All About Students, Inc.

All About Students, Inc. was founded in 1997 by Betty Flatstone. Betty saw that children in her neighborhood were getting into trouble after school because the parent(s)/adult(s) the children lived with worked or were otherwise engaged and the children came home to an empty house. She decided to create a program to give these children a place to go and things to do.

At first, she opened her home and worked by herself. Then she enlisted friends. The number of children involved in Betty's program grew and it became clear to her that she needed a bigger space, money, and better organization. She sought the advice of friends and then a lawyer. She incorporated and filed an application with the IRS for the organization to be recognized as a charity. Friends served on the Board. She served as Chair of the Board and as the Executive Director. She filed grant applications, hired employees, and rented larger space. People who came to All About Students, Inc. as Board Members, Staff, and Volunteers came haphazardly, without any plan or intentionality on Betty's part to identify needs of the organization and seek specific kinds of people to fill those needs.

Board meetings were largely disorganized, with no "Board packet" or agenda distributed prior to meetings. Betty ran the board meetings and controlled matters brought before the Board. There was no planning of any kind discussed or done at any level for this organization. The Board had no independent will apart from the Executive Director.

Over time, she saw that the children she served had other needs. In response, Betty started a tutoring program. Then she started a nutrition program and provided meals and food for the children to take home. She began a clothes closet for her program participants. Over time Betty saw that the families of these children had other needs and developed programs to address those. She enlisted anyone who was willing to help to serve as a volunteer. Volunteers were not screened to determine their qualifications to serve, were given no training, and were not given written guidelines.

All About Students, Inc. opened a drug and alcohol treatment clinic, which included counseling, pharmaceutical treatments, and other medical and psychological services. The clinic provided services to program participants and members of their immediate families. Seeing that the need in the neighborhood for these services was great, the clinic expanded services over time to include anyone who came to the clinic, including folks covered by private and employer-provided insurance. The clinic generated a great positive cash flow and cash surplus.

The clinic and other All About Students, Inc. programs have several paid staff, and also had several volunteers. A volunteer in the tutoring program, however, has made it clear that she feels people with addictions are "weak" and "sinful," and she despises them. She has been making derogatory, and sometime inflammatory, comments about the Clinic and its patients. She is a disruptive force in the entire organization. Betty has done nothing to address this growing problem.

Most recently the clinic has become Betty's primary focus, and many of All About Students, Inc.'s original programs lost attention and funding as Betty's focus shifted. The Board has become increasingly divided, but Betty's will continues to prevail. She began to envision a string of drug and alcohol treatment clinics throughout the state and even across state lines. Board members have resigned; some volunteers in the original programs have become angry and withdrawn from serving; some private donors have begun to withdraw support.

A movement has now begun in the Board to remove Betty as both a Board member and as Executive Director. Arguments break out over who should succeed Betty, and what direction the organization should take. Emotions and tensions run high, and the continued existence of the organization is in jeopardy. Members of the anti-Betty faction on the Board have called you to meet with them and help them sort out what to do.