processes where power is more evenly distributed.</p> <p>Equitable partnerships that balance strengths and compensate for systemic inequities, rather than pretending all partners are starting from the same place.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Governance should include iterative testing, documentation, and open dialogue about what’s working.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>
<p>Strong concern that NBS could dominate decisions, even with good intentions. The meeting raised the idea that even informal norms (e.g., access to space or deference to NBS opinions) could reinforce hierarchy unless structurally counterbalanced.</p> <p>Source: Staff Meeting March 2025</p>	<p>Not reliant on financial capability. It must center on values and relationship-driven contributions. This supports a position of equity, not status or resources, and must guide power-sharing.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Define what's negotiable and what isn't, early and often.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>
<p>Shared authority evolving over time, without formal designation, but with substantial impact.</p> <p>Source: Staff Meeting March 2025</p>	<p>An idea: organization in residence as a bridge for other dancers/ groups</p> <p>Source: Staff Meeting March 2025</p>	<p>Tool: Create a <b>“What to Expect” Governance Primer</b> for onboarding organization residents.</p> <p>Source: Robin’s Idea</p>
<p>An applied system for collective scheduling using historical data, project forecasting, and biweekly cross-departmental meetings. (tool)</p>	<p>Warns that future sustainability depends on mutual benefit, not dependency. Inclusion is not achieved by proximity. Relational equity and mutual buy-in are essential.</p>	<p>Calls for precise and transparent agreements upfront, especially around lease terms, renewals, exit plans, and cost coverage.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>

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Source: Staff Meeting March 2025	“If it’s going to last beyond the generation that implements it, it has to be mutually beneficial.”	
<p><b>Suggests that perceived power imbalances (e.g., “NBS offering space”) could create a saviour narrative:</b></p> <p>“It already sets up a power dynamic... it’ll always be ‘NBS gave you this space.’”</p> <p>Source: Staff Meeting March 2025</p>	<p>“For some of these folks, this is their complete livelihood... We have organizational stakes. They have personal stakes.”</p> <p>Reminder that equitable governance requires power-conscious empathy—acknowledge lived realities when structuring terms and expectations.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>“There has to be flexibility... but also a structure people can trust.”</p> <p>Evaluation: Structured “Rebalancing Periods” (e.g., annual reviews) where partners can renegotiate their role and responsibilities.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>
<p><b>Tool: Transparent Resource Booking System with real-time access and equitable prioritization logic.</b></p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>redefines inclusion as <b>multi-sectoral, non-tokenistic</b>, and based on community need.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p><b>Tool: Partner Selection Framework</b> to guide who is invited into shared governance and why.</p>
<p>Integrate hybrid models of authority: blend financial stake with contribution of non-monetary value.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Equity and transparency must be balanced with feasibility.</p> <p>Source: Staff meeting May 2025</p>	<p>Strongly supports structured transparency, especially where expectations must be managed (e.g., what advisory bodies can and can’t do).</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>
<p>Shared governance must account for lifecycle realities of small organizations or solo-led initiatives.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Every decision should reflect a commitment to long-term sustainability (e.g., “for the next seven generations”)</p> <p>Source: November 4, 2024 – NBS Indigenous</p>	<p><b>Tool: Shared Governance Accountability Report</b> annually, documenting: Community input received</p> <p>What decisions it shaped</p>

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	Talking Circle	
<p>Highlights the need for tiered governance models that reflect investment and role.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>The Indigenous community urged NBS to ‘decenter itself’—both in physical space and organizational influence—during reconciliation efforts</p> <p>Equity in governance is key to successful shared decision-making</p> <p>Source: December 2023 – Monumental Report</p>	<p>Encourages predictable cycles of reporting and candid feedback channels.</p>
<p>develop decision type maps—what’s advisory, what’s final authority, and who is consulted.</p> <p>“We’re not pretending consensus always exists. We negotiate authority and set up who decides what.”</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>		<p>Challenges a default assumption that institutional access equals consent. Transparency must include affirmative, informed permission processes.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>
<p>True shared authority is giving communities agency over how their presence is represented.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>		<p>Tool: Directory of responsible contacts (e.g., Maintenance Lead, Scheduling Lead, Facility Manager).</p> <p>Office Hours where decision-makers are directly available.</p>
<p>Discussion about different relationship tiers (e.g., long-term residency vs. short-term</p>		

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<p>access) adds depth to the framework’s idea of tiered governance and proportional representation. There is clear support for graduated participation models.</p> <p>Source: Staff meeting May 2025</p>		
<p>Cyclical decision making Govern – Reflect – Adjust – Repeat.</p>		

**COMMUNICATION PROCESS**

<p><b>Internal Communication:</b> How do staff/tenants/ NBS Board stay informed?</p>	<p><b>External Communication:</b> What are the strategies for engaging in the broader community?</p>	<p><b>Feedback &amp; Responsiveness:</b> How do we ensure two-way communication and address feedback?</p>
<p>A process that reinforces collective participation rather than creating hierarchies</p> <p>Source: Kick-off Meeting Jan 2025</p>	<p>Ensure transparent and trust-building communication with external partners, particularly those who have historically faced exclusion</p> <p>Source: Kick-off Meeting Jan 2025</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular ED and Chair meetings</li> <li>• Board portal (essentially a link tree with an embedded Google Calendar of all Board meetings and events)</li> <li>• A well-implemented Maintenance Ticket System can foster smoother communication, quicker response times,</li> </ul>	<p>The importance of communicating the ‘why’ behind the initiative to donors and external stakeholders to avoid assumptions of mission drift.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete an annual Self-Evaluation survey - feedback on the efficacy</li> <li>• A tenant advisory committee provides structured feedback loops</li> </ul> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>

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<p>and a more organized way to handle maintenance across shared spaces, benefiting both tenants and facility managers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time given in all meetings for cross-building community building</li> <li>• Source: Governance Talks 2025</li> </ul>		
<p>Communication isn't only about passing information; it's also about creating an environment where people feel safe and welcomed.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>How a space is designed directly impacts the perceived openness and accessibility, thereby influencing how messages are received.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Need for better internal communication and mutual understanding of different users' roles and challenges. Advocates for a culture of informed empathy and proactive communication</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>
<p>Emphasizes seasonal check-ins across collaborative networks and the sharing of lessons and updates. This helps build trust and decentralizes leadership.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Restraint in publicizing NBS' role in the campus' community programming unless contributions are genuinely mutual.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>supported building shared principles and feedback loops — such as rules of engagement collaboratively developed and reviewed — to foster a responsive and inclusive environment.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>
<p>Full alignment across NBS—from frontline staff to board—is necessary.</p> <p>Need clear, internal narratives.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Complex intra-community dynamics was pointed out sharing that identity (e.g., being Indigenous) does not guarantee alignment or comfort - Inclusion beyond surface representation.</p>	<p>Communication should create a culture of shared learning and adaptation, promoting responsiveness over rigid formalities.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>

<p>Discussions on student involvement and intergenerational exchange further support the framework’s emphasis on inclusive and responsive communication practices.</p> <p>Source: Staff Meeting April 2025</p>	<p>Calls for depth and substance over optics</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Call for embedded feedback loops and acknowledgment of community labour, especially from groups historically excluded from credit.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>
<p>Focus on explaining the "why" (why NBS is investing in equity partnerships and shared governance) to avoid mission drift perception.</p> <p>Board engagement through experiential “rallies” that let trustees <i>feel</i> the value of new models (not just hear about them).</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Must center accessibility making sure policy decisions, programming choices, and communications are truly accessible</p> <p>Source: Feasibility Study 2025</p>	<p>Foster a culture where raising concerns, giving feedback, and offering ideas is welcomed, normalized, and safe.</p> <p>Systems must be continuously evaluated — not every few years but built into regular practice.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>
<p>Communication should create an environment where people feel safe and welcomed to share ideas or concerns.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>An external contributor noted their external community outreach and branding challenges, emphasizing the importance of external visibility and accessible messaging.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Two-way feedback loops and proactive communication are essential.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>
<p>Advocated for intentional exposure between NBS students, faculty, and diverse community partners — not just as outreach, but as vital to evolving the institution itself.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Communication that embeds belonging e.g., branding that reflects shared values like <b>“Sharing Dance.”</b> Communication is not just logistical but deeply symbolic and relational.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Feedback leads to concrete adjustments. Model a governance culture where community input is not only welcomed but acted upon, resulting in systemic improvements that benefit both individuals and the broader organization.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>

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<p>Shared the value of live calendars, regular tenant meetings, and improved responsiveness</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>People need to have opportunities to be in the space in a completely different way... perhaps organizations in residence have an open-door day to give them the opportunity to take pride and ownership of the space. Generate an opportunity to engage the wider community.</p> <p>Source: Robin's idea</p>	<p>Engagement Ladder: a model outlining multiple levels of partnership (e.g., access-only, co-programming, governance seat).</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>
<p>Explicit Expectations: Participants emphasized the importance of clear communication on relationship types and durations, especially for resident organizations. This reflects a desire for predictable governance.</p> <p>There was also an appeal for honest internal narratives especially for board communication framing the initiative as a “business case” as well as an equity imperative.</p> <p>Source: Staff Meeting March 2025</p>	<p>The role of shared space in democratizing information access.</p> <p>Communication must go beyond institution walls to reach actual users and communities.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>feedback loops can be low-tech but culturally embedded.</p> <p><b>Tool: Relational Check-In Toolkit:</b> Prompts and formats for regular community care assessments.</p>
<p>Transforming siloed meetings into joint planning processes.</p> <p>Reflection lounges during emotionally intense experiences</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>The model should include messaging strategies to support transparency, humility, and accountability in external relationships.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Illustrated the need for responsive governance that can correct harm or misrepresentation, even in small details.</p> <p>Micro-Adjustment Protocol: a process for partners to flag and revise issues in signage, language, or process without formal review cycles.</p>

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		Source: Governance Talks 2025
<p>Governance must create channels for diverse perspectives and mitigate internal bias.</p> <p>Source: Staff Meeting March 2025</p>	<p>Validates including non-governing advisors, who are still informed and offer feedback.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Tool: Brave spaces established for feedback (meetings, anonymous surveys, listening circles).</p> <p>Celebrating feedback is a vital part of community growth.</p>
<p>Use unified language that avoids othering</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>"Everyone thinks they're on the same page until they're not."</p>	
<p>Responsive governance must include financial performance tracking and cost-to-benefit evaluations.</p> <p>Tool: Include quarterly financial check-ins with organization residents</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>"Being in the building means being part of a wider responsibility to others and the land."</p>	
<p>Governance should capture and learn from internal precedents—what works across current NBS departments (e.g., ballet vs. community programs) can inform external partnerships.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>"Dance companies need more robust strategies for marketing their performances to wider audiences beyond the traditional dance community."</p> <p>Source: A Shifting Landscape 2025</p>	
<p>Internal communication strategies that make the governance model legible and build buy-in.</p>	<p>The discussion reinforced the need for a "Values Charter" (Tool) or community-crafted document to ground shared identity and communications, especially in how the space is introduced to</p>	

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Source: Governance Talks 2025	outsiders. Source: Staff Meeting May 2025	
<b>Tool: community governance feedback circles,</b> (maybe as part of NBS rallies) with board liaison participation.		
“It’s a lot of work when it’s not just you.” Source: Governance Talks 2025		
Concentric impact circles and organizations as “conduits” support the framework’s notion of distributed communication and layered engagement. There’s shared interest in structured but flexible outreach models, such as using endorsements or advisory input to demonstrate sectoral trust Source: Staff Meeting May 2025		

**RESTORATIVE APPROACH**

<b>Conflict Resolution:</b> How do we address harm, grievances, and disputes?	<b>Repair &amp; Healing:</b> What structures support reconciliation & relationship-building?	<b>Accountability Measures:</b> How do we track & assess the effectiveness of efforts?
	Actively acknowledging historical inequities of the organization	

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	Source: Kick-off Meeting Jan 2025	
<p>Be Proactive: staff have yearly conflict resolution training values arising from these workshops include non-disposability of people, which includes discussions around taking accountability for actions and decisions, and addressing issues of inequity, invisible labour including emotional labour, and self-regulation for better communication.</p> <p>Policy: Step 1 - Seek assistance with another person if a conflict is unable to be resolved Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Noted the emotional complexities involved and advocated for having mechanisms that allow mutual reflection and realignment when relationships don't work out.</p> <p>Source: Kick-off Meeting Jan 2025</p>	<p>Policies, such as the "tenant progressive termination policy," formalize conflict resolution while ensuring fairness.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>
<p>conflict management as an inevitable and necessary component of shared governance. ...“toxic” environments when such systems are absent and recommends conflict preparation from the outset.</p>	<p>A restorative approach in governance isn't about applying a one-size-fits-all solution but about fostering environments of trust, reflection, and shared purpose Restorative approaches are about underlying beliefs and trust, not merely about having the right tools.</p> <p>This underscores the importance of grounding governance in shared values and intentions.</p> <p>Governance structures should reflect restorative principles. This integration ensures that the way decisions are made and conflicts are handled aligns with the project's values.</p>	<p>Real commitment to equity includes structural audits and holding power-holders accountable through regular evaluation.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>

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	Source: Meeting with <a href="#">The Restorative Research, Innovation and Education Lab</a> , Dalhousie University on Restorative approach and governance	
Conflict resolution is a critical part of onboarding members. Clarifying the various roles and their boundaries upfront Source: Governance Talks 2025	Addressing both physical and symbolic exclusions. Shared governance offers a chance to begin healing through structural change and honest dialogue.  Source: Governance Talks 2025	Mutual accountability should be embedded through formal agreements that reflect contributions, shared values, and expectations for equity and respect.  Source: Governance Talks 2025
By embedding anti-oppression and anti-racism, governance becomes a tool for addressing harm and historical inequities. Leaders must model reflection and humility.  Source: Governance Talks 2025	Importance of apology, mutual reflection, ongoing conflict resolution, and trust building.  Progressive Repair  Source: Governance Talks 2025	The importance of clear articulation of governance boundaries and participatory processes  Source: Staff Meeting April 2025
Building trust requires acknowledging past harms. Psychological safety must be a cornerstone, particularly for groups with prior negative experiences with institutions.  Source: Governance Talks 2025	Warned against making false promises around shared power.  Emphasized the importance of building trust through honesty and avoiding tokenistic structures that imply influence without delivering it.  Source: Governance Talks 2025	Annual external evaluations are needed to capture honest feedback and support course corrections.  Source: Governance Talks 2025
Conflict is inevitable; it must be anticipated and managed proactively, not seen as failure.	The creation of <b>internal group structure drop-ins</b> (e.g., weekly open check-ins) and culturally responsive mental health support for artists and staff. Like a support group.	A neutral governance steward with clearly defined community-approved authority and processes could proactively assist restorative justice processes.  Source: Governance Talks 2025

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<p>“Expect disputes over cleaning, noise, booking — plan for them from day one.”</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p><b>Normalize repair, not just conflict resolution.</b></p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	
<p>Restorative conflict resolution, clear grievance processes, and proactive conflict preparation.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>“It’s easy to undervalue... how high the stakes are for people trying to survive off their practice.”</p> <p>Calls for governance that is emotionally intelligent and prepared to repair harm caused by delays, broken promises, or exclusion.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	
<p>Emphasizing the need for codified procedural safeguards rather than discretionary authority.</p> <p>Source: Staff Meeting March 2025</p>	<p>Restorative Practices in Space Protocol acknowledging colonial legacies, providing reparation through space, voice, and storytelling.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	
<p>Be prepared to provide <b>restorative facilitation</b> roles or third-party mediators to help diffuse tensions without taking sides.</p> <p>Conflict is inevitable in shared space; preparation is key to minimizing damage and sustaining trust.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>		

<p>Add <b>financial grievance pathways</b>.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>		
<p>“We may not always agree with our partners... that doesn’t mean we shouldn’t engage.”</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>		
<p>“Diplomacy is part of our practice. Not every disagreement is {a} conflict, but we treat it as a point of care.”</p> <p>Conflict resolution as a culture, not just a tool. Must ensure these are <b>resourced</b> and <b>neutral</b>, not punitive or tokenistic.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>		

**SUCCESSION AND NOMINATION PROCESS**

<p><b>Leadership Development:</b> How do we identify and nurture future governance leaders?</p>	<p><b>Selection Criteria</b> What values and qualifications guide nominations?</p>	<p><b>Continuity &amp; Stability:</b> How do we ensure smooth transitions and knowledge transfer?</p>
<p>Look to Indigenous Led &amp; Community Representation Models</p> <p>Source: Kick-off Meeting Jan 2025</p>		<p>Need to think through how shifts in leadership do not erode the long-term integrity of shared governance</p>

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		Source: Kick-off Meeting Jan 2025
<p>Clear expectations (boundaries) are set upfront about roles, goals, and time commitments</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p><b>Recruit for Impact:</b> Prioritize problem-solvers...willingness to engage in "startup-like" challenges</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Incubator with terms</p>
<p>Individuals who understand both community and institutional priorities.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Early partnership with experienced, equity-focused dance organizations can help set the tone. Selection must prioritize groups with aligned values and governance readiness.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>the risk of alienating certain donors if shifts are not well communicated — suggesting the need for a leadership framework that can manage transitional sensitivities.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>
<p>Nurturing leadership across levels and roles, fostering a culture of trust and collaboration rather than hierarchy.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>"Sharing Dance" was suggested as a unifying identity and platform for multiple tenants, promoting a collective rather than NBS-dominated narrative.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Committee members should rotate (short terms) to avoid entrenchment and ensure fresh, diverse perspectives.</p> <p>2-year term limits for committee members, supporting leadership rotation and sustainability.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>
<p>Concern around continuity of governance and organizational culture, and ensuring new leaders or organizations uphold the shared vision</p> <p>Source: Staff Meeting April 2025</p>	<p>Community-controlled nominating and review processes for residency positions. This decentralizes power, reinforces equity, and aligns with the framework's call for inclusive leadership pathways.</p>	<p>A possible tool template would be a continuity plan.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>

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	Source: Staff Meeting April 2025	
<p>One interviewee’s experience highlights how informal recognition, and trust can nurture impactful leadership roles. In the absence of a formal appointment, sustained support and confidence from institutional leaders allowed them to contribute meaningfully over time—shaping pedagogy, influencing culture, and mentoring others.</p> <p>This demonstrates the value of relational leadership development, where opportunities arise from mutual respect, shared values, and deep institutional understanding.</p> <p>“They trusted me... and that trust enabled so much.”</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>		<p>Values like mentorship, intergenerational dialogue, and capacity-building as <b>selection foundations</b> for organizations in residence.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>
<p>Working with organizations across Canada to build pipelines for future leadership.</p> <p>Offer Mentorship and Upskilling</p> <p>“Succession... is built into everything we do.”</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>		<p>Embed protocols for revisiting policies as people and organizations change.</p> <p>Avoid informal gatekeeping and "memory hoarding" by a few.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>

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<p>Governance must anticipate changes in partner org structure and build systems that can evolve accordingly.</p> <p>Encourage shared roles or organizational mentorship to reduce burnout and over-reliance on single leaders.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>		<p>Partner Memory Keeper Role: track relationships and protocols across time, avoiding re-asking permissions or re-traumatizing partners.</p>
<p>Strong endorsement for youth inclusion and multi-generational representation in governance. Youth or emerging artist representation in working groups or partner advisory committees.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>		
<p>The meeting included a strong emphasis on youth/student engagement and rotating representation, which aligns with the framework’s support for intergenerational and rotating governance seats.</p> <p>Participants suggested more than one student/youth member</p> <p>Source: Staff Meeting May 2025</p>		

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<p>Shared leadership may involve "leading from behind," taking a step back, or managing operations while allowing artists to focus on their craft</p> <p>Source: December 2023 – Monumental Report</p>		
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**A MEANINGFUL AND EQUITABLE PARTNER IN SHARED GOVERNANCE**

<p><b>Alignment with Values:</b> How do we assess cultural and artistic fit?</p>	<p><b>Contribution to Shared Governance:</b> What role should partners play in decision-making?</p>	<p><b>Commitment to Equity &amp; Sustainability:</b> How do tenants support a thriving, inclusive space?</p>
<p>The reality is that, despite efforts toward inclusiveness, not every group will be selected as a co-tenant or governance partner. This raised concerns about how decisions are made, who gets access, and how to justify selections in a way that reinforces trust rather than exclusion.</p> <p>Source: Kick-off Meeting Jan 2025</p>	<p>There will likely be different types of tenant relationships, but all should genuinely feel empowered in decision-making.</p> <p>Source: Kick-off Meeting Jan 2025</p>	
<p>The Terms of Reference state that members must be in good standing with no outstanding tenancy issues. This was included to avoid</p>	<p>Tenants should help co-create usage guidelines and be empowered decision-makers within designated spaces.</p>	<p>Constantly address the <b>tension</b> between organizational use and rental/community use of spaces</p>

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<p>anyone joining for their own personal issue and sideline the advising work of the group.</p> <p>Staff completes an annual tenant survey</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	
<p>Mapping mission alignment</p> <p>Recognizing that tenants/ partners play an active role in contributing to and advancing NBS’ mission as well as their own rather than simply using the space. There is also tension in this.</p> <p>Tenancy agreements must include branding and intellectual property considerations</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Models like subsidized tenancy with governance conditions could empower tenants to contribute structurally—not just as users, but as co-governors.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Evaluate equity in partnerships: "what are we all bringing? What are our strengths?"</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>
<p>[Tenants] must be positioned not as add-ons, but as integral, autonomous contributors.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>The group discussed how not all partners will be co-governors, but those who must contribute structurally</p> <p>Source: Staff Meeting April 2025</p>	<p>Discussed models such as subsidized tenancy and shared ownership, where community organizations not only use the space but also participate in its long-term financial sustainability and decision-making.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>

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<p>Genuine investment, not token inclusion—tenant must be integral co-creators, not passive beneficiaries</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Not every organization may become a co-governor — alignment of mission, readiness, and contribution matters.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>NBS has existing efforts to bridge institutional and freelance artist communities, thereby supporting inclusive and sustainable practices</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>
<p>Partners must be autonomous contributors, not passive recipients.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Advocates for a balance between sovereignty and embedded decision-making.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>recognized the possibility of funding collaborations and emphasized that authenticity in relationship-building contributes to long-term sustainability</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>
<p>Sovereignty over its space but to collaborate organically — balance autonomy and community participation.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Tool: <b>Partner Typology Map</b> that classifies roles (e.g., Organization in Residence, community user) with corresponding decision rights.</p>	<p>Tenants must be empowered through a system that embeds equity in ongoing evaluation and mutual accountability.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>
<p>A meaningful partner looks like—reciprocal, autonomous, and deeply invested in community good.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Contributions should include tangible and intangible assets, not every exchange is spatial. <b>Tool: Reciprocity Menu:</b> A document of what partners contribute (skills, programming, community access) and what they receive.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Long-term equity partnerships, including shared ownership or capital investment, to build wealth and opportunity within the community.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>
<p>“You’re not just renting you're shaping the space.”</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>“Being an active partner means showing up with ideas... not just calling when the plumbing breaks.”</p>	<p>Concerns were voiced around how excellence and artistic alignment would be interpreted in a shared model and how to prevent gatekeeping while maintaining standards</p> <p>Source: Staff Meeting April 2025</p>

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<p>The framework must differentiate between valuing contribution and offering authority, especially in power-sensitive environments.</p> <p>Reframe role of “members” of the governance to “builders”</p>	<p>The meeting affirmed that being a “resident” is about shared responsibility, programming alignment, and ecosystem contribution—not just tenancy</p> <p>Source: Staff Meeting May 2005</p>	<p>Authentic recognition of cultural differences and contributions, not absorption or token inclusion.</p> <p>Believe partners must retain their distinctiveness while enhancing the shared environment.</p> <p>Source: Staff Meeting April 2025</p>
<p>“We were clear from the start why we were asking someone to be part of this, and what they bring.”</p> <p><b>Tool: Reciprocity Menu</b> (what each partner offers and receives)</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Dancers want to focus on their artistic mission, not managing space operations</p> <p>Source: Monumental Report December 2023</p>	<p>Strategy of supporting independent artists without co-opting their work</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>
<p>The discussion validated the framework’s emphasis on contribution, not just access, by encouraging organizations to act as network multipliers, not just beneficiaries of space.</p> <p>Source: Staff Meeting May 2005</p>	<p>There is a distinction between governing space vs. managing access. Leaders want to shape who uses the space rather than control operations.</p> <p>Source: Monumental Report December 2023</p>	<p>The group advocated for co-investment in long-term capacity (e.g., mentorship, infrastructure development), not just honoraria or space access — calling for a redefinition of contribution beyond just immediate outputs</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>
<p>“Consider a way for us to leave our mark within the space.”</p> <p>Source: Feasibility Study April 28, 2025</p>		<p>Unless equity is embedded structurally, privilege will replicate:</p>

		<p>“NBS was privileged over the dance community for decades... this should be seen as returning the space.”</p>
		<p>Recognizes that NBS must resource the governance effort itself coordination, communication, and adaptation require staff time and care. At least to start.</p> <p>Budget for governance infrastructure (e.g., coordination roles, advisory honoraria, onboarding support).</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>
		<p>“Joy-centered doesn’t mean unserious.”</p> <p>Governance should feel meaningful and culturally safe, especially for historically marginalized folks.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>
		<p>“It’s a missed opportunity if we don’t design this as a place where cultures converge.”</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>

		<p>Identity Visibility Policy: ensures each partner’s work is branded and visible as their own (in marketing, signage, press, etc.).</p> <p>Source: Robin Idea</p>
		<p>Collaboration is no panacea for the sector, but nonetheless a vital component of a sustainable future. Operating partnerships between dance and performing arts organizations have the potential to alleviate financial and Dance Presentation in the GTA – Final Report 14 administrative pressures and broaden audiences for dance. Performing arts groups are increasingly coming together to secure space, share resources, and address operational challenges with combined resources.</p> <p>Source: Shifting Landscapes 2025</p>
		<p>A flexible structure with strong trust anchors</p>

**FLEXIBILITY & LONG-TERM VIABILITY**

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<b>Adapting to organizational changes:</b> How do we accommodate shifts among partners?	<b>Exit &amp; transition planning:</b> How is continuity ensured?	<b>Future-proofing governance structure:</b> How do we ensure this model remains relevant and effective?
<p>Tenant Education - Tenants understand contracts, cost recovery models, and Town Halls/Tenant Meetings for face-to-face communications when significant changes arise (e.g. renegotiations of head leases).</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>A tenant advisory committee (including existing tenants) worked with staff to create a “tenant progressive termination policy”, that mimics the model of labour-related performance concerns, outlines a multi-step and clear notification of violations by which a tenancy might be terminated.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	
<p>Governance must be adaptable to NBS’ core activities and existing relationships.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Relationships should be revisited periodically. Governance agreements must include mechanisms for either party to exit respectfully if values or priorities change.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Evolves and is incremental—from a startup-like phase to potentially managing shared spaces with multiple tenants.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>
<p>The challenge is to find a balanced, equitable model that accommodates shared use without diluting governance or operational responsibility.</p>	<p>Prioritize alignment and allow evolution through continuous feedback and relational reassessment.</p> <p>Source: Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>The idea of organic growth within a shared governance model where relationships are nurtured over time, and to focus on building robust relationships</p>
<p><b>Community-Centric Design:</b> Use an evaluation framework that includes surveys and iterative feedback loops to align with community needs ongoingly</p>	<p>Governance arrangements should allow for growth and transitions, with clear expectations for accountability and evolving responsibilities.</p>	<p>Accept that new governance models require a willingness to "fail, get it wrong, revisit, reframe"</p>

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<p>Governance Talks 2025</p>		<p>Governance Talks 2025</p>
<p>Governance structures must support nimbleness and the ability to pivot as the community or context shifts.</p> <p>Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>There is a lack of real estate equity accumulation for tenants. While NBS benefits from asset growth, invited partners risk building dependency without long-term security. This highlights a power asymmetry</p> <p>Suggestions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Endowed space use rights (tenants can stay indefinitely but don't "own")</li> <li>● Structured term limits for residency with negotiated objectives</li> <li>● <b>Residency as a launchpad</b>, enabling artists to transition out stronger — emphasizing capacity-building as a governance objective</li> </ul> <p>Source: Staff Meeting March 2025</p>	<p>An incremental rollout of shared governance...the need for structures to be adaptable and reflective of on-the-ground realities as they unfold</p> <p>Governance Talks 2025</p>
<p>Governance must accommodate operational tensions</p> <p>Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Concerned about unequal investment and unclear terms. Exit strategies should avoid signaling distrust while still safeguarding everyone.</p>	<p>supported the idea of starting small, testing the model, and growing it based on what works, aligning with incremental and organic development approaches.</p> <p>Governance Talks 2025</p>

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	<p>“If there’s an exit clause... it might feel like it’s not real to the new partners.”</p> <p>Governance Talks 2025</p>	
<p>Institutional flexibility sustains long-term relationships and invites system evolution.</p> <p>Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Reinforced the need for formalized entry/exit pathways, including terms of reapplication, withdrawal, or succession.</p> <p>Tool: <b>Partner Lifecycle Maps</b> outlining pathways through different levels of engagement and governance.</p> <p>Governance Talks 2025</p>	<p>Governance should be self-aware, nimble, and intentionally designed to evolve as needs and times change.</p> <p>Governance Talks 2025</p>
<p>Physical space-sharing must be matched with shared operational expertise. Governance must support training, risk management, and capacity-building, particularly for groups newly entering institutional environments.</p> <p>Governance Talks 2025</p>		<p>Structures should be designed as learning systems—able to reflect, revisit, and realign—centering shared purpose and community relevance.</p> <p>Governance Talks 2025</p>
<p>Shared governance must allow for phased implementation and sunseting or evolving roles.</p> <p>Governance Talks 2025</p>		<p>Incremental implementation—start small, learn, and evolve. Pilots with more established orgs reduce risk and prepare NBS for deeper collaboration.</p> <p>Governance Talks 2025</p>

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<p>Tool to input early: Space Transition Coaching: Offer sessions for staff navigating emotional responses to shared space.</p> <p>Governance Talks 2025</p>		<p>Envisions shared ownership and wealth-building models that support both institutional and community resilience.</p> <p>Governance Talks 2025</p>
<p>“There has to be space for both... the long-term and the opportunity that bubbles up... How can we create a system that dances with the dance world?”</p> <p>Recommends a dual system of term-based partnerships and open-call access windows.</p> <p>Governance Talks 2025</p>		<p>Encourages incremental growth, grounded in trust, continuity, and humility.</p> <p>Governance Talks 2025</p>
<p>“There needs to be space for learning and reflection... you can’t know how it will go.”</p> <p>Governance Talks 2025</p>		<p>Emphasis on incrementalism: beginning with small, manageable equity sharing initiatives, testing the model, adapting based on feedback, and then growing.</p> <p>Governance Talks 2025</p>
<p>A model of spontaneous flexibility within institutional structures. NBS can build “permissionless” zones within safe boundaries.</p>		<p>Calls for clear processes to avoid ad hoc power shifts</p> <p>Governance Talks 2025</p>
<p>Flexibility must be backed by clear boundaries and support, or staff burnout and reputational risks can arise.</p>		<p>Governance models must measure cultural and relational readiness, not just procedural correctness.</p>

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		<p>“Until the right intention is there, nothing is going to happen.”</p> <p>Governance Talks 2025</p>
<p>This focus on adaptiveness and agility enables governance to anticipate and address changes in the landscape and shifting funder demands. It also provides the flexibility to meet the expectations of multiple generations and a diversity of stakeholders and to be more responsive to complex collaborations and partnerships.</p> <p>Source: Ontario Nonprofit Network, Governance 2024</p>		<p>“Build it to evolve because something that looks good today may not work two years from now.</p> <p>Governance Talks 2025</p>
		<p>Supports the framework’s call for adaptability, but demands stronger financial modeling as part of governance, not as separate.</p> <p>Governance Talks 2025</p>
		<p>“Governance should account for evolution, not perfection”</p> <p>Governance Talks 2025</p>
		<p>Pilot Governance Model, with 2–3 partner orgs co-</p>

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		developing influence channels over a 12 to 18-month period.
		<p>Governance needs to include transparent conversations about resource forecasting.</p> <p>Evaluation methods must remain low-burden, participatory, and equity-centered, not audit-style processes.</p> <p>The call for co-designed, culturally competent evaluation tools aligns with the framework’s proposal for embedded tools like Relational Check-In Toolkits and Micro-Adjustment Protocols.</p>
		<p>Acknowledge what natural rituals are occurring - How can these be nourished and perhaps integrated into the governance.</p> <p>Source: Robin’s idea</p>



*Building Together: A Guide Through the Shared Governance Model*

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