



Developing Shared Governance

Increasing the Faculty's Role in Academic Decision Making

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AAUP Mission

To advance academic freedom and shared governance; to define fundamental professional values and standards for higher education; to promote the economic security of faculty, academic professionals, graduate students, post-doctoral fellows, and all those engaged in teaching and research in higher education; to help the higher education community organize to make our goals a reality; and to ensure higher education's contribution to the common good.

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1915 *Declaration of Principles*:

“A university is a great and indispensable organ of the higher life of a civilized community, in the work of which the trustees hold an essential and highly honorable place, but in which the faculties hold an independent place, with quite equal responsibilities – and in relation to purely scientific and educational questions, the primary responsibility.”

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The AAUP's *Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities*

Lays out the principles of governance that are the focus of this webinar. Available at <http://www.aaup.org/report/statement-government-colleges-and-universities>.

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Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities

Contains *principles* that can “lead to the correction of existing weaknesses and assist in the establishment of sound structures and procedures.”

Intended to “foster constructive joint thought and action”

Not intended

- “as a blueprint for governance”
- as a manual to regulate controversy

Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities

- Recognized as authoritative and informs most academic discourse on governance
- **Remains the Association's central policy document relating to academic governance.**
- Has been supplemented over the years by a series of derivative policy statements.

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Recommendations

Shared responsibility among the different components of institutional government

Specific areas of primary responsibility for governing boards, administrations, and faculties

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Why “Shared” or “Joint” Governance ?

“[t]he variety and complexity of the tasks performed by institutions of higher education produce an inescapable interdependence among governing board, administration, faculty, students, and others. The relationship calls for **adequate communication** among these components, and **full opportunity for appropriate joint planning and effort.**”

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Joint planning and effort means all components get to participate:

“important areas of action involve at one time or another the initiating capacity and decision-making participation of all the institutional components...”

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Appropriate joint planning and effort requires participation *depending on the degree of responsibility:*

“differences in the weight of each voice, from one point to the next, should be determined by reference to the responsibility of each component for the particular matter at hand”

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Three Components of Shared Governance

- Governing Board
- Administration
- Faculty

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The Role of the Governing Board

- Ensures that the institution stays true to its mission
- Plays a major role in ensuring that the institution has the financial resources in needs to operate successfully
- Possesses final decision-making authority
- Entrusts the conduct of administration to the administrative officers

The Governing Board Should

- Entrust the conduct of teaching and research to the faculty
- “undertake appropriate self-limitation.”

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The Role of the President

- The chief executive officer of the institution
- Ensures that the operation of the institution conforms to the policies set forth by the governing board and to sound academic practice
- Provides institutional leadership
- Makes sure there is effective communication between components of the institution
- Represents the institution to its many publics

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The Role of the Faculty

- Essentially, the faculty has responsibility (voice and decision-making authority) for matters in proportion to the degree of their expert knowledge. Therefore...

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The Role of the Faculty

- “The faculty has **primary responsibility** for such fundamental areas as curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction, research, faculty status, and those aspects of student life which relate to the educational process.”

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“Faculty status and related matters are **primarily a faculty responsibility**; this area includes appointments, reappointments, decisions not to reappoint, promotions, the granting of tenure, and dismissal.”

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What Does “Primary Responsibility” Mean?

“On these matters the power of review or final decision lodged in the governing board or delegated by it to the president should **be exercised adversely only in exceptional circumstances, and for reasons communicated to the faculty**. It is desirable that the faculty should, following such communication, have opportunity for further consideration and further transmittal of its views to the president or board.”

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What Does “Primary Responsibility” Mean?

- “In areas of faculty primacy, boards and presidents should concur with faculty judgment **except in rare instances** and for **compelling reasons** which should be **stated in detail.**”

The Faculty

- Has oversight over admissions
- Sets requirements for degrees
- Determines when degree requirements have been met

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Why Should the Faculty Voice Be Authoritative in the Academic Area?

- Faculty are distinctly qualified to exercise decision-making authority in their areas of expertise
- The faculty's "judgment is central to general educational policy"
- "Scholars in a particular field or activity have the chief competence for judging the work of their colleagues"
- "We get the best results in education and research if we leave their management to people who know something about them"

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Areas Where the Faculty Doesn't Have Primary Responsibility

Faculty should still participate in decision-making in areas where they do not have primary responsibility.

These areas include:

- Long range planning
- Hiring and evaluation of administrators
- Physical plant
- Budget

Carrying out Faculty Responsibilities

- “Agencies for faculty participation in the government of the college or university should be established at each level where faculty responsibility is present.”
- “An agency should exist for the presentation of the views of the whole faculty.”
- “Faculty representatives should be selected by the faculty according to procedures determined by the faculty.”

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Communication

Structures for communication among the faculty, administration, and governing board should exist and “be clearly understood and observed.” These could include:

- Circulation of memoranda and reports
- Joint and *ad hoc* committees
- Membership of faculty on administrative bodies
- Membership of faculty on governing boards

Faculty-Board Communication

“our American colleges are constructed upon the model of the hour-glass. All influences, ideas, suggestions, which are to pass from one end of the instrument to the other, must go through a contracted waist or middle, which is the presidential office.”

Arthur Lovejoy, 1914

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Faculty Communication with Governing Board

- Every standing committee of the governing board, including the executive committee, should include a faculty representative.
- New faculty representatives to the governing board should participate in orientation for new trustees.
- Direct communication between the faculty and the governing board should occur through a liaison or conference committee consisting only of faculty members and trustees and meeting regularly to discuss topics of mutual interest.

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Conference Committee

“The essentials are that the faculty conference committee should be elected; that joint meetings should have an official and not merely a personal status; that all new measures under consideration by the governing board should be made known to the committee and discussed by its members before adoption; that no legislation of faculties should be vetoed without thorough discussion of the joint committee. In all important matters, the committee should report matters to the faculty by which it is elected, and receive instructions from it.”

– John Dewey, 1915

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Faculty on Governing Boards

Inherent tension: faculty representative vs. representative of the whole institution.

- Recent survey: faculty representative (41.7%), institution (10.2%), both (22%).
- Faculty members serving as board members always retain their academic freedom as faculty members, including the freedom of intramural utterances, in spite of this inherent conflict.

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Faculty Governance and Academic Freedom

- Faculty participation in governance is closely linked to academic freedom.
- Maintaining academic freedom requires faculty participation in governance.
- Faculty participation in governance is protected by academic freedom: intramural speech.
- The best protection of academic freedom, and thus of governance, is tenure.

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Misconceptions about Governance

Shared Governance is NOT the idea that a lot of conversation ought to take place within and among various campus groups – board, administration, faculty, staff, students, etc. (i.e., the “stakeholders”) – before the people in power make the final decision.

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A Very Common Misconception

Q. Doesn't shared governance mean that all important decisions are put to the entire faculty for a vote?

A. ABSOLUTELY NOT. The weight given to any group depends on the expertise that that group brings to the issue.

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Essence of the Classic Conception of Governance

1. All voices are *not* equal in institutional governance.
2. The faculty exercises “primary responsibility” in areas of expert knowledge.
3. Administration/board normally concur with faculty recommendations regarding areas where faculty have primary responsibility/ That is, the administration/board concur “except in rare instances and for compelling reasons which should be stated in detail.”

In other words

- In academic matters, a faculty decision should normally be a final decision.
- Administration/board should maintain a hands-off policy with regard to any academic matter: curriculum, academic policies, appointment, reappointment, non-reappointment, tenure, promotion

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Thank You!

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