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AAUP Committee Commends AGB Statement on Governance

Last month, the Board of Directors of the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB) issued a statement on shared governance. The statement delineates four principles “to help guide boards and those who work with them to achieve and support healthy and high-functioning shared governance”:

1. Boards should commit to ensuring a broad understanding of shared governance and the value it offers an institution or system.
2. For shared governance to work, it must be based on a culture of meaningful engagement.
3. Shared governance requires a consistent commitment by institutional and board leaders.
4. Institutional policies that define shared governance should be reviewed periodically to ensure their currency and applicability.

The statement asserts that shared governance is not only “essential,” adding “substantial value to institutional progress and innovation,” but its effective implementation is “more important than ever.” Emphasizing the role of faculty, administrators, and board members “in achieving a commonly supported mission,” the AGB’s statement highlights the Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities, a document that the AAUP jointly formulated with the AGB and the American Council on Education more than fifty years ago. It notes that “specific reference” to the Statement on Government “in the institution’s governing documents is an important foundation” for the institutional commitment to shared governance.

The AAUP’s Committee on College and University Governance applauds the AGB for recognizing “the value added to institutions, their decision making, and their culture when shared governance is broadly understood, affirmed, and nurtured.”

The Committee on College and University Governance is therefore pleased to commend to the AAUP’s members the AGB Board of Directors’ October 2017 statement on shared governance. Members may wish to bring the statement to the attention of their governing boards and administrations.