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- [Home](#)
 - [About](#)
 - [Members](#)
 - [Apply and Nominate](#)
 - [Contact](#)
 - [F.A.Q.](#)

 - [Search](#)
-

- [Menu](#)

Update from the Transition Task Force

2018 November 2

5 minute read

Dear Worldwide Shambhala Community,

Summary (Highlights of the letter for those who do not speak English as a first language): Thank you to the 96 people interested in being a part of the Process Team and for your patience as we take care in assessing our approach and requirements for applicants, types of involvement, and structure for the PT. There will be four areas of commitment: Community Healing, Culture Change, Governance, and Community Building. A small group of organizational development and culture change professionals are working with us to design the appropriate structure for the PT in advance of its launch. Thank you for everyone's support and participation in the unfolding and maturation of this landmark group.

Thank you to all of you who have applied to the Process Team and for your patience. With the seating of the Shambhala Interim Board of Directors, the Transition Task Force has turned its attention to the establishment of the Process Team. This is a very different process than selecting the Interim Board. We acknowledge the Process Team's importance and potential impact on the global Shambhala community, and we are taking care with each step of its development.

Ninety-six people from around the world are interested in being part of the Process Team. This includes 47 people from the United States, 34 from Europe, 11 from Canada, and 4 others from Australia, Chile, Costa Rica, and New Zealand. It has been inspiring to have so many people step forward. Every applicant has expressed passion and heart, and an impressive array of skills, expertise, and knowledge in the professions and disciplines that will be needed. While we would like to include everyone in an aspect of the PT, we are also taking time to review specific qualifications and proposed structures in advance of appointments.

The Process Team is charged with the task of creating a path to freshness, trust, and transparency for Shambhala as a worldwide organization and, at the same time, to adhere to the vision of Shambhala, the lineage of Sakyongs, the Shambhala teachings, and Mahayana and Vajrayana buddhadharma. We envision that the Process Team will listen to and consult with the Shambhala community region by region in order to explore, and eventually propose to the community and Interim Board, how Shambhala can heal and find sustainable culture and leadership.

The task of the Process Team will be to engage with the community, build on efforts already underway, prototype, and reveal appropriate regional and, potentially, sangha-wide ways to heal, be more inclusive, develop sustainable governance structures, and build community. The current four areas, which overlap, and may develop in different ways depending on regional needs, reflect the concerns that the community has communicated to us and are likely to contribute to and guide the ways the work of this group will move forward. These four areas are:

1. Community Healing & Learning

Assessing what people need to continue in Shambhala with full engagement and heart, for example, addressing trauma, and truth and reconciliation. This includes practitioners at every level, including students of the Vidyadhara who are not students of the Sakyong.

2. Culture Change

While remaining true to the heart of Shambhala vision, fostering education and raising awareness regarding social system dynamics, i.e., privilege and power, racism, North American centrism, classism, heterosexism, cis-sexism, and able bodyism, among other areas of change.

3. Governance Structures

Exploring what it means to manifest the vision of Shambhala and the teachings of our lineage as a worldwide organization. This might include activities such as gathering input from the community toward the design of a model for the organization, possible governance structures, and models of financial and resource sustainability.

4. Community Building

Working with efforts already underway in this area to strengthen our communities and bring out their best qualities at local, regional, and global sangha levels. Community Building may include suggestions from the other three areas.

We have looked carefully at all the PT applicants' bios and areas of interest and have organized all applicants by regions and general areas of interest. Recently, we sent a survey to applicants to learn more about their specific area of interest, including their personal and professional experience, time availability, and leadership experience.

With this information, we will consider next steps to create an appropriate distributive organizational structure for the Process Team. To do so, we have consulted with five organizational and culture change professionals from three continents. They have reviewed our steps to date and the four areas of interest, and have agreed to meet again to offer a proposed design for the Process Team that is inclusive, cohesive, and flexible.

We look forward to this continuing conversation and the initiation of the Process Team. As the PT initiates and enters its work, other areas that need to be addressed or a sequence for addressing areas may evolve. The Process Team will be fully empowered to adjust and adapt its work accordingly, and/or to invite others into the process, as needed. The Process Team will also be in communication with the Interim Board about its scope, tasks, and progress.

Thank you to all those who have applied to the Process Team and for everyone's support and participation in the unfolding and maturation of this landmark group.

Sincerely,

The Transition Task Force

Ani Pema Chödrön, Acharya

Arawana Hayashi, Acharya

Charlene Leung, Acharya

Suzann Duquette, Acharya

Katrin Stelzel, Treasury Council Europe, Member

Andrew Sacamano, Kasung Shastri

Sharon Owyang, Regional Director

Basia Solarz (facilitator)

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 - [Letters](#)
- - [Announcement](#)
 - [Process Team](#)
- [Transition Task Force \(TTF\) Meeting #7 Official Minutes](#)
- [Process Team Oath](#)

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[Announcements](#)

15

[Letters](#)

7

[Meeting Minutes](#)

7

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-

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-

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-

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