GUIDELINES FOR SHARED GOVERNANCE

Memorandum of Understanding Entered into by the Faculty and the Administration of The University of Arizona

I. OVERVIEW

The University of Arizona is committed to shared governance, granting its faculty, as individuals and through their elected or appointed representatives, meaningful participation in activities such as:

- campus, college, and unit-level decision making, including the development of academic programs and curricula, policies, strategic plans, and overarching budget allocation principles;
- the recruitment, selection, and review of heads of departments, academic unit directors, deans, vice provosts, and vice presidents;
- the recruitment, selection, and review of continuing status academic professionals and of faculty, both on and off the tenure track, and
- the development of the criteria, principles, and processes for faculty review and compensation.

The University of Arizona values the collective intelligence and breadth of perspective of all our faculty and include them in shared governance not only because it is mandated by Arizona Statute and ABOR Policy, but also because it closely aligns with our values of diversity and inclusion, and strengthens our institution through improved decision-making. In addition to formal shared governance structures, such as the Faculty Senate and the Strategic Planning and Budget Advisory Committee (SPBAC), the University routinely provides opportunities at all levels for faculty, students, and non-faculty employees to provide input on different issues through mechanisms such as committees, surveys, and town hall-like discussions.

II. SHARED GOVERNANCE

This Memorandum of Understanding, agreed to by faculty and administration, outlines principles of shared governance at The University of Arizona and is entered into freely by a faculty and an administration committed to a common vision of the mission of the University. This memorandum supersedes those previously signed by Presidents and the faculty dating back to 1997.

In an era of significant change in higher education, the success of the University and the positive morale of the faculty and administration are dependent upon the collective intelligence of the university community in planning and decision-making. To succeed, shared governance requires shared confidence between faculty members and administrators. This requires transparency, the extensive sharing of information, and the goodwill that faculty representatives and administrators achieve through ongoing shared governance dialogue.

Depending on the circumstances and issue at hand, consultation by the administration can take many forms and involve many different faculty members. Subject to this Memorandum and University policy, the administration may choose to weigh the counsel of various faculty groups or members differently. The administration may also consult with students, staff, and their respective governance bodies. However, the primary bodies with which the administration must routinely consult are the Faculty Senate and the Strategic Planning and Budget Advisory Committee (SPBAC). Both of these bodies have majority faculty representation and are chaired by a member of the general faculty.
A central goal of shared governance is mutual participation in policy development and decisions. Decisions on changes in policies under the jurisdiction of shared governance, or the development of and decision on new policies, should normally be reached only after there is general acceptance of the policy proposal in either its original or modified form by both the administrator(s) and the appropriate shared governance body for the issue in question. The President or designee(s), however, can make and announce a final decision without “general acceptance” provided they believe that every reasonable effort has been made to reach a common position through consultation and that such decision is necessary and in the best interests of the University. In this circumstance, the President or designee(s) shall explain the position taken to the faculty.

The following guidelines do not constitute a legal contract but are intended to inform the process through which the faculty and administration work together to address certain issues. They do not supersede Arizona Board of Regents policies, including the Conditions of Service and ABOR 6-910 and 6-201(J); the applicable provisions of the Constitution of the Faculty of the University of Arizona [link]; the Revised Statutes of the State of Arizona [link]; and other documents as described in Section II.

III. STRUCTURE AND PROCESS FOR SHARED GOVERNANCE

A. Budget and Strategic Planning

The Strategic Planning and Budget Advisory Committee (SPBAC), comprised of faculty, administrators, and other sectors of the University community as detailed in the Faculty Bylaws [link], shall be the university-level forum for shared governance on strategic planning and the projected budget.

B. Academic and Academic Personnel Policies

Subject to the authority and responsibilities of the Board of Regents and the President, academic and curricular policies rest primarily with the faculty, as represented by the Faculty Senate. The creation, reorganization, merger, or elimination of programs and academic units; academic personnel, research, or student affairs policy; guidelines on faculty compensation are all included within the jurisdiction of shared governance. An initial proposal to change these policies may come from any source, but the formal consideration and development of such policy changes shall always be undertaken through shared governance processes.

C. Selection of Faculty, and Selection and Review of Academic Administrators and Academic Vice Presidents

The faculty and administration will play a collaborative role in the recruitment and selection of faculty and of continuing-status academic professionals, as well as in the recruitment, selection, and review of heads of departments, academic unit directors, deans, vice provosts, and vice presidents. It is expected that these personnel decisions will take place only after proper shared governance dialogue with appropriate representatives of the faculty, who are expected to serve this role largely through membership on search committees. On these committees, faculty representatives, chosen as per Section E below, shall comprise half or more of each search committee and, for academic administrators and vice presidents, of each review committee.
The remainder are appointed by the designated administrator. Extraordinary reviews shall be conducted by procedures outlined in the University Handbook for Appointed Personnel [link]. It is the responsibility of all committees to ensure open faculty input, including the input of the appropriate elected faculty body.

D. Position Searches

The authority to hire University employees has generally been delegated by the Regents to the University presidents. Tenured and tenure-eligible faculty, continuing and continuing-eligible academic professionals, and academic administrative appointments will be made following open, competitive searches with selection based on merit and due consideration of diversity and inclusion. This statement is not intended to prohibit “laureate” or otherwise uniquely qualified appointments made on the bases of approved non-competitive searches.

E. Faculty Representation

Faculty members, especially those who are members of the General Faculty, have the right and responsibility to participate in shared governance. In work assignments and performance reviews, their participation shall be recognized as service and given the weight necessary to ensure its success.

Representation of the faculty at all levels of University shared governance will be the responsibility of members of the faculty who have been chosen by direct election by the faculty or a faculty elected body; appointed by an elected faculty officer; or appointed by an administrator from a list of several nominated by an elected faculty officer or committee. Administrators who are also faculty may also be included in this representation, assuming they are selected through the above process.

If a substantial minority (more than one third) of any shared governance committee disagrees with any action taken by that committee, their position should be included as part of the committee’s report or recommendations.

F. Process of Consultation

1. The overarching shared governance groups are the Faculty Senate and the Strategic Planning and Budget Advisory Committee. The President and Provost or designee should normally also interact with other individuals and organizations, including University Staff, the officers of the Associated Students of the University of Arizona, and the officers of the Graduate and Professional Student Council. When any such group or the administration wants to suggest a policy or a change in an existing policy, there should be initial consultations involving leaders from all the representative groups with a stake in the matter, as detailed in UHAP [Procedures for Creating and Revising University Policies https://policy.arizona.edu/process-creating-and-revising-university-policy]

2. The overarching shared governance groups and the administration are responsible for ensuring that any proposed policy, wherever it originates, shall be developed pursuant to this MOU, UHAP, and ABOR policy.
3. When differences arise between the administration and the appropriate overarching shared governance body concerning any policy recommendation in any area covered by these guidelines, the administration and that shared governance group will work to resolve those differences so as to attain an outcome that is generally accepted. If general acceptance cannot be reached among the parties involved, and the President or designee(s) believes that every reasonable effort has been made to be responsive and reach a common position, the President or designee(s) may proceed, provided they determine that action is necessary in the best interests of the University. In this circumstance, the President or designee(s) shall explain the position taken to the faculty through the Faculty Senate.

4. Shared governance principles do not extend to management decisions (the carrying out and implementation of policy according to the objectives and guidelines of that policy).

5. If there is a dispute over whether the adoption of a policy or its implementation has followed the terms of this document, a consultation will take place between the administration and the appropriate shared governance bodies subject to the terms of F.2 above and, if needed, Section G, below.

6. If the President or designee(s) believes that an academic, educational, or faculty personnel policy change must take place urgently, to the point of abbreviating normal shared governance procedures, the President or designee(s) will notify the Chair of the Faculty. To the degree possible, they will develop an expedited shared governance process.

G. Shared Governance Review Committee

The Shared Governance Review Committee is an ad hoc committee that may be convened to reviews allegations of any breaches of this agreement by any party to it and may make recommendations toward the more effective working of shared governance. It includes the Chair of the Faculty, the Chair of the Strategic Planning and Budget Advisory Committee, the Presiding Officer of the Senate, the two Senators elected by the Senate to the Senate Executive Committee, the Provost, and two other members of the administration chosen by the President.

H. Continuing Structure and Process

These principles of shared governance shall be fostered within the colleges and units, in a form appropriate to the circumstances of each college and unit, but consistent with aims and objectives of shared governance.