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Shared Governance Document Oregon State University Faculty Senate

Definition of Shared Governance

Shared governance is the process by which faculty (as defined in Art. III Sec. 1 of the OSU Faculty Senate Bylaws – <https://senate.oregonstate.edu/bylaws>) and administrators share responsibility and accountability for reaching decisions on policy and procedure. **The purpose of shared governance is to create a university community based on open communication, accountability, and mutual respect, for the sake of best advancing the institution's missions.** Shared governance should permeate the University, reaching into all levels of decision-making.

Oregon State University honors and celebrates a robust tradition of shared governance going back through many decades. A consistent system of faculty review and input provides checks and balances to administrative and academic governance. 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. The OSU Faculty Senate is also a partner in shared governance with university administrators and recognized student governance bodies on broader matters that affect the success of the institution in fulfilling its missions. Such matters include but are not limited to:

- institutional planning;
- policy development;
- academic programs;
- curriculum and academic regulations;
- university, college, and unit budgeting and planning;
- processes of selection, appointment and reappointment of administrators, faculty and staff members;
- promotion and tenure; and
- alumni relations and development.

By longstanding mutual agreement with administrators, and according to its own bylaws, the Oregon State University Faculty Senate has primary responsibility with respect to academic policies, educational standards, curricula and academic regulations. The Faculty Senate recognizes that UAOSU advocates for the interests of represented teaching and research faculty in negotiating the terms and conditions of employment with the University. The Faculty Senate asserts its prerogative to enter into conversations with all parties in the pursuit of advocating for faculty welfare, but the Faculty Senate does not speak on behalf of the University or UAOSU.

Shared governance mandates that administrators seek faculty input, weigh that input carefully, and report back to the faculty on the reasons for arriving at the final decisions. For faculty, shared governance requires careful consideration of the issue, deciding on the process by which faculty input will be made, deciding on the content and form of the input, communicating input through the channels made available, and attending to the communication from administrators regarding the

final decision. The immediate goal of shared governance is to reach agreement among administration, students, and the Faculty Senate on matters vital to the institution and its internal and external stakeholders, or, where disagreements remain, to assure those on the dissenting side that their views were heard and fully considered. All participants in shared governance must be free to address matters of legitimate concern. There must be an inclusive framework within which these concerns will be addressed and resolved.

Basic Principles of Shared Governance at Oregon State University

1. Administrators and faculty share responsibility and accountability in all steps of decision-making on policy and procedure.
2. Shared governance requires broad and active participation from both faculty and administrators.
3. Shared governance requires a “full-cycle” approach in soliciting, formulating and making decisions on policy and procedure. For administrators, a full-cycle approach requires soliciting faculty input, weighing that input, arriving at decisions, and reporting back to the faculty on the rationale for those decisions. For faculty (in matters where faculty do not make the final decision), a full-cycle approach requires decision on process, form, and content of faculty input, and then requires effective communication between administrators and faculty. In matters where faculty have primary responsibility, a full-cycle approach requires regular and effective communication to relevant administrators and students concerning the actions of the Senate and its committees.
4. Good principles of shared governance shall inform decision-making at all levels: the *institutional*, *college*, and *unit* levels. Therefore, it is essential that faculty have the freedom to express their informed assessments without fear of reprisal.
5. The faculty’s voice shall be authoritative across the entire range of decision-making that bears, whether directly or indirectly, on its responsibilities.
6. All shared governance partners should be mindful of the tenets and directions laid out in the current university strategic plan.

Practices and Procedures for Decision-making at OSU

A. Institutional Planning

In all cases where this is feasible or practicable, the committee/task force recommendations shall be presented to the Faculty Senate for discussion, input, and endorsement prior to final decisions.

B. Faculty Senate Governance

The principle of “full-cycle” governance will guide administrators’ interactions with the faculty in general and the Faculty Senate in particular. Administrators shall solicit faculty input, weigh that input, arrive at decisions, and report back to the faculty on the rationale for those decisions.

- i. Reports to the Faculty Senate, including those by the Faculty Senate committees, will be substantive (i.e., comprising specific actions and/or recommendations). Senators and their guests should be afforded time and opportunity to discuss these reports and, when appropriate, vote on action items arising from them.
- ii. The Senate will act as an official voice for faculty feedback to the President/Provost/Deans after discussion of items on the Faculty Senate Agenda. Mechanisms will be developed to provide more meaningful input such that “the sense of the Senate” is obtained and shared with the administration.

Increased participation of academic and professional faculty in the Faculty Senate and its committees is desired. Mechanisms for increasing participation include increasing the importance and value of faculty service as recognized in P&T policies, periodic reviews, merit-based salary increases, and role of administrators in recognizing such service by faculty.

- i. The University must value participation in the workings of the Faculty Senate. Position descriptions at the dean and department head levels should include a statement related to the importance of fostering faculty participation in Faculty Senate and university committees.
- ii. Due to the importance and value of service in the Faculty Senate and on university committees, administrators will review and enforce the requirements of such service in the current promotion and tenure policies, and will recognize and reward university level service on the Faculty Senate and its committees.
- iii. Annually, the Faculty Senate should work with Institutional Research to produce a summary of the composition of the Faculty Senate and its committees by apportionment unit, faculty status, and rank, to be posted on the Faculty Senate website.

The Faculty Senate Executive Committee monitors the question of whether the current structure of the Faculty Senate serves adequately and equally well the interests of both academic (teaching, research, extension, and clinical) and professional faculty. If necessary or desirable, the Senate Executive Committee may appoint a task force and/or ad hoc committee to review the current structure.

C. University, College, and Unit Spending Priorities

Committees or task forces formed by the president and provost to help guide budget allocation and planning ideally shall have at least 20% of its membership appointed or vetted by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee.

The president and provost will bring to the Faculty Senate, for discussion and input, budget priorities for the University prior to implementation.

Each college and unit will have a transparent budget allocation process developed through consultation by the dean/department chair or head with the faculty.

D. Faculty Compensation and Adjustments

The Faculty Senate is a shared governance partner with administration in the determination of compensation. For those employees represented by a CBA, the President and/or the Provost will inform the Faculty Senate of any changes to compensation or benefits agreed upon in an executed CBA. Each college and unit shall have a transparent process for salary adjustments developed through consultation by the dean/department chair or head with the faculty.

E. Administrative Appointments

There shall be a broad commitment by both the administration and Faculty Senate to follow the Standing Rules of the Administrative Appointments Committee.

All units and colleges will have a written policy, agreed upon by faculty and administrators, that defines the process by which faculty can provide input on the qualification of

candidates and the performance of the current administrator, without concern for negative repercussions for themselves.¹

Search processes include the identification of priorities for the administrative role, the development of the position description, the selection of search committee members, and the recruitment and evaluation of candidates. The majority of faculty on search committees for administrative posts should be from the academic unit(s) the position serves.

Faculty input into decisions about the appointment and reappointment of academic administrators should be heard and valued. Faculty representatives shall be included on all search committees for administrative appointments, unless agreed upon by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee. In units in which faculty do not vote on candidates for administrative posts, search committees should make an unranked list of the potential candidates specifying each individual's strengths and weaknesses.

Dated: _____

June 3, 2020

Edward J. Ray

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¹ The protection of the academic freedom of faculty members in addressing issues of institutional governance is a prerequisite for the practice of governance unhampered by fear of retribution; see AAUP 1994 at <https://www.aaup.org/report/relationship-faculty-governance-academic-freedom>