

**INTERNAL MEMORANDUM**

March 18, 2015

From: Executive Director, CWSC

To: Board of Directors and Advisors to the Board

Re: **CWSC Directing Officers Operating Guidelines**

Congratulations on your selection as a directing officer for the Community Wide Shuraa Conference (CWSC), a national resource center for the American Muslim Intelligentsia.

I am very excited to have the team of members we have now and look forward to expanding the board as necessary and with the same due diligence in the future. We have a special responsibility of setting precedent for future directing officers of CWSC. Because we are in many cases entering uncharted territory, it is necessary that we provide a foundation and written learning curve, not only for ourselves, but for successors to benefit from and build upon. Thorough familiarity with the CWSC website at [www.cwsc.us](http://www.cwsc.us) will help you as a directing officer understand more fully the Operating Guidelines and perform your responsibilities better.

We have assumed a significant responsibility for helping our community increase its capacity to realize model Muslim communities. We seek in accordance with our faith and the best of our abilities and with the broad participation of the group intellect, to remove obstacles that prevent realization of organizational goals for CWSC and the institutions that seek our assistance.

We seek to provide administrative, operational and financial education and assistance, as well as the intellectual discourse to help masajid, schools, and other community service institutions and affiliated entities access a national network of technical and professional resources capable of helping local administrators achieve their goals. To accomplish our task, we will require an administrative framework not only for conducting our affairs, but also to set the example for organizational excellence.

Our responsibility as directing officers mandate a respect for the leadership and fiduciary responsibilities we have assumed. More important than our legal and fiduciary responsibilities, are our responsibilities as members of this community and as believers. We must set the example and truly abide by the highest standards of conduct in governing our affairs. Moreover, our level of commitment, degree of teamwork, and cohesiveness will bear directly on the results we achieve as a support team for ourselves and the communities we serve.

Great change is upon us inside and outside the Muslim community. From the local and domestic to national and international concern, the Muslim and global communities are being challenged to examine issues of identity, conflict and belief, collaboration and cohesion. And the rate of change is itself increasing and demanding that leadership respond with a sense of urgency and deliberation. We must be committed to helping all our leadership and the Community achieve the fullest potential by offering and not forcing assistance.

As directing officers, we will experience a high level of uncertainty in the short-term as we chart a path for progress. Among our immediate tasks is the necessity to minimize fear and resistance as much as possible through clear communication and patience. We will have to be patient with ourselves, our immediate association or organizational network and with the broader Muslim and American communities.

Despite the natural time lag between idea formulation and realization, we must be determined to collapse the gap as quickly as possible and remain resolute in forging ahead.

As new officers of a new organization, we particularly face initiation fears and transition burdens, but like all transitions, faith, time and clear goal setting will replace uncertainty with greater surety and results.

We should be keenly aware of our strengths, weaknesses and our history. Shuraa appears in the name of our organization and it serves as the point of departure for all CWSC operations and services we provide to others. Consequently, Shuraa must be present first in our own deliberations.

At the same time, we must not allow uncertainty, miscommunication or any lack of due diligence on our part, impede in any way the work we must accomplish. We must not misconstrue shuraa as a bureaucratic device preventing directing officers from exercising the authority and span of control they have been given in their functional area to achieve concrete results. Directing officers are a team supporting one another and all of CWSC.

Our history as a community is important, for it can help can help us minimize error. While we can learn from both our past failures and successes, we must constantly look forward to the future and not fear making a mistake. We are seeking to maximize progress while minimizing mistakes such as inadequate strategic planning, resistance to accountability and disproportionate authority in any one person.

Our operations must reflect system dependent leadership that relies upon personality only in so much as an actual person must achieve desired goals and results while remaining accountable to the established system of governance. The system or offices of leadership remain and must necessarily be of greater significance than the office holder. CWSC seeks directors who understand they are part of a *working* board, and not merely an *occasional presiding* board, that incorporates structural redundancy, succession planning and the need for training and development. CWSC needs directors who want to build system-dependent leadership that is continually improving each day, week or month. Each officer must be preparing himself or herself to serve as the Executive Director, by being familiar with all major areas of operations and administration, and the gap between our stated goals and vision and the status quo. Despite the competing demands for our time due to other obligations, officers must prioritize time for their CWSC responsibilities, especially as the organization stabilizes from its startup period.

With respect to succession planning, not only must we think in terms of creating the policies and procedures for ourselves and near-term successors, we must also actively help identify next generation leaders for our internships, scholarships and leadership development programs.

Next generation leaders bring fresh perspective, new ideas and approaches and access to new technologies and an idealism unhampered by fear of failure and an overdependence on “yesteryear’s” experiences. As CWSC current leaders, we must seek to benefit from next

generation leadership not only tomorrow, but today. Let's keep our eyes and ears open for youthful leaders who can assist us.

We are blessed with the opportunity to design the best organization we can conceive. Our biggest challenge will not be a lack of the human or material resources we want....it will instead be the measure of our faith and commitment and what are we willing to do each and every day to perfect CWSC to achieve our goals.

As Executive Director, one of my primary responsibilities is to help us strive to be as effective and efficient as possible. I realize each of us has multiple obligations and responsibilities. Each of us wants our service to be a positive, challenging and rewarding experience. Most important is we want to deliver service to our broader community. I do not want officer responsibilities to unduly impact or unnecessarily interfere with other responsibilities and personal commitments. Yet we must fulfill our obligations. To this end, we must use the latest administrative techniques and technology to work smarter. But technology and administration are only parts of a comprehensive plan for organizational excellence. A larger part is fulfilled through written procedures, expectations and standards.

Our Guidelines are promulgated to allow CWSC to conduct its affairs with the necessary organization, efficiency, and accountability it deserves. I believe that with the Operating Guidelines, we will be able to more effectively fulfill our responsibilities and provide guidance again, not just for ourselves, but for future leaders to come. I ask you to review all the operating documents, but especially the Operating Guidelines for any deficiencies, for the foundational responsibility to lay a framework for excellence for all future boards falls upon us. When the time comes, let us pass on the most excellent design and standards we can produce.

Finally, let's reflect our culture, values and legacy in our work by attaching nomenclature to operating components, services and programs that can help institutionalize our values. An example of what I refer to is the *Words Make People Scholarship*. We must creatively use nomenclature to both honor our leadership and community service legacy while conveying to the world our values; thus our Speakers Bureau, online Store, Awards programs, etc. should be named appropriately.

I look forward to working with you on this magnificent journey.

May Allah (SWT) guard our affairs and grant us great success.

As-Salaam-Alaikum.



Mukhtar Muhammad  
Executive Director, CWSC

cc: Board of Directors & Advisors