



*Dharma Rain*

*Zen Center*

# Organizational Structure

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## Organizational Structure Overview

This document describes the components of Dharma Rain Zen Center's organizational structure, respective groups' responsibilities, and the relationships between councils and groups.

**Board of Directors:** Led by the Chair of the Board. Responsible for fiscal management, fundraising, strategic planning, management of legal liability and risk, operating in accordance with articles of incorporation and bylaws. The [Ethics Council](#) reports to the Board.

**Abbot:** The Abbot is an ordained and transmitted Soto Zen priest who is the executive and spiritual director of the organization. As Executive Director, the Abbot is supervised by the Board of Directors. The Abbot appoints the Godo, Kanin and any assistants to these positions, and may themselves fill one or more of those positions.

	<b>West Hall (Teaching)</b>	<b>East Hall (Operations)</b>	<b>Dharma Garden (Children and Family Programs)</b>
<b>Led By</b>	Godō*, Assistant Godō*	Kanin*, Assistant Kanin*	Head of Dharma Garden
<b>Councils and groups within these areas</b>	<p>Dharma Rain Active Transmitted Teachers (<a href="#">DRATT</a>) - Teaching assignments, teacher collaboration</p> <p><a href="#">Dharma Council</a> - Presentation and practice of Dharma</p> <p><a href="#">Elders Council</a> - Sangha culture and tradition</p>	<p><a href="#">Sangha Council</a> - Manages volunteers</p> <p>Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) committee</p>	<a href="#">Dharma Garden Council</a>
<b>Activities in this area</b>	<p>Teaching - Dharma Talks, class instructor appointments, sesshin.</p> <p>Ceremonial ryo - (jisha, precenting, guestmaster, zoom, sacristy, doshi, sanzen), Tanto*</p> <p>Programs - <a href="#">Affiliated Groups</a>, <a href="#">Prison Program</a>, Sangha Support Network, Hand in Hand (End of life care)</p>	<p>Administration - Bookkeeping, HR, communications, IT, fundraising, health and safety</p> <p>Facilities - Grounds, maintenance, library, sewing, housekeeping, residency, Tenzo*</p>	Dharma School, Dharma Camp, Frog Song Montessori Preschool, Parents Group, Family Programs

\*[Temple officers](#) meet regularly to facilitate communication among decision-making bodies.

## Relationships Between Councils

Each council has its own scope of authority and process for making decisions. The Board of Directors, Dharma Council, Sangha Council, and Dharma Garden Council all have ongoing business and need to coordinate with each other. If there is a dispute between decision-making bodies about an area of overlapping responsibility, the Abbot will resolve it. The Temple Officers serve to facilitate communication, awareness and responsivity between bodies. The Elders' and Ethics Councils are ad hoc groups with important functions that only occur in specific circumstances.

The Board makes decisions by majority vote. It may call upon other councils for consultation. The Board and the Dharma Council are called on to be mindful of each other's areas of responsibility, respectful of each other's areas of oversight, and attentive to situations in which consultation and cooperation are needed.

The Dharma Council makes decisions by consensus. If unable to achieve consensus on a decision, the Dharma Council can bring the issue to the Elders' Council or the Board of Directors.

The Sangha Council is in the East hall, and may confer with the Dharma Council or Board of Directors as needed.

The Elders' Council is a standing committee in the West Hall. Its role is advising when concerns arise associated with temple culture and abbot succession. Although the Elders Council does not have direct authority over any other council or officer, it may provide input on issues or make its position public.

The Ethics Council reports to the Board. It has an important but limited scope of responsibility that is driven by formal complaints. Ethics Council decisions may be appealed to the Board. To the extent that there may be internal conflicts in the Ethics Council, the Board should be consulted.

Dharma Garden Council is in its own hall, but reports to the Board of Directors on a yearly basis and coordinates with the Board on matters of budgets, fees, liability, and abuse reporting policies and procedures.

Each group has areas of stewardship (full responsibility for decisions and tasks, including visioning, development and implementation), and oversight (advisory input over decisions that are primarily the responsibility of other individuals, groups, or departments). These are described below.

## Board of Directors: Responsibilities, Composition, Process

Per the [Oregon Department of Justice](#), the Board is responsible for ensuring that the organization's assets are used to carry out its mission and goals as defined in the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws. It is the Board's job to hire the chief executive officer. Board members are expected to attend board meetings, evaluate reports, read minutes, and review the performance of the executive director. Decisions regarding funds and activities must promote the organization's public purpose rather than private interests. Reports of office or employee theft or mismanagement must be investigated.

To encourage citizens to serve as board members for charities, the law cloaks volunteer board members with qualified immunity. They cannot be sued for negligent acts. They may, however, be subject to lawsuits alleging that a loss was due to their gross negligence, willful or fraudulent acts.

### **The Board has stewardship of:**

#### *Mission and Vision*

- A. Fulfillment of mission statement, as defined in the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws.
- B. Fulfillment of statements of vision, inclusivity and guiding values.
- C. Strategic planning for future function and evolution of the temple, in cooperation with the Dharma Council. The Board pays particular attention to the operations functions of the temple.

#### *Fiduciary Matters*

- A. Ensure the financial health of the temple in order to deliver its programs and services, care for its ordained, maintain its facilities and save for its future needs.
- B. Prepare and adopt an annual budget for all operations and programs of the temple prior to the beginning of each fiscal year.
- C. Monitor the approved budget by reviewing financial statements, including an income and expense statement and a balance sheet, at least quarterly.
- D. Review and approve variations from the adopted budget if in excess of \$2000 in any line item in advance of the expenditure.
- E. Participate in and actively promote the fundraising activities of the temple.

#### *Legal Matters*

- A. All legal matters, including liability.
- B. Government relations

#### *Internal Governance*

- A. Changes to Bylaws, as determined necessary by the Board, with a  $\frac{2}{3}$  majority vote.
- B. Determining levels or categories of membership.
- C. Determining eligibility of members to vote for Directors.
- D. Election and oversight of corporate officers (President, Treasurer, Corporate Secretary).
- E. Establishing committees and councils to assist with fulfilling the temple's mission or assisting with operations and growth. Examples include the Elders Council, Ethics Council, fundraising committees, Safe Environment Committee, and Emergency Preparedness Team.

- F. Oversee Abbot, including regular performance reviews. If necessary, initiate and conduct impeachment proceedings against the Abbot as specified in the Bylaws.
- G. Establish policies and procedures regarding volunteers and employees of the temple. This includes defining terms and conditions of employment, creating and/or approving job descriptions, and determining compensation and benefits.
- H. Regular communication with the Sangha regarding mission and vision, strategic planning, financial status, policies, and operations.

**The Board has oversight of:**

- A. Hiring and termination of employees
- B. Changes to the organizational structure
- C. Decisions involving expenditures over a specified amount (see above), or
- D. Any matters that raise concerns in an area of the Board's responsibility.

**Composition of Board of Directors**

The Board consists of 5-12 members, including Directors (elected by general membership), Trustees (appointed by the Abbot), and the Corporate President and Treasurer (ex-officio members). Eligibility and terms of service for Directors are specified in the Bylaws.

Directors may serve for up to two consecutive three-year terms. After serving two consecutive three year terms, a Director may serve additional terms after taking at least one three-year term off the Board. Alternatively, they may be appointed as a Trustee, in which case they do not have a term limit. Trustees may number no more than 1/3 of the total number of Board members.

The Board nominates candidates for Director vacancies, though nominees may be suggested by any Sangha member (including oneself).

Directors may not also serve as voting members of the Dharma Council.

**Board of Directors Process**

The Board of Directors operates according to the processes outlined in the Bylaws and as specified by Oregon law.

## Dharma Council: Responsibilities, Composition, Process

The Dharma Council provides oversight and support throughout the areas of teaching and liturgy. The Council is concerned with and has the power to make decisions regarding the general tenor of teaching and instruction throughout the sangha. Areas of particular concern include the strategic plan, seminary, talks, classes, workshops, study groups, and affiliated groups. The Dharma Council shares oversight with the Board of Directors in the areas of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), the public face of the temple, and general sangha health. The Dharma Council also provides a way for temple governance to include general members who are not otherwise in leadership roles, giving them a voice in decision-making and in guiding the temple's direction. Membership should be representative of the sangha and include people who are not otherwise involved in major decision-making.

### **Composition of the Dharma Council**

The Godo is responsible for facilitation of the Dharma Council. This responsibility may be delegated to the Assistant Godo at the Godo's discretion.

The Dharma Council will have 6-8 members. Dharma Council members must be pledging members of Dharma Rain who have taken the Precepts. They should demonstrate a mature practice, with at least two years of experience at Dharma Rain Zen Center. The Council will ideally include representatives of the temple officers, the monastic and residential members, and the general membership, including those working with children. Preference is given for people not serving on other decision-making bodies.

The ideal composition of the Dharma Council will include both newer and more senior members. Participants will serve a term of three years, and people may serve two terms in a row.

Each member of the Dharma Council will focus on a specific area of concern, maintaining contact with the members serving in those areas and reporting regularly to the Council.

Each fall, if there are vacancies on the Council, the membership will be invited to express interest in serving on the Dharma Council. The Godo will consult the Dharma Council and other seniors in order to choose from the resulting pool of eligible members. The Godo may look beyond this pool in order to create a Council with wide sangha representation.

Members are expected to attend at least 80% of meetings.

### **Dharma Council Process**

In general, meetings are held ten times a year. No meeting is held in August or December.

Each meeting will include time for member concerns and requests, reports from each member on their oversight area, and an open discussion on sangha temperature and tone.

A quorum is at least 50% of members. The Dharma Council makes decisions by consensus; no action is taken until every member either agrees with a decision or chooses not to block it. In the event that consensus cannot be reached, members may either:

- Stand aside, where one or more members is recorded as abstaining or as casting a dissenting vote but accepts the majority decision, or
- Block, where one or more members does not accept the majority decision.

As needed, the council may consult the Godo or Abbot for help with resolving disagreements. In the case of inability to come to a decision, a majority of the Dharma Council may vote to bring the matter to either the Elders Council or the Board of Directors, depending on the nature of the issue.

The Godo and Abbot have authority to reverse Dharma Council decisions. If disagreement persists between the Dharma Council and the Godo or Abbot, a majority of the remaining Dharma Council (not including the Godo and Abbot) may vote to bring the matter to either the Elders' Council or the Board of Directors, depending on the nature of the issue.

## Sangha Council: Responsibilities, Composition, Process

The Sangha Council, under the guidance and supervision of the Abbot, Board and Dharma Council, helps ensure the harmonious and effective functioning of the temple by filling and rotating temple jobs.

### **Sangha Council has stewardship of:**

- A. Maintaining the temple job list
- B. Assist Team Leaders in recruiting people for jobs
- C. Help match those interested in volunteering with appropriate vacancies
- D. Provide information and support for people functioning in various jobs and roles

### **Composition of Sangha Council**

The council consists of two to three members. They must be full members of Dharma Rain. Council members are asked to serve a minimum of one year. New members of the council are recruited by the council. Members of the council are replaced as they resign.

### **Sangha Council Process**

The Sangha Council makes decisions by consensus; no action is taken until every member either agrees with a decision or chooses not to block it. In the event that consensus cannot be reached, members may either:

- Stand aside, where one or more members is recorded as abstaining or as casting a dissenting vote but accepts the majority decision, or
- Block, where one or more members does not accept the majority decision.

As needed, the council may involve the Abbot to help resolve disagreements. The chair of the Sangha Council is appointed by the Abbot. Chair responsibilities include ensuring the council fulfills its responsibilities, scheduling council meetings, setting agendas for and facilitating meetings, suggesting changes to council function and process when necessary, and leading the process of selecting new council members when necessary.



## Elders Council: Responsibilities, Composition, Process

The Elders Council collectively holds the knowledge of the customs, practice traditions and core Zen teachings that have been established at Dharma Rain Zen Center (Dharma Rain). This body of knowledge includes the Soto Zen lineage teachings and traditions presented by the temple's founders, Kyogen and Gyokuko Carlson, as well as customs, traditions and teaching approaches that have evolved within, and are supported by, the larger Dharma Rain sangha. It is especially important that the Council provide stability and a thread of continuity during times of change within the temple, and serve as a conservative force if the Council assesses change as occurring too quickly, or if the changes appear to be inconsistent with the vision of the temple's founders. The Council may also serve the temple in times of rigidity as a source of adaptability, emphasizing the creativity and ingenuity of the temple's founders. The Council is responsible for assisting the Board of Directors (Board) in finding, recruiting and selecting candidates to fill a vacancy in the abbacy.

### **Elders Council has stewardship of:**

- A. Continuity and Stability of Vision. Holding knowledge of the customs, practice traditions and core Zen teachings that have been established at Dharma Rain within the collective memory of the Council members.
- B. Providing stability, a thread of continuity, and a traditional, long-term viewpoint on key issues of organization, function, and succession.
- C. Assisting and advising the Board in finding, recruiting and selecting candidates to fill a vacancy in the abbacy, as described in the Bylaws.

### **The Council has oversight of:**

- A. Providing advisory input to other Dharma Rain councils and to temple officers when requested to do so.
- B. Providing unsolicited advisory input to other Dharma Rain councils and temple officers when the Elders Council believes a critical situation has developed that may affect the long-term viability and lineage integrity of the sangha. This unsolicited advisory input would first be offered informally and privately, but, if this first effort cannot resolve the issue, then the council's position may be made a matter of public record.
- C. The Board's and Dharma Council's adherence to Dharma Rain's mission and to the temple's long-term strategic plan.

### **Composition of Elders Council**

The Elders Council is composed of five to eleven members. Council members must be active members at Dharma Rain for at least ten years, have a long-term involvement in and commitment to Dharma Rain events and activities, a maturity of practice, and an understanding of Dharma Rain's lineage traditions. The temple's abbots are not eligible for Council membership.

The Council elects its own members. If Council membership falls below five members, the Council shall select new members to the Council as soon as practicable after a vacancy occurs.

Additional Council members up to eleven total members may be added at any time at the Council's discretion. When nominating Council candidates, the existing Council will strive to maintain a membership that includes ordained monks, lay teachers, lay disciples, and other senior sangha members.

Once elected to the council, a member may serve indefinitely. Council members will renew their commitment to serve at the beginning of each calendar year. The council chairperson will report the council's membership each year to the Board. Members of the council who are not actively participating in council affairs may be asked to vacate their position by a consensus of the majority of the council.

In the case of a vacant abbacy, any member of the Elders Council who is actively being considered as a possible candidate for the position of new abbot would be excused from the process of finding, recruiting, and selecting candidates to fill the vacancy.

### **Elders Council Process**

The council elects a chairperson who arranges and chairs meetings, distributes communications, and represents the council when coordinating with other Dharma Rain councils and groups. The council chairperson serves with the option to renew with the council's approval. The council holds meetings at least annually, and as needed. If a temple situation arises that may require the timely involvement of the council, any council member may petition the chairperson to convene the council. The chairperson will contact council members and set a meeting time and place at their discretion.

The council maintains ongoing, informal communications with the Abbot. This may be accomplished by occasional, informal meetings between the Abbot and the entire council, between the Abbot and a delegation representing the council, and between the Abbot and the council chairperson. As requested by the Board, the council may present progress and activity reports to the Board or the sangha.

## Ethics Council: Responsibilities, Composition, Process

The Ethics Council oversees and maintains Dharma Rain Zen Center's [Ethics and Precepts in Sangha Relationships](#) standards and the [Ethics Complaint and Dispute Resolution Process](#). To the extent that informal dispute resolution is not successful, the Ethics Complaint and Dispute Resolution Process offer formal procedures to address conflict and perceived misconduct of sangha members.

### **Ethics Council has stewardship of:**

- A. Accepting and investigating reports of unresolved disputes, alleged unethical conduct, and allegations of abuse of vulnerable populations. A complaint may be filed by any sangha member and can name any other member of the sangha, including an abbot or Board member, as the focus of the complaint.
- B. Managing the Ethics Complaint and Dispute Resolution Processes in accordance with established policy.
- C. Maintaining and reviewing the Ethics Complaint and Dispute Resolution Process and procedures at least annually, and making suggestions for revisions to the Board of Directors as needed.

### **Ethics Council Composition**

The Ethics Council consists of three core members and three alternate members, appointed by the Board of Directors. Alternates serve whenever a core member is unavailable or has a conflict of interest at the time a grievance is filed. Ethics Council members must be Full Members of Dharma Rain. There are no term limits for members, but the Board of Directors conducts an annual review of the Ethics Council members.

The Board of Directors may solicit nominations for new Ethics Council members from the sangha on an as-needed basis. Ideally, nominees for the Ethics Council have a background in dispute mediation. The Ethics Council does not have non-voting members and no particular person is required to sit on the Ethics Council.

### **Ethics Council Process**

The Ethics Council makes decisions by consensus. In the event that consensus cannot be reached, a member may either stand aside or block. As needed, the council may involve the Board to help resolve disagreements.

The Ethics Council meets at least once a year to review the Ethics Complaint and Dispute Resolution Process. A Chair is elected by core members of the council. If a formal complaint is received, the Ethics Council's process consists of: Receipt of a complaint; review of the complaint and decision whether it warrants investigation; investigation as appropriate, and preparation of a final report; and any follow-up needed. In some cases, there may be additional steps, including an appeal or reconciliation. Ethics Council decisions may be appealed to the Board or, if there is a conflict of interest with the Board, with an outside panel.

## Dharma Garden Council: Responsibilities, Composition, Process

The Dharma Garden Council cares for and is accountable for the success and continuity of its programs. These programs should meet the ongoing needs of the community over time, in a dynamic, creative and expansive way, while staying true to Dharma Rain's mission and vision.

These programs may include:

- Sunday Dharma School: Bi-weekly classes for children from preschool through high school aiming to cultivate and nurture the emotional intelligence, social skills and spiritual growth of children.
- Dharma Camp: Designed for campers ages 9-18 to learn about themselves and to practice interdependence through a combination of traditional summer camp activities and Buddhist practice.
- Parent/Guardian Support and Education: Structured bi-weekly classes on parenting as Buddhist practice, utilizing formal curriculum combined with informal exchange and information.
- Childcare: Trained and supervised childcare for sangha members during some zazen and temple services.
- Works with the Board, other councils, staff and teachers as needed to assure pedagogical goals are met and to maintain compliance with fiduciary, ethical and legal requirements.

The primary focus of these programs is to support children and families: their spiritual development, well-being and growth; and to encourage and support young people's inherent Buddha nature through community, compassion, sharing and joy. These programs support the broader Dharma Rain temple and community by offering young people a way into dharma practice.

### Staffing

The Dharma Garden Council identifies and appoints staff and volunteers for all its programs. Candidates must satisfactorily pass a background check in order to qualify. The Dharma Garden Council assures staff compliance with all rules and regulations pertaining to children's well-being and safety.

### Dharma Garden Council Composition

The council is made up of between five and seven members, with a preference for membership to include at least one lay disciple, one transmitted teacher, one dharma school teacher (or former, within the last five years), one parent and one student, (or former, both within the last five years). Members of the Dharma Garden Council must satisfactorily pass a background check in order to serve. There is a term length of four years. The Administrative Coordinator attends meetings, but is not a voting member. The Dharma Garden Council nominates and confirms its own successors, though nominees may be suggested by any Sangha member. Dharma Garden Council members should not also be members of the Board of Directors or Dharma Council.

The Chair will be elected by current committee members and hold the position for no more than two consecutive years. The Chair of the Dharma Garden Council is responsible for organizing and facilitating meetings of the council.

**Dharma Garden Council Process**

The Council will hold regularly scheduled monthly meetings, or meet at least ten times per year. Any concerns may be brought to the committee in writing or person. Meeting agendas and minutes will be published online. The Dharma Garden Council makes decisions by “consensus minus one.” So if more than one member blocks a decision, that action is not taken. As needed, the council may involve the Abbot to help resolve disagreements.