A Call for Shared Governance as Shared Responsibility

Policy RP 1.210 Regents’ Policy on Faculty Involvement in Academic Decision-Making and Academic Policy Development specifies the roles of faculty, administration and BOR as follows:

1. It is the policy of the university to maintain and strengthen organized and systematic involvement by faculty in academic decision-making and policy development.

Section 3b. The duly authorized organization specified by each charter shall have the responsibility to speak for the faculty on academic policy matters such as:

1. Determining the initiation, review, and evaluation of proposed, probationary, or authorized research, instructional, and academic programs;

2. Budget planning and implementation;

3. Student-faculty relations;

4. Evaluation of faculty and campus academic administrators;

5. Establishing a canon of professional ethics and an effective means of professional maintenance of those ethics, including faculty self-discipline; and

6. Other subjects referred to it or them by the chancellor, or by request of the appropriate faculty organization.

c. As stated previously by the board, the faculty has primary responsibility for such fundamental academic areas as curriculum content, subject matter, and methods of instruction and research. On these matters the power of review and concurrence or final decision lodged in the board or delegated to administration officers should be exercised adversely only in exceptional circumstances and for reasons communicated to the faculty.

d. In cases of academic policy proposals that may be initiated by the board or recommended by the president, the president shall decide the manner by which the advice and full input of duly constituted faculty organizations are obtained. Prior to final board action, such advice, along with the president’s
recommendations, will be considered.

e. The role of the faculty as set forth herein shall not be delegated to any other entity by the faculty organization established pursuant to this policy.

f. Each action of the faculty under these provisions shall be consistent with such policy and directives as the board may prescribe. If there is any conflict, the chancellor shall notify the faculty of the conflict and initiate consultation to resolve the problem.

4. The authority for implementing this policy is vested in the president of the university or his/her designee. Each campus is encouraged to develop and submit for approval a system of faculty involvement in academic decision-making and policy development in accordance with this policy.

However, the declines in shared governance has been attributed to the external influences, standardization, litigation, and centralization. Societal and legislative expectations have been altered, focusing more on accountability, quality, and efficiency. In spite of these changes and because of the complexity of institutional issues, well-considered decisions should be based on a high degree of input and thought, usually achieved through participation of multiple constituents. Institutions may jump to poor conclusions since decisions do not benefit from a thorough examination of the issues or multiple perspectives.

In fact, the 2010 Association of Governing Boards study found that only 23 percent of board members and faculty members alike understood each other's role "well" or "very well." It was suggested that there is a need for more than mutual understanding, such as having one or two faculty members on the Board of Trustees... "having the right faculty member on a receptive board could make a big difference." (see Governance Decision-making in Colleges and Universities, website http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/2014/Governance-Decision-making-in-Colleges-Universities.html)

Some best practices on how to Make Shared Governance Work can be found on the website of the Association of Governing Boards (AGB) of Universities and Colleges.
The trends pressuring many colleges and universities are numerous, and they demand unprecedented cooperation and collaboration among boards, administrators, and presidents. They include heightened competition among institutions; drumbeat of calls for stronger student outcomes which requires building consensus among the board, administration, and faculty; and affordability and accessibility issues that require all within the institution to better focus on doing their part to create the best value for an increasingly diverse set of students.

The Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges has called for “integral leadership” from leaders of colleges and universities. Recently, in a publication called *Top 10 Strategic Issues for Boards, 2013–2014*, AGB provided this compelling definition of integral leadership:

“To accomplish these goals, many governing boards have moved to a model of integral leadership—collaborative but decisive leadership that can energize the vital partnership between boards and presidents. Integral leadership links the president, faculty, and board in a well-functioning partnership purposefully devoted to a well-defined, broadly affirmed institutional vision.”

The bolded phrases in this definition are areas enhanced and strengthened through strong systems of sharing governance. Effective shared governance increases collaboration, creates useful links between constituencies, and builds needed partnerships.

But it can do so much more. When shared governance is viewed as more than a set of boundaries and rules of engagement, it can create a system where the integral leaders move beyond the fragmentation of traditional governance. They move to shared responsibility for identifying and pursuing an aligned set of sustainable strategic directions. And though it may take time to develop these priorities, once they’re identified, each constituency can be more decisive in implementing tactics to advance them.

There are five best practices that cut across various types of institutions, whether public or private, unionized or non-unionized, four-year colleges or community colleges, traditional or specialized. Although these types of institutions are different in many ways, including how boards and faculties are structured, they still have much in common. Each board has similar fiduciary and supervisory duties, and each faculty has substantial responsibility for the curriculum. And every institution sometimes experiences a degree of tension between faculty members and board members.
The five practices below, when deliberately followed, create the alignment in which administrators, board members, and faculty members become integral leaders.

1. Actively engage board members, administrators, and faculty leaders in a serious discussion of what shared governance is (and isn’t).

For institutions that enjoy effective shared governance, faculty leaders and board leaders should seek agreement on each of these five fundamental propositions:

- Shared governance is a central value of integral leadership that requires continued hard work, open communication, trust, and respect.
- The faculty has the central role in setting academic policy, and the board should hold faculty leaders responsible for ensuring academic quality.
- While board members have fiduciary responsibility for many of the business and financial decisions of the college, they should consider the views of the faculty before making important decisions.
- In cases of disagreement between faculty and board members about decisions where both have responsibilities (e.g., tenure and retrenchment), faculty handbooks and other governing documents should clearly state how disagreements are addressed and by whom.
- The most important aspect of shared governance is developing systems of open communication where faculty members, board members, and administrators work to align and implement strategic priorities.

2. Periodically assess the state of shared governance and develop an action plan to improve it.

Shared governance at most institutions is far from perfect, because it is difficult, messy, and imprecise work. The first step to improvement is to develop an accurate assessment of the state of shared governance at the institution. That can be done in different ways. Some institutions may want to develop formal surveys. Others may want more informal discussions through an appointed task force or discussions at board meetings and retreats.

The following questions get to the heart of the “health” of shared governance:

- What does each constituency expect from effective shared governance? What are the benchmarks of good governance? How do these definitions and expectations differ?
- Do faculty members believe that the board and administration are transparent about important college matters? Do board members believe the administration and the faculty are transparent in sharing information about
student learning outcomes, how the outcomes are assessed, and how the curriculum supports student achievement?

- Do the faculty and board believe they receive sufficient information from the administration to participate in making good decisions? Is the information presented in an easily understandable form?
- Do faculty members believe that the structure of faculty governance will facilitate shared governance?
- Does the board believe that its own structure encourages sharing governance with faculty?
- Do faculty members understand how board decisions are made and vice versa?
- Is it clear who makes what decisions, who is to be consulted, and who must approve?
- How well are faculty members informed about how the board works and vice versa?
- Is there shared agreement on the strategic priorities of the college?
- In an open-ended question, what suggestions do those who complete the survey have for improving shared governance?

As a way of drawing these discussions to a conclusion, the president should consider appointing an ad hoc task force or working group to create strategies for improving shared governance by building trust, open communication, and ways to resolve differences amicably.

3. Expressly support strong faculty governance of the academic program.

If a faculty can’t effectively govern itself, it will be too fragmented, or even dysfunctional, to meaningfully and responsibly share in the governance of the institution. A faculty that is able to take strong, unified, and even bold collective action can help move from shared governance to shared responsibility.

Robert Zemsky, the founding director of the Institute for Research on Higher Education, recently put it this way: “I would start by having faculty relearn the importance of collective actions—to talk less about shared governance, which too often has become a rhetorical sword to wield against an aggrandizing administration, and to talk instead about sharing responsibility for the work to be done together.”

While boards and administrations shouldn’t, and really can’t, establish structures that ensure the faculty functions well, they can take several simple steps to encourage effective faculty governance:
• Boards and presidents should reward strong faculty governance by stating the importance of the faculty making appropriate and timely decisions, and valuing those actions. Board chairs should do that at board and committee meetings when faculty members are in attendance, and presidents should make such acknowledgments at faculty meetings and at general “state of the college” addresses.

• Boards should give legitimacy to faculty leaders by inviting them to the table at crucial junctures in a decision-making process. That may include invitations to board committee meetings, full board meetings, and board retreats.

• Board leaders, the president, and the chief academic officer should meet annually with faculty leaders, aside from normal board meetings and faculty meeting times. Doing so allows for a full and open exchange of ideas.

• Presidents should include faculty leaders in leadership programs, particularly in internal programs that the institution maintains for administrators. Many faculty members have no leadership training and little experience. Supporting faculty leadership development also may have the benefit of grooming the next dean, provost, or even president.

• Board members should avoid circumventing faculty leaders by giving undue attention to those who express individual concerns not widely held by other members of the faculty. When seeking to understand the sense of the faculty, trustees should rely on elected faculty leadership, not that one professor who seeks to get around the faculty governance process by filing a special brief with the board.

Strong faculty leadership, combined with an effective board and integral presidential leadership, leads to a nimble system of shared governance that addresses challenges and seizes opportunities in a timely way.

4. Maintain a steadfast commitment to three-way transparency and frequent communication.

Effective shared governance depends on three-way transparency. The faculty can’t adequately participate in governance if they do not have the information from which to develop informed positions. Board members can’t appropriately exercise their general oversight of the institution’s academic program if the faculty withholds important facts about the value of the program. And presidents who withhold information from either of the other constituencies as a way of consolidating their power or dividing and conquering are not integral leaders.
• Share board and committee agendas with the faculty and other members of the community before board meetings. Include a summary of actions taken by the board shortly after the meeting.

• Clearly communicate decisions being considered by the board and the president’s executive cabinet, why those decisions are before the board or the president’s cabinet, the timetable for the decision, and the extent of the faculty’s opportunity to participate in the decision-making process. Give faculty leaders an opportunity to discuss their views.

• Conduct periodic faculty forums with key decision makers presenting. The board chair could present on how the board makes decisions. The chief financial officer could present on how budgets are developed.

• Encourage faculty leaders to observe board meetings and committee meetings, where appropriate.

5. Develop deliberate ways to increase social capital between board members and members of the faculty.

• With faculty members’ permission (and not regularly), consider inviting board members to a faculty meeting, followed by a reception. Board members usually are impressed with the quality of deliberation at these meetings, just as faculty members usually are impressed with the quality of deliberation at board meetings.

• If the institution has a required first-year book to read, consider providing the book to the board with an opportunity before or after the board meeting to discuss the book with members of the faculty.

• Seat board members and faculty members in the same area at athletic events, concerts, and other special occasions, and at board meetings and dinners where both are present.

• Publish trustee and faculty leadership biographies. Let faculty members know that board members may be available as guest lecturers in classes that touch on their areas of expertise.

• Invite a board member to participate in part of a study-abroad program or field trip for students.

• Invite board members to celebrations of student and faculty scholarship.

• Hold a reception during each board meeting on campus to give the community the chance to get to know the board, and vice versa.
Following such practices can help institutions build the trust and respect needed to sustain shared governance through good and bad times. In doing so, the institution moves from the traditional approach of shared governance to the more dynamic approach of shared responsibility.

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. That, after all, is our common goal. http://chronicle.com/article/Exactly-What-Is-Shared/47065/

**SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE UH BOR**

To ensure that the aforementioned principals of shared governance are met consistent with UH BOR Policy:

1. Include the President of the Manoa Faculty Senate as a nonvoting member of the UH Board of Regents.

2. Include the relevant committee chairs of the Manoa Faculty Senate as members of the BOR committees and subcommittees.

**APPENDIX**

Governance of higher education institutions traditionally has been a responsibility shared by faculty, administrators, and trustees. The AAUP [Committee on College and University Governance](http://www.aaup.org) composed its first statement on the subject in 1920, emphasizing the importance of faculty involvement in personnel decisions, selection of administrators, preparation of the budget, and determination of educational policies. The [1966 Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities](http://www.aaup.org) calls for shared responsibility among the different components of institutional government and its specification of areas of primary responsibility for governing boards, administrations, and faculties, remains the Association's central policy document relating to academic governance. It has been supplemented over
the years by a series of derivative policy statements, including those on faculty governance and academic freedom, budgetary and salary matters, financial exigency, the selection, evaluation, and retention of administrators, college athletics, governance and collective bargaining, and the faculty status of college and university librarians.  

http://www.aaupfoundation.org/our-issues/shared-governance


ABSTRACT: Today's challenging higher education environment demands a new way of making decisions. Changing business models and methodologies for delivering academic programs present new opportunities (as well as risks) and call for innovative responses. This publication aims to "reboot" dialogues among boards, presidents, and faculties. It creates a roadmap to navigate the complicated new terrain to a better state of shared governance and stakeholder engagement.