

REPORT OF THE UofL AAUP

Dec. 6, 2017

Updates:

1. AAUP held its fall meeting on Nov., 17. The agenda included discussions of: the presidential search; the Board of Trustees' tenure policy review and AAUP's #tenurematters initiative; the results of our chapter's shared governance survey; and the recently published statement on shared governance by the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB). The winners of the book raffle at the fall meeting were Andrea Olinger and Tom Stewart.
2. In spring of 2017, AAUP conducted a survey of faculty experiences in shared governance on campus. The AAUP Committee on Governance worked hard to prepare the survey and to analyze the data. The Committee is particularly grateful to Dr. Dave Roelfs, Associate Professor of Sociology, for his invaluable assistance in data analysis. A copy of the full report is attached.

Notable findings include:

- There was widespread agreement, across all types of faculty, and the different units, that shared governance is important.
 - There were consistent differences between tenure/tenure-track and term/part-time faculty in their perceptions of communication between department chairs and faculty. This suggests a lack of integration of term/part-time faculty at the departmental level of governance.
 - A clear difference existed between the percent that agree/strongly-agree that department chairs communicated with faculty and the percent that agree/strongly agree that faculty senators and the dean communicated with faculty. This suggests a potential starting point for improving faculty governance is to address lines of communication between faculty senators and faculty.
3. President of UofL AAUP, Dr. Susan Jarosi, and former AAUP President, Avery Kolers, gave an invited presentation at WKU during which they discussed governance issues at UofL.
 4. Members of AAUP, along with other concerned faculty members, once again protested the planned closed Presidential search during the Nov. 20, Board of Trustees meeting.

Current Activities

1. The National AAUP Committee on College and University Governances has asked local chapters to share with their Boards, administration, and other governing bodies the statement on shared governance recently published by the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB). The statement of shared governance can be found at:
https://www.agb.org/sites/default/files/u27335/2017_statement_sharedgovernance.pdf?link_id=1

[&can_id=ca09fda5e33e4d04d537ef975587b917&source=email-aaup-chapter-leader-update&email_referrer=email_267577&email_subject=aaup-chapter-leader-update.](#)

A copy of the Statement on Shared Governance is also attached.

Summary Report from the AAUP Faculty Governance Survey

The data for this report were gathered using an online survey. This survey was administered with the assistance of Acting Provost, Dale Billingsley, and Vice Provost for Institutional Research, Effectiveness and Analytics, Bob Goldstein. The survey was distributed via email to all university faculty in March-April 2017 by the Office of Communications and Marketing.

Takeaways:

- There was widespread agreement, across all types of faculty, and the different units, that shared governance is important (see Tables 2 and 3). It was especially viewed as important by those who indicated they had served on a college/unit committee (see Table 3).
- While no standard exists for judging whether a percentage of disagreement/agreement with a particular question about governance was “good”, a clear difference existed between the percent that agree/strongly-agree that department chairs communicated with faculty and the percent that agree/strongly agree that faculty senators and the dean communicated with faculty (See Table 3). This suggests a potential starting point for improving faculty governance is to address lines of communication between faculty senators and faculty.
- There were consistent differences between tenure/tenure-track and term/part-time faculty in their perceptions of communication between department chairs and faculty (with tenure/tenure-track faculty consistently agreeing more that chairs communicated with faculty; see Table 3). This suggests a lack of integration of term/part-time faculty at the departmental level of governance.
- There were some differences about governance between those who served on a college/unit committee and those who had not. Those who had served on a committee were in greater agreement that chairs communicated with deans, that deans communicated with faculty, and that faculty senators communicated with faculty (see Table 3).
- There were differences about governance between those with administrative roles and those without. Persons with administrative roles were in more agreement that department chairs communicated with the dean and that the dean communicated with faculty (see Table 3).
- Faculty were in greater agreement that department chairs communicated with faculty for respondents located on the Belknap campus and for respondents with positions in the non-professional-school units (see Table 4). However, faculty in non-professional-school units were in less agreement that deans communicated with faculty. These differences were largely driven by differences between respondents from Arts & Sciences (Belknap, non-professional-school unit) and Medicine (downtown, professional school).
- Faculty from smaller units were less in agreement that chairs communicated with faculty, but were more in agreement that their deans and faculty senators communicated with faculty (see Table 4).

- There were substantial variations in the percentages of respondents, by unit, that indicated they served on a committee because they were required to vs. because they wanted to contribute to the college/unit (see Table 5). Additional regression analyses (see Table 6) showed that all units other than A&S were substantially more likely to indicate they had been required to serve on a college/unit committee. However, there were no significant differences by unit in terms of the likelihood of indicating they had wanted to serve. Status at UofL (tenure/tenure-track vs. term/part-time, having an administrative appointment, and opinion on the vitality of shared governance) did not affect the likelihood of indicating service was required or the likelihood of indicating service was wanted.
- Slightly over half of respondents who served on committees agreed/strongly agreed that their committee's work was acknowledged in a timely manner by college/unit administration (see Table 7). However, less than half felt their committee's work influenced their college's/unit's administration and slightly less than one third felt their committee's work resulted in changes to policy (see Table 7). However, once a person's understanding of their committee's role was taken into account, the results showed that lower levels of agreement about a committee's impact on policy largely were driven by respondents who understood the committee's role to be advisory. When the focus is reduced to those respondents that understood their committee's role to be to work jointly with college/unit administration, slightly over half agreed/strongly agreed that their committee's work resulted in changes to policy (see Table 7).

Table 1. Distribution of Survey Respondents (n = 477 respondents out of 1,992 faculty)

	<i>Survey Respondents</i>	<i>Total UofL Faculty</i>
<i>Status at UofL</i>		
<i>Tenured and tenure-track faculty</i>	70.6%	55.9%
Full-time tenured faculty	61.0%	
Full-time tenure-track faculty	6.7%	
Emeritus/emerita faculty	2.9%	
<i>Term and part-time faculty</i>	29.4%	44.1%
Full-time term faculty	23.5%	
Part-time term faculty	3.1%	
Part-time non-term faculty	2.7%	
<i>Has Administrative Appointment of 51% or more</i>		
Yes	12.2%	
No	87.8%	
<i>Years of Service at UofL</i>		
1 to 5	5.5%	
6 to 10	24.3%	
11 to 15	21.6%	
16 to 20	14.0%	
21 to 25	12.2%	
26 or more	22.4%	
<i>Served as Faculty Senator 2012-Present</i>		
Yes	6.1%	
No	77.4%	
Did not answer	16.6%	
<i>College or Academic Unit</i>		
Arts & Sciences	30.0%	20.9%
School of Business	5.2%	4.2%
School of Dentistry	6.3%	6.0%
Education & Human Development	8.4%	5.7%
Kent School of Social Work	0.6%	1.7%
School of Law	3.1%	1.8%
Libraries	3.1%	2.0%
School of Medicine	30.4%	45.3%
School of Music	1.0%	2.0%
School of Nursing	3.6%	2.7%
Public Health & Information Sciences	1.7%	2.3%
Speed School of Engineering	6.5%	5.6%

<i>Served on a College/Unit Committee 2012-Present</i>		
Yes	50.9%	
No	47.6%	
Did not answer	1.5%	

Table 2. General Faculty Opinions on Shared Governance and Communication with Faculty^{1,2}

	<i>Median</i>	<i>Inter-quartile Range</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>
Faculty shared governance is a vital aspect of running a university	7.0	5.0 to 7.0	5.99	1.53
My department chair or unit head always reports to faculty at regularly scheduled meetings what was discussed at Chair's meetings	6.0	4.0 to 7.0	5.05	1.98
My department chair or unit head always takes into consideration the opinions of faculty on issues affecting us	6.0	4.0 to 7.0	5.17	1.92
My department chair or unit head routinely communicates faculty concerns to the Dean	5.0	4.0 to 7.0	5.06	1.81
The Dean of my college or unit routinely communicates to faculty what happened at meetings of Deans	4.0	2.0 to 6.0	4.05	1.97
The Dean of my college or unit routinely communicates to faculty what was discussed at meetings with the Provost and President of the University	4.0	2.0 to 6.0	3.96	1.93
My Faculty Senators routinely communicate to faculty what happened at Faculty Senate meetings	4.0	3.0 to 6.0	4.37	1.88

¹ All questions summarized in this table were answered using a 7-level scale where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 7 = Strongly Agree

² 398 of 477 respondents answered each of the above seven questions

Table 3. Faculty Opinions on Shared Governance and Communication with Faculty¹ by UofL Status, Service on a Committee, and Administrative Role

	All respondents (n = 398)	UofL Status		Committee Service		Administrative Role	
		Tenured / tenure-track (n = 278)	Term and part-time (n = 120)	Served on a Committee (n = 186)	Did not serve on a committee (n = 212)	Administrators (n = 44)	Non-administrators (n = 354)
<i>Faculty shared governance is a vital aspect of running a university</i>							
Strong Disagree or Moderately Disagree	5.3%	5.8%	4.2%	5.9%	4.7%	6.8%	5.1%
Slightly Disagree, Neutral, or Slightly Agree	20.4%	18.3%	25.0%	12.9%	26.9%	22.7%	20.1%
Moderately Agree or Strongly Agree	74.4%	75.9%	70.8%	81.2%	68.4%	70.5%	74.9%
<i>My department chair or unit head always reports to faculty at regularly scheduled meetings what was discussed at Chair's meetings</i>							
Strong Disagree or Moderately Disagree	14.3%	11.2%	21.7%	11.8%	16.5%	9.1%	15.0%
Slightly Disagree, Neutral, or Slightly Agree	32.7%	32.0%	34.2%	32.8%	32.5%	27.3%	33.3%
Moderately Agree or Strongly Agree	53.0%	56.8%	44.2%	55.4%	50.9%	63.6%	51.7%
<i>My department chair or unit head always takes into consideration the opinions of faculty on issues affecting us</i>							
Strong Disagree or Moderately Disagree	14.1%	10.4%	22.5%	11.8%	16.0%	4.5%	15.3%
Slightly Disagree, Neutral, or Slightly Agree	31.2%	30.9%	31.7%	30.1%	32.1%	29.5%	31.4%
Moderately Agree or Strongly Agree	54.8%	58.6%	45.8%	58.1%	51.9%	65.9%	53.4%
<i>My department chair or unit head routinely communicates faculty concerns to the Dean</i>							
Strong Disagree or Moderately Disagree	11.3%	9.4%	15.8%	9.1%	13.2%	4.5%	12.1%
Slightly Disagree, Neutral, or Slightly Agree	39.2%	37.8%	42.5%	34.4%	43.4%	29.5%	40.4%
Moderately Agree or Strongly Agree	49.5%	52.9%	41.7%	56.5%	43.4%	65.9%	47.5%

<i>The Dean of my college or unit routinely communicates to faculty what happened at meetings of Deans</i>							
Strong Disagree or Moderately Disagree	26.6%	27.3%	25.0%	24.2%	28.8%	15.9%	28.0%
Slightly Disagree, Neutral, or Slightly Agree	45.5%	43.9%	49.2%	41.4%	49.1%	27.3%	47.7%
Moderately Agree or Strongly Agree	27.9%	28.8%	25.8%	34.4%	22.2%	56.8%	24.3%
<i>The Dean of my college or unit routinely communicates to faculty what was discussed at meetings with the Provost and President of the University</i>							
Strong Disagree or Moderately Disagree	26.6%	27.0%	25.8%	26.3%	26.9%	15.9%	28.0%
Slightly Disagree, Neutral, or Slightly Agree	47.5%	46.4%	50.0%	43.0%	51.4%	34.1%	49.2%
Moderately Agree or Strongly Agree	25.9%	26.6%	24.2%	30.6%	21.7%	50.0%	22.9%
<i>My Faculty Senators routinely communicate to faculty what happened at Faculty Senate meetings</i>							
Strong Disagree or Moderately Disagree	20.9%	18.7%	25.8%	18.8%	22.6%	15.9%	21.5%
Slightly Disagree, Neutral, or Slightly Agree	47.7%	48.2%	46.7%	39.8%	54.7%	45.5%	48.0%
Moderately Agree or Strongly Agree	31.4%	33.1%	27.5%	41.4%	22.6%	38.6%	30.5%
¹ All questions summarized in this table were answered using a 7-level scale where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 7 = Strongly Agree Bolded numbers represent percentages that are statistically different at the 95% confidence level (two-tailed test)							

Table 4. Faculty Opinions on Shared Governance and Communication with Faculty¹ by Campus, Unit Type, and Unit Size

	All respondents (n = 398)	Campus ²		Unit Type		Unit Size		
		Belknap (n = 220)	Downtown (n = 169)	Professional School ³ (n = 208)	Other Units ⁴ (n = 190)	Large Units		All Small Units
						Arts & Sciences ⁵ (n = 131)	Medicine (n = 128)	All Small Units (n = 139)
<i>Faculty shared governance is a vital aspect of running a university</i>								
Strong Disagree or Moderately Disagree	5.3%	6.8%	3.6%	3.8%	6.8%	6.1%	4.7%	5.0%
Slightly Disagree, Neutral, or Slightly Agree	20.4%	18.6%	23.1%	23.1%	17.4%	18.3%	26.6%	16.5%
Moderately Agree or Strongly Agree	74.4%	74.5%	73.4%	73.1%	75.8%	75.6%	68.8%	78.4%
<i>My department chair or unit head always reports to faculty at regularly scheduled meetings what was discussed at Chair's meetings</i>								
Strong Disagree or Moderately Disagree	14.3%	11.4%	18.9%	18.8%	9.5%	8.4%	19.5%	15.1%
Slightly Disagree, Neutral, or Slightly Agree	32.7%	33.2%	32.0%	32.2%	33.2%	29.8%	27.3%	40.3%
Moderately Agree or Strongly Agree	53.0%	55.5%	49.1%	49.0%	57.4%	61.8%	53.1%	44.6%
<i>My department chair or unit head always takes into consideration the opinions of faculty on issues affecting us</i>								
Strong Disagree or Moderately Disagree	14.1%	10.0%	19.5%	17.8%	10.0%	7.6%	20.3%	14.4%
Slightly Disagree, Neutral, or Slightly Agree	31.2%	30.5%	31.4%	32.7%	29.5%	30.5%	26.6%	36.0%
Moderately Agree or Strongly Agree	54.8%	59.5%	49.1%	49.5%	60.5%	61.8%	53.1%	49.6%
<i>My department chair or unit head routinely communicates faculty concerns to the Dean</i>								
Strong Disagree or Moderately Disagree	11.3%	10.9%	12.4%	11.5%	11.1%	9.2%	14.1%	10.8%
Slightly Disagree, Neutral, or Slightly Agree	39.2%	37.3%	40.2%	39.4%	38.9%	38.9%	38.3%	40.3%
Moderately Agree or Strongly Agree	49.5%	51.8%	47.3%	49.0%	50.0%	51.9%	47.7%	48.9%

<i>The Dean of my college or unit routinely communicates to faculty what happened at meetings of Deans</i>								
Strong Disagree or Moderately Disagree	26.6%	29.1%	23.1%	20.2%	33.7%	35.9%	24.2%	20.1%
Slightly Disagree, Neutral, or Slightly Agree	45.5%	45.9%	45.0%	45.2%	45.8%	47.3%	50.0%	39.6%
Moderately Agree or Strongly Agree	27.9%	25.0%	32.0%	34.6%	20.5%	16.8%	25.8%	40.3%
<i>The Dean of my college or unit routinely communicates to faculty what was discussed at meetings with the Provost and President of the University</i>								
Strong Disagree or Moderately Disagree	26.6%	28.2%	24.9%	21.6%	32.1%	35.1%	28.9%	16.5%
Slightly Disagree, Neutral, or Slightly Agree	47.5%	46.8%	47.3%	46.6%	48.4%	50.4%	42.2%	43.2%
Moderately Agree or Strongly Agree	25.9%	25.0%	27.8%	31.7%	19.5%	14.5%	21.9%	40.3%
<i>My Faculty Senators routinely communicate to faculty what happened at Faculty Senate meetings</i>								
Strong Disagree or Moderately Disagree	20.9%	20.0%	23.1%	19.2%	22.6%	16.8%	26.6%	19.4%
Slightly Disagree, Neutral, or Slightly Agree	47.7%	55.9%	39.1%	38.5%	57.9%	65.6%	42.2%	36.0%
Moderately Agree or Strongly Agree	31.4%	24.1%	37.9%	42.3%	19.5%	17.6%	31.3%	44.6%
<p>¹ All questions summarized in this table were answered using a 7-level scale where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 7 = Strongly Agree</p> <p>² Libraries omitted from this comparison since offices are located on both campuses</p> <p>³ Professional schools included the School of Dentistry, Kent School of Social Work, Brandeis School of Law, School of Medicine, School of Music, School of Nursing, School of Public Health & Information Sciences, and Speed School of Engineering</p> <p>⁴ Other types of units (non-professional schools) included the College of Arts & Sciences, College of Business, College of Education & Human Development, and Libraries</p> <p>⁵ Arts & Sciences was used as the reference unit when examining differences by unit size</p> <p>Bolded numbers represent percentages that are statistically different at the 95% confidence level (two-tailed test)</p>								

Table 5. Reasons Given for Serving on a College/Unit Committee Overall and By Unit ¹

	<i>Academic College or Unit</i>												
	<i>All respondents (n = 243)</i>	<i>Arts & Sciences (n = 52)</i>	<i>Business (n = 12)</i>	<i>Dentistry (n = 21)</i>	<i>Education & Human Development (n = 28)</i>	<i>Kent School of Social Work (n = 3)</i>	<i>Law (n = 15)</i>	<i>Libraries (n = 14)</i>	<i>Medicine (n = 56)</i>	<i>Music (n = 4)</i>	<i>Nursing (n = 17)</i>	<i>Public Health & Information Sciences (n = 3)</i>	<i>Speed School of Engineering (n = 18)</i>
Was required to Serve	17.7%	1.9%	33.3%	28.6%	14.3%	0.0%	46.7%	7.1%	14.3%	50.0%	29.4%	66.7%	16.7%
Needed service allocation for AWP	18.9%	9.6%	16.7%	9.5%	39.3%	33.3%	20.0%	28.6%	12.5%	0.0%	35.3%	33.3%	22.2%
Wanted to contribute to the college/unit	50.2%	57.7%	33.3%	42.9%	42.9%	66.7%	53.3%	35.7%	64.3%	25.0%	41.2%	33.3%	38.9%
Other	17.7%	21.2%	25.0%	14.3%	17.9%	0.0%	13.3%	7.1%	14.3%	25.0%	23.5%	0.0%	27.8%

¹ Percentages do not always add to 100% as respondents were allowed to select multiple reasons for serving on a college/unit committee

Table 6. Results from Binary Logistic Regressions Predicting the Odds of Indicating Service Was Required and Predicting the Odds of Indicating Service Was Wanted		
	<i>Odds that Service Required</i>	<i>Odds that Service Wanted</i>
Constant	0.04	0.32
Status at UofL		
<i>Tenured and tenure-track faculty (Reference group)</i>	1.00	1.00
<i>Term and part-time faculty</i>	1.27	1.05
Has Administrative Appointment of 51% or more		
<i>Yes (Reference group)</i>	1.00	1.00
<i>No</i>	0.97	2.31
College or Academic Unit		
<i>Arts & Sciences (Reference group)</i>	1.00	1.00
<i>School of Medicine</i>	7.76	1.45
<i>Other</i>	18.14	0.56
Level of Agreement that Shared Governance is Vital	0.85	1.54
<i>Bolded numbers represent percentages that are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level (two-tailed test)</i>		

Table 7. Opinions on the value of committee service among faculty that served on a college/unit committee ¹

	All respondents (n = 243)	Understanding of Committee Role		
		Advisory (n = 111)	Works jointly with administration (n = 42)	Determines policy (n = 9)
<i>Overall, the work of the committee made an important contribution</i>				
Strong Disagree or Moderately Disagree	5.3%	6.3%	7.1%	0.0%
Slightly Disagree, Neutral, or Slightly Agree	22.6%	31.5%	19.0%	22.2%
Moderately Agree or Strongly Agree	52.7%	62.2%	73.8%	77.8%
Did not answer	19.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
<i>Overall, the recommendations of the committee were acknowledged in a timely manner</i>				
Strong Disagree or Moderately Disagree	5.8%	4.5%	11.9%	11.1%
Slightly Disagree, Neutral, or Slightly Agree	20.6%	28.8%	21.4%	22.2%
Moderately Agree or Strongly Agree	53.5%	65.8%	64.3%	66.7%
Did not answer	20.2%	0.9%	2.4%	0.0%
<i>Overall, the work of the committee influenced the actions of my college/unit administration</i>				
Strong Disagree or Moderately Disagree	4.5%	2.7%	7.1%	22.2%
Slightly Disagree, Neutral, or Slightly Agree	33.7%	47.7%	31.0%	22.2%
Moderately Agree or Strongly Agree	42.4%	49.5%	61.9%	55.6%
Did not answer	19.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
<i>The recommendations of the committee were full followed</i>				
Strong Disagree or Moderately Disagree	0.0%	3.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Slightly Disagree, Neutral, or Slightly Agree	2.5%	3.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Moderately Agree or Strongly Agree	2.1%	7.2%	2.4%	0.0%
Did not answer	95.5%	92.8%	97.6%	100.00%
<i>On average, the policy recommendations of the committee resulted in changes to policy</i>				
Strong Disagree or Moderately Disagree	8.6%	9.9%	4.8%	11.1%
Slightly Disagree, Neutral, or Slightly Agree	41.6%	60.4%	38.1%	44.4%
Moderately Agree or Strongly Agree	30.5%	29.7%	57.1%	44.4%
Did not answer	19.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
<i>On average, the committee received a full explanations from administration when the</i>				

<i>recommendations of the committee were not going to be implemented</i>				
Strong Disagree or Moderately Disagree	7.4%	7.2%	9.5%	22.2%
Slightly Disagree, Neutral, or Slightly Agree	43.6%	56.8%	50.0%	44.4%
Moderately Agree or Strongly Agree	26.3%	31.5%	38.1%	33.3%
Did not answer	22.6%	4.5%	2.4%	0.0%
<i>What is your understanding of the role this committee plays in decision-making?</i>				
Advisory	45.7%			
Works jointly with administration	17.3%			
Determines policy	3.7%			
Other	14.0%			
Did not answer	19.3%			
¹ All agree/disagree questions summarized in this table were answered using a 7-level scale where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 7 = Strongly Agree				
<i>Bolded numbers represent percentages that are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level (two-tailed test)</i>				

AGB BOARD OF DIRECTORS' STATEMENT ON

SHARED GOVERNANCE

of higher education's most *distinctive values* is its commitment to shared governance. Simply put, shared governance is a fundamental principle of *inclusion* in key areas of *institutional responsibility* and decision making. Governing boards hold ultimate authority for an institution, as defined bylaws and other *foundational documents* as well as state fiduciary principles. There is very little debate on this point. However, through longstanding academic practice, this authority is delegated to—or “shared with”—institutional leaders and faculty. Typically, presidents are charged with institutional *leadership, vision, strategic planning*, and daily management, while faculty are charged with educational design and deli

ABOUT AGB

Since 1921, the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB) has had one mission: to strengthen and protect this country's unique form of institutional governance through its research, services, and advocacy. Serving more than 1,300 member boards, 1,900 institutions, and 40,000 individuals, AGB is the only national organization providing university and college presidents, board chairs, trustees, and board professionals of both public and private institutions and institutionally related foundations with resources that enhance their effectiveness.

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Shared Governance

Introduction

One of higher education's most distinctive values is its commitment to shared governance. Simply put, shared governance is a fundamental principle of inclusion in key areas of institutional responsibility and decision making. Governing boards hold ultimate authority for an institution, as defined in bylaws and other foundational documents as well as state fiduciary principles. There is very little debate on this point. However, through longstanding academic practice, this authority is delegated to—or “shared with”—institutional leaders and faculty. Typically, presidents are charged with institutional leadership, strategic planning, and daily management, while faculty are charged with educational design and delivery. As the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB) said in its *Statement on Board Responsibility for Institutional Governance* (2010), shared governance “has historically resulted in continuous innovation and the concomitant effect that American college curricula and pedagogy define the leading edge of knowledge, its production, and its transmission.” Despite the remarkable value of shared governance, the stakeholders who are fundamental to its impact often lack understanding of, appreciation for, and even commitment to it. Boards, faculty, and presidents—the key players in the relationship that defines shared governance—continue to struggle with its value and its effectiveness.¹

¹ This statement focuses on the long-established participants in shared governance—boards, faculty, and presidents. While this group retains its traditional responsibilities in shared governance, for important decisions many leaders today regularly seek consultation with other stakeholders such as staff, students, part-time faculty, alumni, and others. The majority of governing boards do not include reserved board seats for faculty, staff, and students, but some have voting representatives from one or more of these groups. Others allow representatives to attend board meetings but not to vote. AGB does not advocate the inclusion of faculty, staff, and students on governing boards because of the fiduciary responsibilities involved in governance. However, broad consultation that values insights and wisdom from an array of constituencies is often appropriate and helpful.

In higher education's volatile environment, shared governance is essential. It adds substantial value to institutional progress and innovation. In fact, responsibility and accountability for addressing colleges' and universities' thorniest challenges often rest with multiple parties. Effective shared governance is about more than who is responsible for what. At its best, shared governance is about how key constituents in institutional communities—traditionally faculty, administrators, and board members—engage in achieving a commonly supported mission. For example, these groups customarily participate in strategic planning, institutional budgeting, and discussion of critical issues such as campus climate and student-learning outcomes.

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The practice of shared governance has developed differently according to the circumstances of individual colleges and universities. For instance, a small, religiously affiliated college with mainly full-time faculty will likely have different shared governance traditions from those of a large public university with faculty unions and substantial numbers of part-time faculty. However, despite institutional size or mission, effective shared governance provides the context for meaningful engagement and decision making in virtually every private and public college or university. It strengthens institutions by providing the means of aligning priorities and including key constituents in mission-related decision making.

Even when there is recognition of the importance of shared governance to institutional operations and innovation in principle, it can present considerable challenges in practice. As AGB explained in the 2010 statement, "Many presidents, governing boards, and faculty members believe that institutional governance is so cumbersome that timely and effective decision making is imperiled; factionalism, distrust and miscommunication, and lack of engagement among the parties can impede the decision-making process." Newer board members may be surprised to learn that—despite their fiduciary authority—some responsibilities, especially those related to academic programs, are primarily the province of the faculty.

Many faculty (and even some experienced board members) may be surprised to learn that the board holds significant responsibilities in these same areas, occasionally even overruling faculty recommendations. Even the most senior faculty members may never have met board members or engaged in meaningful conversations with them about the institution's mission, priorities, and challenges. AGB research shows:

- Nearly two-thirds of board members believe shared governance is very important in institutional decision making.
- One-third of presidents believe board members understand the work and responsibilities of faculty.
- Less than one-quarter of presidents believe faculty understand the responsibilities and authority of governing boards.

Presidents and chancellors often find themselves uncomfortably in the middle of misunderstandings about what shared governance means, why it is needed, and how to do it well. As Steven Bahls, president of Augustana College, observed in his book *Shared Governance in Times of Change: A Practical Guide for Universities and Colleges*, "I have found that although the principle is endorsed by most in higher education, only rarely is it successfully and consistently implemented." And, as a participant in an AGB focus group on shared governance stated, "The current practice of shared governance works just fine when there aren't any problems. It breaks down as soon as the institution faces a significant challenge." Such breakdowns can grab headlines, derail progress, and even shorten the terms of institutional leaders. In today's challenging environment, shared governance needs to work, not as an afterthought but rather as a fundamental driver of institutional change and success.

As institutions grapple with the need for innovation in such areas as improving student learning outcomes, strengthening the business model, and meeting the needs of a new student population, time-honored processes for widespread consultation and deliberation are sometimes seen as impediments. A lack of cultural awareness between boards and faculty can complicate and delay decision making. Likewise, demanding voices from both outside the academy and within it—state and federal policymakers, contingent and unionized faculty, students with new social and academic needs, philanthropists, foundations—can complicate and heighten tensions, even while underscoring the importance of stakeholder engagement. In these circumstances, shared governance can become a zero-sum game, with participants focusing primarily on who has the power to decide what, rather than what the institution, its students, and its mission need to advance.

Most campuses rely on the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) 1966 *Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities* to describe the “shared responsibility among the different components of institutional government and the specific areas of primary responsibility for governing boards, administrations, and faculties.”² Now, more than 50 years later—with vastly different circumstances on our campuses in terms of who attends, what they pay, what they expect in return, and how our institutions’ business models function—effective implementation of shared governance is more important than ever.

Governing boards have not typically been involved in either assessing or improving the effectiveness of shared governance at their institutions. If anything, they may have looked to presidents or chancellors and the faculty to ensure that shared governance works, assuming it is more the concern of those groups than of the board. It’s time for that to change. Given the challenges facing colleges and universities, governing boards need to become better educated about the state of shared governance on their campuses, understand its potential value in executing needed institutional change, and help ensure its effectiveness in strengthening the institutions for which they are responsible.

Effective shared governance, focused on open communication, shared responsibility, a commitment to accountability, and alignment of institutional priorities, is broadly seen as advantageous but is less commonly achieved. In its recent report *Shared Governance: Is OK Good Enough?*, AGB describes the results of a survey of board members and presidents on the state of shared governance at their institutions. A larger proportion of both groups said shared governance should help align institutional priorities rather than simply define rules of engagement. To move to this preferred level of performance, the three traditional participants in shared governance need sufficient motivation to change how they work together. For board members, that motivation is rooted in their ultimate fiduciary duty to ensure decisions are made wisely and in the best interest of the institution.

Key strategic decisions typically benefit from input from a wide range of constituents, including the administration and faculty, whose members have professional and personal interests in the institution’s success and fiscal health. The alignment of priorities for all three groups in shared governance can result from an effective, engaging planning process as well as regular opportunities for inclusive conversations about strategic goals and challenges, new markets and academic programs, and other critical topics.

² AGB provided advice to the AAUP in the development of this statement and subsequently commended it to AGB members.

The AGB Board of Directors, consisting predominantly of members of college and university boards, acknowledges the challenges inherent in establishing and maintaining a healthy system of shared governance. But it also recognizes the value added to institutions, their decision making, and their culture when shared governance is broadly understood, affirmed, and nurtured. This *Statement on Shared Governance*, approved by the AGB Board of Directors in August 2017, provides principles to help guide boards and those who work with them to achieve and support healthy and high-functioning shared governance.

Principles

1. Boards should commit to ensuring a broad understanding of shared governance and the value it offers an institution or system.

Shared governance is not easy. Too often it is situated in an environment of competing interests, tension, reduced resources, and even professional pride. For shared governance to work, board members, faculty, and presidents need a solid understanding of what shared governance is and what its history is at the institution. New board members, faculty members, and senior administrators should receive a grounding in the fiduciary responsibility of the board and the manner in which their particular board operates. Each person should also be informed about the nature of faculty work specific to the institution, including governance roles and responsibilities.

The board's governance committee should develop board member orientation that emphasizes the traditions and the policies of shared governance within the institution or across the system.

Governing boards need to understand that their participation in and commitment to shared governance will result in more than specific decisions; they can stimulate institutional progress by ensuring the inclusion of a range of voices and ideas in the formulation of goals, priorities, and strategies.

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Effective shared governance strengthens an institution by serving as a vehicle for necessary change. Strong shared governance does not diminish governing board accountability, but rather informs important decisions. A board's commitment to the value and practice of shared governance bears fruit for the institution in the form of mutual trust in challenging times, support for innovation, and shared commitment to goals for building a stronger future. It facilitates a culture that welcomes input, broadens commitment, and fosters creative ideas.³

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2. For shared governance to work, it must be based on a culture of meaningful engagement.

A system of shared governance that focuses on rights may politicize the process instead of taking advantage of its potential value. A culture of meaningful engagement among board members, administration, and faculty can elevate the outcome—as well as the experience—of shared governance. This kind of culture requires a strong board commitment, which can be expressed in a variety of ways, both formal and symbolic. Boards should consider adding a formal commitment to shared governance within their statements of board member expectations. Additionally, while AGB does not recommend adding faculty seats to the governing board itself, the board should seek ways to benefit from faculty engagement, experience, and expertise by including faculty members in the work of board committees and task forces. A governing board's academic affairs committee should address issues related to shared governance, and it should benefit from engagement with faculty on such critical topics as educational quality, student success, and completion.

Governing boards often choose to invite formal faculty consideration of academic budgets and strategic priorities that might affect faculty responsibilities. In doing so, governing boards should expect good intent, even fiduciary-like performance: faculty input that serves the interests of the institution as a whole, welcomes diverse opinions within the faculty itself, and responds to the need for timely input and decision deadlines that enable action.

³ As part of its project on shared governance, AGB developed case studies of institutions and systems where shared governance has been pursued with marked intentionality. See agb.org/revitalizing-shared-governance-for-the-21st-century.

An investment in a culture of engagement is distinct from investments in other strategic priorities. The most important resources boards, presidents, and faculty can provide to shared governance are time, attention, and commitment. Just as time constraints can sometimes limit board and administration attention to shared governance, faculty often struggle with time commitments, especially where increases in the number of full-time faculty have not kept pace with the growth of the institution, leaving fewer faculty to fulfill the responsibilities of governance. In addition, loyalty to academic discipline and individual scholarship can outweigh faculty commitment to institutional priorities. The result is a strain on shared governance. Boards can be helpful in these situations by taking an interest in the faculty's capacity to engage in governance.

Boards and faculty can also help one another understand issues confronting higher education and how those issues could affect the institution's strategic direction. Accepting and acknowledging the value of such engagement are important elements of building a culture of shared governance.

3. Shared governance requires a consistent commitment by institutional and board leaders.

The president or chancellor, along with the chief academic officer, must play a central role in building, encouraging, and maintaining effective shared governance. A governing board should be intentional in assigning appropriate accountability for shared governance to the president or chancellor. While recognizing the president's essential role in facilitating shared governance, the board should also respect the complexity of that task and partner with the president rather than delegate away that responsibility.

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The board chair has a similarly special role in demonstrating a governing board's commitment to shared governance. Establishing meaningful opportunities to include faculty in substantive discussions with the board on cross-cutting issues is one way the board chair can facilitate engagement. With the president's support, board leaders can also be ambassadors to faculty governing bodies, and a periodic meeting of the chair, board officers, or a group of board members with members of the faculty governance body can be rewarding in multiple ways. In all such engagements, the board chair and president need to be aligned on the purpose of the discussion. While inviting faculty to dinner or other social events can encourage collegiality and respect between the groups, social engagement is not the same as shared governance. Those who conflate the two risk greater disengagement—shared governance is not about sharing space but rather about sharing ideas.

The true test of any system of engagement is how well it works during a period of urgency or even crisis. Fiscal exigency, campus climate incidents, and other current realities might, in the heat of the pressure to act, cause even the most transparent and collaborative leaders to lose sight of the need for inclusion. Leaders must be deliberate and intentional about how best to engage others based on the situation. Even then, there will be times when swift action is required and there is little or no time for consultation and deliberation. Good faith efforts to share information in real time—while acknowledging circumstantial challenges—build trust, a necessary feature of shared governance.

While it is appropriate and necessary for a governing board to keep some discussions confidential, important board decisions should be delivered promptly, with evidence of the board's thoughtfulness. Increasingly, constituencies beyond the full-time faculty and senior administration (such as staff, students, part-time faculty, and alumni) have an understandable expectation of being both informed and consulted on important board decisions.

One special note for governing boards of public institutions and systems: These governing boards bear another responsibility in their commitment to shared governance. This country's higher education system is unique, due in part to the ability of each institution to establish its own mission and academic programs, with accreditor approval. Shared governance is only effective when internal discussion and debate lead to outcomes—about academic programs, budgets, and tenure policies, for example. However, policy leaders in some states are now making decisions about the same matters for public institutions

of higher education. These efforts undermine shared governance and run the risk of diminishing the quality of what is taught and who teaches. They pose a broader threat to institutional autonomy and integrity. Public institution leaders, including board members, should help inform state policymakers about the risks of overreach.

4. Institutional policies that define shared governance should be reviewed periodically to ensure their currency and applicability.

The AGB white paper *Shared Governance: Changing with the Times* states, “Colleges and universities—their boards, presidents, and faculty—need to be attentive to the effectiveness of their governance practices on an ongoing basis. Neither an unexpected emergency nor a brief window of opportunity is the time to discover that an institution’s governance structure and culture of decision making are not up to the task. Reliable shared governance requires continuous, intentional effort.” The board must be confident that the institution’s foundational documents and policies, such as the board’s bylaws, faculty handbook, and the institution’s charter, agree with one another and codify decision-making responsibility in a clear and practical way.

AGB research shows periodic reviews of shared governance policies are not common practice, and contradictory mandates or unclear expectations among key groups risk undermining effective governance. The institution’s legal counsel should monitor the timing of policy reviews and bear responsibility for recommending necessary updates for consistency across all related policies. The goal is to establish clarity of roles and processes in a way that facilitates the engagement of the president or chancellor, board members, and the faculty on mission-related and strategic matters.

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Ultimately, the board is responsible for policy currency and effectiveness. Generally, a governing board's governance committee should work with the president or chancellor and legal counsel on policy currency and needed changes. Pertaining to shared governance, the board's academic affairs committee might collaborate with the governance committee on a policy review process that includes the engagement of the chief academic officer and the faculty governance body. Policies that guide strong shared governance align the expectations of faculty, board, and administration on essential issues and set the stage for strong shared governance.

To further safeguard effective shared governance, the board, president, and faculty should commit to a regular assessment of the process. This assessment provides an opportunity for inclusive conversation about the full range of activities that ensure a common understanding of shared governance and its value at the institution, a culture of engagement, and an ongoing commitment to keeping the process strong.

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Conclusion

The historic debate about what shared governance is and the tension among governing boards, presidents, and faculty will likely continue, especially as resources grow scarce and stakes remain high. Each group must recognize that ensuring the value proposition for higher education will require working together on behalf of students and society. Perhaps the best indicator of how well shared governance is working on any campus is whether it enables, rather than constrains, thoughtful decisions to enhance student success, institutional health, and innovation. Boards, working with key administrators and faculty leaders, hold responsibility for ensuring that the practice of shared governance embodies and advances institutional values.

Questions for Boards to Ask

- How are new board members, faculty, and senior staff oriented to shared governance?
- How does the board learn about faculty work? How does the faculty learn about the board's role and responsibilities?
- How can the board contribute to an institutional culture of appropriate engagement and inclusion in decision making?
- What are the roles of students and staff in shared governance at our institution? Is the board satisfied with their engagement?
- What can the board chair do to demonstrate the board's commitment to shared governance? What does the president do?
- When did the institution last assess the state of its shared governance? What was the result? What has changed based on that assessment?
- How does the board engage with the faculty on matters of consequence?
- Are the priorities of the board, president, and faculty currently aligned on critical mission-related matters? Is there agreement on the strategic priorities of the institution? Which are important topics or questions for collaboration?
- How well would shared governance work at this institution in a crisis?

Appendix

The following passage, selected from the AGB white paper [Shared Governance: Changing with the Times](#), presents insights gained as a result of focus group conversations with more than 200 governing board members, senior administrators, and faculty leaders. AGB is grateful to the Teagle Foundation for supporting that project.

THRESHOLD CONDITIONS FOR HIGH-FUNCTIONING SHARED GOVERNANCE

- A shared commitment on the part of faculty, administration, and board members to the principles of shared governance,⁴ and a current, shared understanding among faculty, board, and president of what shared governance actually is and how it operates/functions/works in their institution.
- A shared and clearly articulated commitment to *trust, collaboration, communication, transparency, inclusiveness, honesty, and integrity*.
- An institutional culture of good will, good intentions, and commitment to common values that is reinforced through the practice of shared governance. Clear policies concerning authority and standard operating protocol are important to develop, but without good will and commitment to shared values, they can't lead to effective decision making on meaningful issues.
- A shared commitment among all parties to focus the practice of shared governance on the institution's strategic goals, aspirations, and challenges.
- Constitutional documents (such as bylaws, faculty handbooks, policy statements) that clearly codify decision-making authority as well as a thorough, nuanced understanding on the part of board members, faculty, and presidents of their own respective roles in shared governance, as well as those of their colleagues.
- A shared appreciation by board members and faculty of the complexity of the president's role in facilitating a constructive relationship between the board and the faculty.

⁴ Specific reference to the AAUP [Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities](#) in the institution's governing documents is an important foundation for this shared commitment.

- A recognition that while students, staff, and contingent faculty often do not have a formal role in shared governance, boards, presidents, and faculty should create regular opportunities to include their voices in the discussion of important issues and major decisions.
- A shared recognition that institutional change is necessary, constant, and inevitable; the dynamically changing external environment and continued institutional relevance demand it. All stakeholders must be open to doing things differently when circumstances require.
- A recognition that the most important decisions are often the most difficult and contentious, but the preservation of relationships is vital to sustained effectiveness in governance.
- A recognition by the president, board chair, and faculty leadership that they have collective responsibility to ensure that the above conditions exist.

One of higher education's most *distinctive values* is its commitment to shared governance. Simply put, shared governance is a fundamental principle of *inclusion* in key areas of *institutional responsibility* and decision making. Governing boards hold ultimate authority for an institution, as defined in bylaws and other *foundational documents* as well as state fiduciary principles. There is very little debate on this point. However, through longstanding academic practice, this authority is delegated to—or “shared with” institutional leaders and faculty. Typically, presidents are charged with institutional *leadership, vision* and *strategic planning*, and daily management, while faculty are charged with educational design and de

AGB BOARD OF DIRECTORS' STATEMENT ON

SHARED GOVERNANCE



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