

Date: May 16, 2003

To: Unit heads, Deans, Vice Presidents, Chairs of College Councils and University Councils, and Faculty Senators

From: Shared Governance Review Committee

Subject: Implementing Shared Governance at the University of Arizona

The university community values shared governance, believing that the collective intelligence enables the university to make better decisions, and that reaching consensus about decisions enhances unity, which creates a stronger institution and helps it achieve its goals.

This document was prepared to facilitate implementation of shared governance in the university and in all colleges and appropriate units. Faculty, administrators, appointed personnel, staff, and students are all involved in various ways in shared governance. The focus is on university and college level efforts, yet some of the observations also apply to other university units.

In 1992 the State of Arizona passed a faculty governance law. The University of Arizona began its formal shared governance program in 1997, although there is a long history of many of the practices here. The University Shared Governance Review Committee in 2002-2003 reviewed UA's approach by surveying college administrators and college advisory councils and by reviewing studies and policies developed elsewhere. As external and internal pressures are exerted on the University, the form and most effective practices that shared governance takes change over time.

This report summarizes our conclusions for best practices to improve our shared governance efforts and provides some implementation guidelines for the 1997 Shared Governance Memorandum of Understanding and the 1998 Plan for Extending Shared Governance. Copies of these documents can be found on the Faculty Senate web site (<http://fp.arizona.edu/senate>) and are included in the attached references.

The attached document offers general guidelines for the wider implementation of shared governance at all levels of the university. After hearing concerns and ideas from you, we further hope to provide next Fall, as additional document that would include examples of how shared governance might operate in a variety of circumstances.

Implementing Shared Governance at the University of Arizona

Prepared by Shared Governance Review Committee

Introduction

Shared governance reflects a general commitment on the part of faculty, staff, academic professionals, students, and the administration to work together to strengthen and enhance the university. Shared governance reflects mutual respect and trust in the university community for contributions by all members. Building such trust and respect allows all other activities to proceed more smoothly. It capitalizes on our collective intelligence and strengthens morale.

The focus of shared governance is on university and college levels efforts, but some observations also apply to other university units. The purpose of this document on implementation is for clarification and illustration of the particulars of the 1997 University of Arizona “Shared Governance Memorandum of Understanding” (SGMOU) and related documents.

Definition and Spirit of Shared Governance

Shared governance can be thought of as a sharing of responsibility by faculty, administration, staff, appointed personnel and students, for making decisions about institutional missions, policies and budget priorities. *Shared governance does not extend to management decisions (e.g., carrying out policy that stays clearly within the guidelines of that policy).* Under shared governance as a collegial decision-making process, each party endeavors to think in terms of the good of the institution as a whole and to work to reach agreement with the other parties before making decisions. Shared governance strives to attain mutual agreement between the administration and all appropriate representatives in making decisions in those areas to which shared governance applies. Until mutual agreement occurs, under shared governance, the present course of action continues unless the responsible administrator or his/her designee concludes that without new action the vital interests of the university or college would be placed in jeopardy.

Wherever shared governance calls for mutual participation and agreement in the development of policy decisions by faculty and administration, it requires shared confidence between faculty members and administrators. This confidence extends to short- and long-range financial priorities for the university or unit, the creation and elimination of programs and units, academic and academic personnel policy, and as understanding that faculty representatives and administrators have the support of the faculty.

In selected areas, faculty have special university responsibilities (e.g., academic personnel policies, curriculum and degree decisions, etc.). Representation of the faculty at all such levels of university governance will be carried out by members of the faculty who have been elected directly by their faculty peers or selected by a committee which has been elected by the faculty at the university, college, or unit level. Usually the recommending body will contain at least a majority of faculty. Staff, appointed personnel, and student representatives shall be chosen by the agreed-on procedures of each group.

Best Practices for Shared Governance at the University of Arizona

These "best practices" described below are intended as guidance for the university and college-level units to implement and bring about shared governance in all appropriate areas. They are selected from

experiences on our campus as well as from frequently mentioned activities on other campuses. To be most useful, the best practices should apply to every level of administrative organization: unit, division, department, college, and upper administration. The overall intent is to create a culture that embraces shared governance throughout the university and to create opportunities for shared governance in all units at all levels. At the University of Arizona, the common terms for a college-wide organization dealing with shared governance are: council, advisory council, advisory committee, or forum with dean or college as a modifier. These councils are 8-16 members; most are all faculty but some include administrators, academic professionals, staff, and students. Some meet regularly and some infrequently. All are advisory to the head of the administrative unit involved.

In general, as difficult as it can often be, all leaders and members of university units should actually strive for an atmosphere where ideas are shared and debated to ensure that all decisions arise from the best collective wisdom. Accordingly, we urge the following:

1. *Create an Atmosphere that Fosters Trust*

Effective shared governance depends on accountability, a trust among the parties. This trust then provides the foundation for effective activities and efficient use of participant's time and knowledge. Examples of the building blocks of trust include: fully sharing appropriate information in a timely manner and providing adequate time for effective dialog, providing relevant background for the subject at hand to allow for fully informed choices, and informal gatherings in addition to the formal group efforts.

2. *Develop a Collaborative Attitude and Participatory Decision Process*

The parties involved in shared governance are interdependent and must be involved in joint actions when appropriate. Examples include: joint agenda development, allowing appropriate time for consultation, providing an honest airing of relevant issues, and adequate discussion opportunities but without unnecessary delay.

3. *Communicate Extensively*

Effective communication is essential for successful shared governance. Provide what is needed fully and early in the process and communicate final decisions to all parties. The regular communication channels should be widely known.

4. *Encourage Informed Participation and Training*

The university and unit environment should respect appropriate participation by faculty, academic professionals and staff, one that allows for methods for new faculty and others to learn about opportunities for involvement. Examples of these methods include: workshops, retreats, informal meetings with administrators and other faculty. Appropriate rewards for service need to be identified and activities need to be seen as important from the perspectives of involved faculty, administrators, staff and appointed personnel.

5. *Focus on Effective and Efficient Processes and Subjects*

Those involved in shared governance need to be sufficiently informed to participate effectively. They need to understand and agree on the roles of faculty and administrators. It should be clear which group has the primary responsibilities for specific topics (i.e., faculty or administration). Shared governance does not mean everything has to be done by joint efforts or by delegating decision making to the faculty. Suitable resources and support must be made available for shared governance to be effective and efficient.

6. *Allow for Flexibility in Shared Governance Structures*

While university, college, and departments shall have some form of shared governance, the forms will vary, as the circumstances of each unit vary, but be consistent with the aims of shared governance. Each organizational unit should have written rules/procedures regarding the purpose and operation for the shared governance process. The methods of participation will vary among faculty, academic professionals, staff and students (e.g., election or appointment, policy making or implementation, focused topics or strategic issues). The methods of selection will vary (e.g., representation by subunit or major unit, election, ex-officio, or appointment).

Major Subject Areas of Shared Governance

There are three major areas of shared governance at the University of Arizona. Additional examples can be found in the SGMOU.

A. Budget and Strategic Planning

The university budget will be formulated by the administration with participation of faculty, staff, appointed personnel, and students, and reviewed by those representatives. The university Strategic Planning and Budget Advisory Committee (SPBAC) will serve as the university-level forum on budgeting and planning. It will consult with and report to the Faculty Senate on a regular basis. Colleges and units would have a similar mechanism to address budget and planning issues in a manner relevant to the college or unit. The 2002 document *The Tracking of Proposals to the Faculty Senate* or SPBAC clarifies which types of proposals go through each route (e.g., general policies, planning and budgeting issues, and prioritization criteria for programs and budgeting).

B. Academic and Academic Personnel Policies

Academic (including curricular matters) and academic personnel policies rest primarily with the faculty. An initial proposal to change academic or academic personnel policy may come from any source, but the formal consideration and development of such policy changes shall always be undertaken through shared governance arrangements at the university, college, or unit level. These recommendations then will go through the normal procedure of the Faculty Senate, which is the ultimate representative of the faculty in these areas of academic and academic personnel policy. Until the point that mutual agreement is reached between the administration and the faculty in these matters, the status quo prevails, including allowing for the issuance of interim policies to address issues on a timely basis.

C. Selection and Review of Academic Administrators and Vice Presidents

The faculty, administration and representatives of other appropriate groups will play a collaborative role in the recruitment, selection, five-year review, and retention decisions as a result of such review of heads of departments or academic unit directors, deans, vice provosts, and vice presidents.

The Goal: Making Decisions with Collective Intelligence

The goal of shared governance, again, is to make better decisions by using the collective intelligence and good will of the university community. The SGMOU elaborates details of how the faculty, administration, and other groups address certain issues. The primary vehicles at the university level are through the Faculty Senate and its standing committees and also the Strategic Planning and Budget Advisory Committee. Other major vehicles include the Undergraduate and Graduate Councils.

The SGMOU indicates that shared governance shall also be implemented within the colleges and units, as appropriate to the circumstances of each college and unit, but consistent with the aims and objectives of shared governance. Further, the 1998 Plan for Extending Shared Governance includes a statement that shared governance efforts are to be reported in the unit annual report and shared governance activities are to be a part of the review process for administrators.

References: All shared governance documents cited in this report are available at the University of Arizona Faculty Senate web page <http://facultygovernance.arizona.edu>