

Statement on Shared Governance

To be presented to Campus Senates for further discussion on January 15, 2015

Shared Governance Principles

[Clarification: This portion of the document addresses the whole shared governance environment of the entire college, not just Senate's role within that environment.]

I. Authority

1. The administration possesses the authority to make decisions regarding college policies and procedures. Administrators are then held accountable for those decisions.
 - a. According to the administration's "Governance, Administration, and Communication Guiding Principles" document, the Board of Trustees delegates authority with accountability to the Chancellor, who then delegates authority with accountability over specific areas to individual members of Chancellor's Cabinet.
 - b. For example, the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs has the authority to make academic decisions and is held accountable for those decisions by the Chancellor.
2. Administrators are advised in their decisions by individuals and groups in the institution with relevant expertise and experience.
3. Groups containing individuals with expertise in certain areas should be given weightier or even primary responsibility for contributing to the decisions made concerning those areas. When an recommending body has primary responsibility for contributing to the decisions of an area, the recommendations of that body should be rejected only in "rare instances and for compelling reasons which should be stated in detail" (AAUP).

II. Participation

[Clarification: parts II and III of the Shared Governance Principles are "should be" statements that present overall principles. Specific examples of failures to abide by these principles are not included, nor are specific examples of where these principles have been upheld.]

1. A shared governance model that includes early involvement in the decision-making process by a diverse base of voices and perspectives not only improves the quality of those decisions but also creates an atmosphere of inclusion and respect that can only help to smooth the reception of those decisions.
2. All aspects of college governance benefit from early and broad engagement in the process, from defining the institution's mission and plans to developing individual policies and procedures.
3. The variety and complexity of the tasks performed by institutions of higher education produce an inescapable interdependence among governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students (AAUP).
4. Important areas of action involve at one time or another the initiating capacity and decision-making participation of all the institutional components (AAUP).
5. Shared governance should involve two complementary and sometimes overlapping concepts: giving various groups of people a share in key decision-making processes, often through elected representation; and allowing certain groups to exercise primary responsibility for specific areas of decision making (*Chronicle* article).
6. True shared governance attempts to balance maximum participation in decision making with clear accountability (*Chronicle* article).
7. The shared governance environment should be one of inclusion and respect in order to generate a high level of morale within the institution.

III. Communication

1. The key to genuine shared governance is broad and unending communication. When various groups of people are kept in the loop and understand what developments are occurring within the university, and when they are invited to participate as true partners, the institution prospers (*Chronicle* article).
2. The most important aspect of shared governance is developing systems of open communication where faculty members, staff, board members, and administrators work to align and implement strategic priorities (*Trusteeship* article).
3. Communication needs redundancy, incorporating multiple vehicles (*Communication guiding principle*).
4. Because “community” is our middle name, effective communication in the shared governance environment helps to build the college’s internal community.
5. Any member of the college should have a public forum at which to express approval, propose innovations and changes, and raise concerns without fear of retribution or retaliation.

Academic Senate Practices that Achieve the Shared Governance Principles

1. The Academic Senate should be the recommending body with primary responsibility in all areas of the Student Experience, which includes but is not limited to curriculum, academic standards, assessment, academic technology, academic planning, athletics, student services, student life, and other academic matters.
2. The Academic Senate should participate in academic policy, procedure, and planning conversations as early in the process as possible as opposed to being asked for its feedback after a policy, procedure, or plan has been created.
3. The academic recommendations of Senate should carry great weight and be rejected only in rare instances and for compelling reasons which should be communicated in detail.
4. Academic Senate should maintain college and campus level meetings in order to facilitate multidisciplinary and multi-work group conversations and work that enhance student learning.
5. There should be open attendance at all Senate meetings, including committee meetings. If a member of the college community wants to attend and speak at a Senate meeting, he or she should be allowed to do so.
6. The Academic Senate Council should be comprised of freely elected voting representatives of all college workgroups and students, who should then have the unrestricted ability to attend all Senate functions.
7. Frequent, consistent, constructive, and redundant two-way conversation on academic matters should occur between administration and Academic Senate.
8. The Academic Senate should have the freedom to initiate conversations and deliberations about academic matters as well as consider suggestions from the administration.

Documents

- Higher Learning Commission, “Criterion 5, Core Component 5B”; <https://www.ncahlc.org/Criteria-Eligibility-and-Candidacy/criteria-and-core-components.html> .
- American Association of University Professors, “Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities”; <http://www.aup.org/report/1966-statement-government-colleges-and-universities>.
- Infomart, “Governance, Administration, and Communication Guiding Principles”; <https://infomart.oaklandcc.edu/CBT/Reports/Governance/GPGACommunication.pdf>.

- Gary A. Olsen, "What Exactly is 'Shared Governance'?", *Chronicle of Higher Education*, July 23, 2009; <http://chronicle.com/article/Exactly-What-Is-Shared/47065/>.
- Steven C. Bahls, "How to Make Shared Governance Work: Some Best Practices," *Trusteeship* 2.22, March/April 2014; <http://agb.org/trusteeship/2014/3/how-make-shared-governance-work-some-best-practices>.