Joint Task Force on Shared Governance

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Joint Task Force on Shared Governance

Agendas

- 2010
Joint Task Force on Shared Governance

Charge

The fundamental charge of the Joint Task Force is:

To review and recommend policies and actions that will enhance the effectiveness of shared governance at all levels of the University.

Among the items to be considered by the Task Force are:

- A value statement on shared governance that articulates the University’s commitment to shared governance.
- Guiding policies and procedures that demonstrate commitment to shared governance.
- Examples of best practices of shared governance.
- Recommendations on improving shared governance practices at OSU.
- Process to periodically assess and insure the effectiveness of shared governance practice across the University.
Joint Task Force on Shared Governance

Membership

Dan Arp
Lynda Ciuffetti – co-chair
Roger Hammer
Goran Jovanovic
Michael Oriard
Meg Reeves – ex-officio
Sheryl Thorburn
Becky Warner – co-chair

University Honors College
Botany & Plant Pathology
Sociology
Chemical Engineering
College of Liberal Arts
Office of the General Counsel
Public Health
Academic Affairs
Joint Task Force on Shared Governance

Scheduled Meetings

- May 12, 2009 – 1:00-2:30
- January 20, 2010 – 3:00-4:00
- August 19, 2010 – 1:00-2:00
- September 2, 2010 – 10:00-3:00
Joint Task Force on Shared Governance

Minutes

• 2010
Joint Task Force on Shared Governance

Resources

**Administrators Must Dispel the Derogatory Myths About Professors**
*By Steven C. Bahls - president of Augustana College, in Rock Island, Ill.*

**Augustana College - Shared Governance Task Force Action Items**

**NWCCU Accreditation Standards**
The primary standard related to shared governance is Standard Two (Resources and Capacity); 2.A. Governance (Policies and Procedures) (pages 1-5). However, there are other parts that call for articulating the involvement of various people on campus on educational resources, institutional planning, etc.

**Shared Governance at Other Institutions**

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

- **Office of Faculty Governance**
- **Faculty Governance: Origins, Development and Current Structure (PPT)**
- **Faculty Code of University Government**

Miscellaneous


James T. Minor, Assistant Professor of higher education, Department of Educational Administration, College of Education, Michigan State University

*James T. Minor's Research:*

- **Four challenges for faculty senates** *Thought & Action*. 2004. (Summer):125-140.

*Working documents*
Final Report

- Final Report
- Adoption Agreement Between Provost Randhawa and the Faculty Senate
Joint Task Force on Shared Governance

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Joint Task Force on Shared Governance

2010 Agendas

- February 18, 2010
Joint Task Force on Shared Governance

2010 Minutes

- February 03, 2010
- January 20, 2010
Administrators Must Dispel the Derogatory Myths About Professors

As president of Augustana College, I live in two worlds: that of higher education, and that of the "outside world" beyond campus borders. For decades I have listened to alumni, parents, local residents, and even complete strangers express their opinions about academe—often while reciting certain derogatory myths regarding college professors. On occasion, I even hear my presidential colleagues doing the same. Popular complaints include:

- Managing professors is like herding cats.
- When it comes to making tough decisions, faculty members want merely to be asked to be included in the process, but have no desire to actually participate.
- There’s really only one way to work with the faculty: Find the path of least resistance and proceed accordingly.
- Faculty members are professional contrarians, and the academy rewards them for it by giving them tenure.
- When you finally give in to the contrarians, they can't take "yes" for an answer.
Such myths are as dangerous as they are demeaning, as caustic as they are comical, and can be as incendiary as they are inaccurate. The worst of them may be the notion that faculty members are irrepressible contrarians: Not only is that view disparaging, but it ignores the time-tested benefits of shared faculty governance, an essential institution at today's colleges and universities that is badly misunderstood by the outside world. Especially in our current environment of limited resources and cutbacks, responsibility for governing an institution of higher education should be shared. Professors must be empowered to participate in and shape the outcomes of policies, procedures, and long-term decisions, for a very pragmatic reason: Faculty members often are the ones who have to carry them out.

While it's true that the potential exists for faculty-governance decision making to become ponderous and inefficient, that is true of any process. And in today's world, we need less seat-of-the-pants decision making and more careful and participatory deliberation. Myths about faculty members, if believed by presidents and deans, can chill our willingness to ask professors to help with governance. Yes, it may be easier to govern without them, but the college will suffer for it.

When institutions fail, it is often because they have strayed from their values. Think of the financial institutions that have failed recently because they strayed from their traditional role of sound stewardship to one of reckless speculation. What if AIG had had a few more contrarians in the governance process? Although academe may indeed have a few people who have a hard time taking "yes" for answer, that is far better than too many.

It is our tenured faculty members, most of whom have made life-long commitments to our institutions, who are the first to remind us of those institutions' values. It is those values that sustain our commitment to quality in good times and bad. Because shared governance in the academy has historically led to thoughtful decisions consistent with long-held institutional values, our colleges and universities are among the oldest institutions in the nation. We must continue to affirm the decision making of those who execute our decisions—our faculties—and dismiss the outside world's notion that participatory governance is nothing more than herding cats.

The people who become board members for private institutions and regents for public institutions—notable alumni, successful businesspeople, religious leaders, heads of nonprofit organizations, members of the local community—usually come from the world outside academe. Often they are surprised to learn how colleges are governed and are inclined to believe the negative things they've heard about faculty members.

As a college president and former faculty member, it is my role to facilitate understanding of the crucial role that professors play on a campus. Because of the corrosive and pervasive nature of those myths, I have begun working with new trustees to help clarify the helpful and important role that faculty governance can play.
Last spring the academic dean and I discussed with our board the necessary role of faculty governance on the campus. That discussion was precipitated by a blog developed by an academic department to discuss (and sometimes vent about) my decision not to recommend a candidate for tenure in a case where I received a closely divided, but positive, recommendation from the faculty. A number of faculty members who posted on the blog believed the president and board should have no real role in tenure decisions, other than to rubber-stamp the faculty recommendation. And a few board members were dismayed at the tone of the faculty reaction to my decision.

The board then expressed a desire to work with the faculty and administration to review our approach to governance. We developed a task force on shared governance to achieve better communication, improve cooperation, and foster mutual respect among the faculty, the administration, and the board. The task force's membership included five board members, six faculty members, our academic dean, and me.

The process brought significant reflection on the need for and benefit of shared governance on our campus. Honest discussions were held within the task force and the board as a whole, touching on such topics as faculty participation in campus decision making, the administration's involvement in tenure decisions, and the faculty's role in the attainment of the college's aggressive strategic plan.

And the economic downturn has made our focus on faculty governance all the more important, as the traditional domains of their responsibility include faculty salary policies, involvement in academic budgeting, and strategic planning. For that reason faculty members have a place at the table when difficult topics arise. We aren't bringing the opinions of professional contrarians into the fold; we are bringing our best minds and strongest resources to bear in our decision making during the most challenging time for higher education since World War II.

At Augustana, we find ourselves in a strong position of hiring faculty members in an environment where the best and the brightest are looking for new academic homes. The strength of our governance model allows us the opportunity to hire faculty members who are committed to sharing in the governance of this institution. I can honestly say to our new faculty members that they will not only put their individual marks on their departments, but that they can collectively guide this college to new heights during these times of unprecedented societal changes.

Presidents and board chairs must work aggressively with board members to better communicate just how important faculty members are to their work in governance. We must motivate and engage our faculty members—not simply manage them—in our strategic-planning processes. Trustees can affirm the value of professors through their actions in the boardroom and through the policies they establish on their campuses.

Next, we need to challenge, at every opportunity, derogatory myths about faculty members and provide a more vigorous defense of the value of shared
governance to the outside world. Our defense of shared governance should extend past board meetings to students, donors, and policy makers. As we encourage our students to weigh in on the complex campus issues facing us, their participation will be enhanced when they understand that their opinions are but one vital part of shared governance.

When donors seek to bypass or usurp shared governance by attaching too many strings to their gifts—a practice that denies the faculty its important role in developing the details of academic programs—we must try to educate them about the importance of the faculty's contributions.

Finally, we must encourage legislators to resist the temptation to micromanage academic programs in exchange for state or federal support. Such overinvolvement jeopardizes the traditional independence of higher education, of which shared governance is a necessary component.

One final note of caution: Those presidents who, in order to strengthen their own positions, exploit faculty myths to foster the apprehension that often exists between boards and faculties are engaging in an easy, but ineffective, divide-and-conquer management style. I have observed that such a strategy doesn't work for long—eventually both the board and faculty will see through it.

Confronting the long-perpetuated legends that so wrongly denigrate and demean our faculties is imperative. Dispelling them is the least we can do as leaders in higher education.

*Steven C. Bahls is president of Augustana College, in Rock Island, Ill.*
Augustana College  
Shared Governance Task Force Action Items

The Shared Governance Task Force recommends the following Board action:

1. **Recommendation to Endorse the Principles of the AAUP Statement on Government of Colleges & Universities**
2. **Recommendations Concerning Augustana Governance Documents**
   a. **Dismissal of Tenured Faculty**  
      *Issue & SGTF Recommendation:* Language in the Constitution and Faculty Handbook on dismissal of tenured faculty conflicts with AAUP guidelines. This language should be changed to reflect AAUP procedures. The SGTF recommends that the Faculty Welfare Committee (FWC) propose suggested changes to the Faculty Handbook language and the Trusteeship Committee of the Board of Trustees review the issue and propose any necessary changes for the Constitution.
   b. **Sexual Harassment Policy**  
      *Issue & SGTF Recommendation:* After review and consideration by Augustana legal counsel and the administration, the SGTF recommends further consultation between the faculty and administration on the policy regarding sexual harassment allegations against faculty members. This is based on the fact that legal liability stemming from sexual harassment claims is an Augustana College liability, not a faculty liability.
   c. **Tenure Decision Appeal Process**  
      *Issue & SGTF Recommendation:* The current appeals procedure does not adequately reflect the current role of the Dean in the tenure process. The SGTF expresses no opinion on the substance of the matter and refers this matter to the FWC.
   d. **Role of Dean in Tenure Decisions**  
      *Issue & SGTF Recommendation:* The handbook language does not reflect the current role of the Dean in the process. The SGTF expresses no opinion on the substance of the matter and refers this matter to the FWC.
   e. **Role of Administrative Officers as Chair on Certain Committees**  
      *Issue & SGTF Recommendation:* The AAUP recommends that faculty chair committees that are responsible primarily to the faculty (e.g. Faculty Welfare, Educational Policies, General Education). Currently, administrators chair such committees. The SGTF expresses no opinion on the substance of the matter and refers this matter to the Nominations and Rules Committee.
   f. **Search Procedures for Open Faculty Positions**  
      *Issue & SGTF Recommendation:* Ambiguity exists as to what the correct handbook language actually is (there are two different versions of the handbook posted on the college web site), and this needs to be clarified. Second, search procedures (including the more detailed language in the draft Chair's handbook) should be reviewed in light of issues raised by AAUP. The SGTF expresses no opinion on the substance of the matter and refers this matter to the FWC.

3. **Augie Interview**
The “Augie Interview” is a tool that may serve Augustana College well in terms of building community. The SGTF recommends that the Board consider the usefulness of this tool and how the College might continue and build on the concept. Key inquiries include: (1) How might we share the faculty interview summaries with the Augustana community? (2) If it is determined that “Augie Interview” is a useful tool, how might the Board and/or faculty continue this initiative?

4. Joint Meeting

The SGTF believes that a “Joint Meeting” with faculty, board members and administration that includes a panel discussion, Q&A, and an opportunity for socializing will help build community and aid effective shared governance. The SGTF believes that the “Joint Meeting” may well promote communication and a sense of community. The SGTF would like the Board to endorse the “Joint Meeting” and authorize a committee of Doug Hultquist, Kathy Jakielski, Jon Clauss and Jeff Abernathy to plan for inclusion at the May, 2009 Board of Trustees Meeting.

5. Theme of the Year

The SGTF recommends that the Board endorse the “Theme of the Year” concept and request that the faculty be charged with selecting an annual theme. A subcommittee or taskforce would then likely consider the important issues involved in “Theme of the Year” programming.

6. Shared Biographical Information

The SGTF recommends that the Board endorse and encourage a college-wide initiative to collect and share biographical information on faculty, board members, and administrators in an attempt to build community and enhance our knowledge and understanding of each other. The Director of Web Services will coordinate this initiative and properly align it with existing projects.

7. Departmental Statements

The Departmental Statements shared with the SGTF and the Academic Affairs Committee proved to be a helpful tool in allowing board members to have a better understanding of the work being done and future work planned in various academic departments. The SGTF recommends that the Board endorse this sort of information sharing. The SGTF further recommends that the Board consider whether other departmental reports might be useful to the work of the Board (e.g. athletic department, greek life, campus ministries).

8. AAUP Shared Governance Survey

The SGTF recommends that the Academic Affairs Office continue monitoring faculty sentiment regarding the state of shared governance at Augustana College with the use of survey tools and other methods allowing for comparative measure.
Issues in University Governance: More "Professional" and Less Academic
William L. Waugh, Jr.
The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 2003; 585; 84
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The pressures for efficiency and the achievement of performance goals are encouraging college and university presidents to focus more on the management of their institutions and less on the more collegial processes of academic decision making. Presidents are being held more accountable to external constituencies, particularly the public officials and business leaders involved in hiring them and the foundations and businesses that supplement their salaries and benefits, and, therefore, feel less accountable to the faculty and other internal constituencies. To increase efficiency and meet goals, presidents are increasingly hiring professional administrators without academic experience, who feel more accountable to their administrative superiors and less accountable to faculty, students, and others within the institution. The focus on managerial values is also filtering down to academic departments and nonacademic offices. The net effect is that the faculty role in university governance is decreasing and may be extinguished if current trends continue.

College and university presidents in the United States are becoming more responsive to outside constituencies and less sensitive to faculty and other internal constituencies, academic administration is becoming more professional, and academic institutions are becoming more bureaucratic. These changes are not universal in American higher education, but they are increasingly common. The question is what

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effect the changes are having on the structures and processes of university governance. The short answer is that college and university presidents are responding to pressures for greater efficiency and productivity (likely in that order) and are relying more on professional staff to achieve those ends. The longer answer is less simple. As organizations mature, they typically undergo changes that lead to greater bureaucratization and, when the external environment is unfriendly, they adapt if they want to survive. Professionalization of staff and responsiveness to external constituencies are adaptations to new demands. While the changes are understandable, they are having a profound impact on the traditional faculty role in university governance and thus on American higher education. In fact, that role may already be dead, according to Joanna Vecchiarelli Scott (1996).

The changing roles of college and university presidents should come as no surprise. Executive-centered management has been the cornerstone of organizational theory and practice for the past century. Indeed, the good government movement of the Progressive Era focused on executive-centered professional management as a cure for political corruption and administrative inefficiency (see, e.g., Stever 1993). Executive-centered management was to ensure accountability by providing leaders with ultimate responsibility for their organizations. Held accountable, executives presumably would find it to their advantage to root out the unscrupulous and the incompetent and to adopt techniques that would improve decision making and administration. Reform measures included the development of executive budgets and tighter financial controls. The Brownlow Commission and its successors encouraged executive-centered management in the executive office of the president. The city management movement encouraged similar reform in local government (see, e.g., Schiesl 1977).

In some measure, academic administration seems to have escaped the scrutiny of reformers—until recently. The constituencies of universities and colleges were not motivated to seek political and administrative reform through mechanisms to enhance executive control. Colleges and universities tended to choose their leaders from the ranks of the faculty, often with academic qualifications outweighing administrative skills. To some extent, many academic institutions still follow that model. Presidents, provosts, vice presidents, and deans are still drawn from classrooms and labs, and their values reflect the consensus-building approach of academic decision processes. To be sure, there have always been authoritarians and those with less than collegial inclinations, but the general pattern of academic administration has been a decentralized, faculty-driven process. Now, however, there is increasing pressure to recruit executives from the private sector armed with skills in business management but without work experience in academic administration. As a result, academic planning, budgeting, and day-to-day administration is becoming more like the management processes developed for the private sector and increasingly reflects values that conflict with the traditional values of university governance.

The pressures for change in how universities and colleges are governed should not be surprising. Economic constraints are forcing a focus on efficiency and accountability. Governing boards and presidents are under increasing pressure to
be more cost-effective, and that pressure is being passed on to vice presidents, deans, and department chairs. Demands to do more with less are forcing institutions to reexamine how they operate. Programmatic changes are also taking place. Indeed, an executive in residence at Washington University suggested that universities “reinvent” themselves by first determining their core functions and then disposing of their “unproductive programs” and contracting out or sharing administrative functions with other institutions (Mahoney 1997). Reducing bureaucracy by identifying unproductive programs is the explicit goal, although it is uncertain what “unproductive” might mean for academic departments and programs. Does “unproductive” mean having only a few majors, generating few credit hours, or bringing in little or no sponsored research or training projects?

In addition to financial pressures on institutions and their officials, there are also inexorable processes that all organizations experience as they mature and adapt to the external environment. The processes of institutionalization, bureaucratization, and professionalization change the character and the culture of the organizations. They become more institutionalized as their structures become more differentiated. Lines of authority become more clearly defined. Tasks become more specialized. Relationships become more formal. Hierarchy grows as spans of control shrink and the needs for supervision and coordination increase. The institutionalization process makes for a much more complex organization, which in turn requires more accountability. Organizations also tend to become much more bureaucratic as they mature. Formal relationships require formal communication, rules and regulations, clear lines of authority, accountability, and so on. Procedural requirements, that is, red tape, ensure consistency in decisions. Professionalization reflects the movement to greater task specialization. Persons formally trained in financial management, human resource management, and other needed skills replace those who learned their skills on the job or as they were needed. In effect, professional managers are replacing the academics that previously filled those administrative roles.

All three of these processes are occurring in American colleges and universities today, and they are having a profound effect on the role of faculty and staff in university governance. While the faculty role in university governance has been a contentious one in many cases, a primary, if not dominant, view has been that faculty have lead responsibility for the design and implementation of academic programs. In many institutions, that role has been jealously guarded by university senates and faculty committees and by individual professors in the name of academic freedom. While some institutions have experienced debates concerning the authority faculty should have over curricular matters, the faculty role in hiring, promoting, and tenure decisions has been less controversial, although some presidents, provosts, deans, and other administrators do wield considerable authority in those decisions and may disregard faculty preferences.

Certainly it may be argued that the role of faculty in university governance has long been limited. However, that has varied from institution to institution. Many community colleges have tended to treat faculty as employees rather than the cen-
tral technology of the institutions because there has been no scarcity of prospective faculty to fill those roles and because teaching loads have left little time for faculty to fulfill administrative duties. For-profit colleges have tended to treat faculty as employees subject to management prerogatives because they were hired much like other employees. The market, that is, student demand, determines programmatic priorities. By contrast, institutions less dependent on the market have tended to define their product in terms of the prerequisites of liberal arts or fine arts or scientific education. In other words, the curriculum determines human resource priorities. Finding enough qualified faculty to cover the desired range of courses is the goal. Institutions adjust to the market demand for liberal arts, fine arts, science, business, and other degrees, but not necessarily to demands for specific courses that might compromise the quality of the product. Notwithstanding the widespread adoption of programs to ensure computer literacy; an appreciation for diversity; an understanding of international issues, analytical skills, communication skills; and other cross-cutting skills and competencies, the content of core curricula has been defended by faculty in most institutions. What has changed? Why is university administration in the United States becoming more professional?

Academic Leadership and Executive Accountability

Higher education in the United States is clearly undergoing profound change. Issues of access, program quality, cost to students and their families, and cost to taxpayers are challenging universities and colleges to reexamine their products (or services). Public institutions are experiencing decreasing state support, and as a result, they are increasing tuition to make up the difference or face serious deterioration of program quality. The costs of education are not rising so much as public subsidies are decreasing, with students and their families picking up the tab (see Winston 1998). In many cases, raising special fees only reduces the state subsidy. Moreover, tuition discount or scholarship programs are increasing the number of students—further straining college and university resources. For example, the much lauded lottery-funded HOPE scholarships in Georgia are increasing the numbers of students in colleges and universities at the same time that state support is being cut.

In this environment, university presidents are under increasing pressure to meet performance standards, usually measured by the number of students enrolled and the credit hours generated, but increasingly measured by evidence of reputation and endowment growth (or occasionally by the success of the sports teams). In great measure, the pressure comes from politicians who know little about leading or running academic institutions and see the institution only in terms of its statistical profile. The pressure also comes from business and government leaders who do not understand the unique nature of academic institutions. The
complaints of faculty are not taken seriously until academic stars choose to leave for more hospitable environs.

There is also a cultural divide that encourages politicians and business leaders to intervene in academic affairs. Roger W. Bowen (2001), president of the State University of New York at New Paltz, has criticized the interference of political leaders and their lack of tolerance for faculty, including faculty-administrator, opposition. Bowen concluded that the academic world, which values free-thinking, intellectual risk taking and challenges to authority and the rules, conflicts with the political world, which prefers “certainty, order, and rules” (p. B14). Political leaders do not like their authority to be challenged, and that is precisely what leaders face in academic institutions. Bowen went on to compare the academy with the Church and suggest the need to separate politics, the state, from the academy to preserve the search for truth, rather than power (p. B15). In essence, political leaders do not understand the nature of academic leadership and often encourage the hiring of administrators whose work experience fits their own notions of how leaders should lead.

There is also a problem of accountability to boards of regents or other governing bodies when presidents may receive a substantial portion of their compensation from third parties, such as the university or college foundation or a separate endowment set up by alumni. For example, the total compensation for the president of the University of Louisville in 2001-2002 was $597,455. The state of Kentucky contributed $263,305 in base salary, $21,000 in deferred compensation, and $8,250 for an automobile lease. The University of Louisville Foundation provided an additional $98,361 as compensation as a consultant to the foundation, $85,389 in performance bonuses, $121,151 in deferred compensation and benefits, another automobile, a club membership, and a house. If the president completes his ten-year contract term at the university, which will end in 2008, he will receive a $1.5 million bonus (Basinger 2001, A24).

It is not unusual for presidents to receive supplements to their base compensation from their university foundations, endowed chairs, and other sources. A 2000 report published by the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges indicated that about one-third of public governing boards said that their presidents received supplementary compensation from outside sources. The question is whether the outside compensation affects their accountability to institutional and state boards of directors or regents (Basinger 2001, A24). The boards that oversee the colleges and universities have little control over foundations; consequently, conflicts of interest may well be present. Corporate-sponsored chairs may also create conflicts of interest (Basinger 2001, A26).

Even the hiring process for university and college presidents has become more formal and legalistic. Contracts outline performance expectations, including fundraising and programmatic changes. These are not new issues for many of the business people on the institution’s governing board or for the corporate recruitment services hired to provide a pool of candidates and to assist in the selection. The negotiations may result in agreements quite inconsistent with the institution’s mis-
sion and the traditional responsibilities of faculty and administrators (Basinger 2002, A29).

Being held accountable to outside constituencies, whether foundations, corporations, or boards, lessens the chances that presidents will feel accountable to an institution’s faculty, staff, or students. While most would feel that embarrassing votes of no confidence and other demonstrations of nonsupport would not be in their best interest, their jobs depend on those external constituencies that do the hiring and provide the salary and benefits. Hiring staff to ensure that those external constituencies’ expectations are met only makes sense. Professional staff are more likely to feel primarily responsible to the president rather than to the faculty.

The Professionalization of Academic Administration

Pressures for efficiency and productivity encourage academic administrators to focus on management processes. Consequently, it should come as no surprise that academic institutions would choose to hire administrators trained in techniques designed to achieve management goals. The issue, however, is whether management goals and academic goals are the same or, at least, not conflicting. Unfortunately, the evidence is that the professionalization of academic administration is resulting in more attention to management goals and less attention to academic goals.

Certainly, there are still scholars and scientists serving in administrative roles in most colleges and universities. While the hiring of professional financial and human resource managers may be increasingly common and the hiring of executives, including chief executives, who do not have academic experience beyond their own undergraduate and graduate educations is growing, the administrative reins of most institutions are still largely in the hands of people who understand traditional academic values and have some appreciation for the central roles that faculty have had in university governance.

For those institutions in which professional staff has become the norm, the faculty may well find themselves left out of decision processes because staff feel primarily responsible to the president and vice presidents and do not share information that might cause disagreement with their decisions. In meetings, the staffers are representatives of the administration rather than resource persons for the faculty. While faculty may be involved in some decisions directly or in advisory roles, the participation is becoming more peripheral, and in some cases, it is disappearing altogether. The marginalization of faculty is all the more difficult to understand when faculty members have specific skills in planning, financial management, and other management techniques and often serve as consultants to private firms, nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and even other academic institutions.

The growing number of administrators lacking academic experience portends even more major changes in academic administration. Already, some institutions
are making the argument that department chairs and division coordinators should be full-time administrators, rather than faculty members, because their duties may not permit time in the classroom and may require management skills not commonly found among faculty (see, e.g., Evelyn 2002). While that may be relatively uncommon in four-year and larger institutions, the numbers of professional managers are increasing rapidly. Staffs are expanding as business managers, assistant department chairs, and a proliferation of assistant and associate deans, provosts, and vice presidents are hired to manage nonacademic and academic offices. There are pressures on academic administrators to acquire management training to facilitate their work, as well. Harvard University, Bryn Mawr College, and other institutions have nationally recognized programs for university administrators. Their students range from presidents to department chairs to registrars. The courses cover strategic management issues from enrollment management to fund-raising and basic management techniques, from outcome assessment to strategic management to quality management. Administrators can also be trained in state-of-the-art course management systems in which many institutions are investing (see, e.g., Olson 2001).

As more and more senior administrators come from outside the institution and even academia itself, the concern about administrator interference in faculty governance is growing. Conflict between university presidents and faculty senates is only the tip of the proverbial iceberg. There is increasing conflict at all levels. A case in point is the recent conflict between members of Harvard University’s Afro-American studies department and the university’s president. One of the issues has been whether a university president should question a tenured faculty member’s productivity. Interestingly, the initial report concerning the conflict cited the bureaucratic treatment received by a prominent member of the faculty and later by his colleagues. The tone of the interaction was confrontational rather than collegial (Wilson and Smallwood 2002, A-8). Rather than simply having a conversation concerning the faculty member’s activities, the president challenged the value of the activities to the institution. While the president had some academic experience, most of his recent experience had been in government, where executive control is more accepted. Similar conflicts have arisen with public intellectuals who have the credibility to comment on the issues of the day and, thereby, may create political problems for administrators who wish to avoid controversies that might jeopardize the support of officials, alumni, and other constituencies.

Administrative values may also conflict with academic values. Because budgets so often are driven by credit-hour generation, encouraging the enrollment of more students in more classes makes perfect administrative sense. However, the weakening of standards to boost enrollments makes little academic sense unless the institutional leadership is consciously choosing to reduce the quality of its programs. Allocating resources with a strong preference for those programs with many students may well spell doom for degree programs and departments that are less popular, even though their courses are central to the educational mission. A better example that is becoming more common in American research universities is to
favor those programs that generate indirect or overhead monies. To be sure, the pursuit of grants and contracts and the overhead that they bring may be affecting the allocation of university resources. But many departments and faculties may fail the market test if that is a principal criterion for allocating resources. In short, the policy choices that might be considered very desirable in management terms are often very undesirable in academic terms. Faculty participation in decision making can reduce the likelihood that academic interests will be ignored.

The Bureaucratization of Academic Administration

The bureaucratization of academic institutions is a normal process, and the professionalization of staff is a major contributor to the process. Most institutions become more bureaucratic as they mature. Colleges and universities are taking on the characteristics of classic Weberian bureaucracies with increasing levels of hierarchy, divisions of labor, task specialization, formal communication, and impersonality. Standard operating procedures, plans, decision rules, and other administrative conventions reduce flexibility. The distance from the top of the organization, the offices of chief executive officer or president and chief administrative officer or provost, to the level of the organization at which services are delivered (including the level at which classes are taught) is increasing. There are more people, from vice presidents to deans to division and department chairs, between the chief academic officers and those laboring in classroom and lab. The growing numbers of non-tenure-track and other part-time faculty further lengthens the distance from the president’s office to the classroom. As a result, seemingly simple decisions may involve layers of staff and officials over relatively long periods of time.

The bureaucracy is increasingly made up of people who have little or no academic experience and do not understand the academic enterprise. Their work experience has been in traditional private or nonprofit sector organizations that have regular business hours, well-defined products and/or services, a distinct market, and so on. Conflicts between faculty and bureaucrats over administrative and academic issues are understandable. While conflict may be frequent and acrimonious in some institutions, it is no different from conflicts between line and staff in many organizations. In academic institutions, the conflicts may be as mundane as the scheduling of early morning meetings when faculty teach late into the evening and scheduling classes in rooms which are inappropriate for instruction. Increasingly, however, the conflicts may involve extending registration periods to ensure higher enrollments, with the result that students join classes several weeks into the term, and reducing book orders to minimize costs to bookstores, with the result that there are not enough books for all students and instructors have to spend more time dealing with the issue. The first set of examples reflects differences in organizational culture, and the latter set reflects differences in the goals of faculty and
administrators. As academic administration becomes more bureaucratized, the cultural and administrative conflicts between faculty and staff will increase. Indeed, the conflicts between staff and students will also increase, and faculty and students may find themselves with common complaints. The levels of conflict also tend to escalate as both sides become more frustrated in their interactions.

The development of a professional bureaucracy is creating a new culture. The language of higher education is increasingly punctuated with references to cost and revenue centers, customer-driven programs, and other terminology more common to the business world. While the profit motive is certainly appropriate in private for-profit institutions, profit or value is defined quite differently in academic institutions. The implications of business language, however, should not be dismissed lightly. The change in language reflects the change in values. Institutions are being “reinvented.” Presidents, provosts, deans, and department chairs are becoming more “entrepreneurial,” and their programs are becoming more “customer friendly.” While some of the terms are simply buzzwords of the day and mean very little, the impact may be substantial (Waugh 2001). Allocating resources on the basis of economic measures affects more than the business functions of the institution. Administrators become more accountable and responsive to the chief executive or chief administrative officer. Faculty become a peripheral concern and may, in fact, be considered an obstacle to be overcome or avoided rather than participants in university governance (Waugh 1998). Moreover, the business techniques on which decisions are made may be ill suited to the kinds of decision processes that are associated with academic institutions.

It should be remembered that colleges and universities are not the same as businesses, and the same economic assumptions do not apply (Winston 1998). For example, strategic planning involves (or should involve) broad involvement of internal and external constituencies. However, the planning process is essentially top down in that senior executives guide the development of the mission and vision statements, the identification of strategic issues, and most important, the choice of participants. Many people may participate and there may be relatively open communication. But faculty become just another stakeholder group, along with students, staff, alumni, and local dignitaries. They may find themselves fighting for a niche in a new mission because that niche will determine their resource allocations for the coming years. Organizational change has become an administrative responsibility rather than a faculty responsibility (Waugh 2001).

Administrators may not understand the values inherent in their management techniques. The techniques are not value-free tools. They require a structuring of decision making and a selection of information that affect the range of alternatives considered and the choice. The selection of participants and the nature of their participation affect decisions. In academic institutions, the faculty are becoming stakeholders rather than the central technology of the institution (Waugh 1998). In strategic planning processes, as well as in the hiring processes for presidents and other high-level officials, faculty are one of many stakeholder groups and are often outnumbered by staff representatives and external constituents. The management processes effectively marginalize faculty in the institution. Decision makers tend to
give numerical information, especially dollar amounts, more weight than qualita-
tive information. Increased focus is on sponsored research, with indirect cost rates,
faculty buyouts, and support for graduate research assistants, postdoctoral faculty,
and equipment purchases. Some departments rely on indirect cost revenue gener-
ated by external research for their basic operating expenses and certainly for the
amenities such as faculty travel. The revenue-generating departments and colleges
often subsidize the units that do not or cannot generate their own revenue. Engi-
eering, business, public policy, education, and other professional programs are
often the cash cows of the university, while the humanities and others have far less
opportunity for external funding. The allocation of indirect or overhead revenues is
a controversial issue, with some universities absorbing all such revenue, some allo-
cating a portion to the college and/or department that generated the revenue, and
some ensuring that faculty who generate such revenue receive a portion large
enough to encourage the pursuit of additional sponsored projects. In a large
research university, successful grant writers can support legions of graduate stu-
dents and finance state-of-the-art laboratories.

A more legalistic approach to academic activities may also be reflected in
bureaucratic interpretations of academic parameters. For example, course length
is generally expressed in terms of classroom or contact hours and specified by
accrediting agencies. A regular semester system typically has two fifteen- or sixteen-
week terms. However, the contact hours in a semester may be fit into a few days
rather than three or four months. Forty-five contact hours in a typical semester, for
example, could be satisfied in a long week or two or three three-day weekends,
depending on the length of the class days. The literal or legalistic interpretation of
standards may not be a problem in some courses, but it can be a serious problem in
courses that require reflection and research. Creative curriculum design is an
important marketing tool because students may appreciate the convenience and
not the pedagogical problems.

Faculty, too, are often pressured to behave more like employees in a business.
Requirements to wear business attire and work business hours are common. Many
faculty experience serious problems fitting their activities into a typical, forty-hour,
nine-to-five workday when research, professional travel, and even teaching may be
done at night or on weekends and many faculty work fifty or more hours per week
on average (particularly if they are seeking tenure or simply enjoy their work). Many
faculty find it difficult to relate their work to a typical work schedule when
projects frequently require long days and weekend work and professional confer-
ences often span weekends. Smaller institutions often require that faculty have fre-
cquent contact with students and alumni outside of the classroom. Religious institu-
tions may require attendance at services, as well.

Increasingly, the job of the department chairperson is to play the managerial
game—to manipulate or, at least, to live with the performance measures. Success is
getting courses inserted into core curricula to justify more faculty, increasing cost
effectiveness as measured by cost per student or credit hour, creating graduate
programs because the weighed credit hours may justify more faculty, eliminating
outside electives to keep credit hours in house, lengthening programs to generate
more credit hours, and increasing course offerings at the last minute to capture unanticipated demand. The point is that the management decisions are driving academic decisions, often at the price of academic quality.

Conclusions

Given the economic and political environment of higher education, it is understandable that college and university presidents, as well as other academic administrators, will focus on external constituencies. Given recruitment and selection processes, it is also understandable that presidents are more accountable to external constituencies, whether they be the boards that oversee the institution and hire presidents or the foundations that supplement salaries and provide amenities. Presidents, nonetheless, have a responsibility to their institutions, and academic quality should be a standard to which they are held.

It is also understandable that presidents will hire administrators who can help them reach economic performance goals. The pursuit of rationality and efficiency, without regard for the impact on faculty and students and others, may well be a form of what Adams and Balfour (1998) called “administrative evil.” The application of business management techniques in universities may be saving money or more rationally allocating resources, but it may also be having a detrimental effect on students, faculty, staff, and other constituents. As long as efficiency is the sole criteria against which the techniques are measured, their effects on university governance will not be accurately assessed. Leaving faculty out of the decision-making processes that affect academic programs and other faculty concerns increases the likelihood that academic values will not be served and may well result in actions that are “evil” in their effects (Waugh 2001).

Cary Nelson (1999), a professor of English at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, has characterized the conflict between faculty and administrators as a “war” and called for a resistance movement to fight back against “evil” administrative actions (p. B4). The ethical choice may be to resist threats to academic freedom and to protect the faculty role in university governance. To do less would amount to complicity. Although budget cuts, resource reallocations, and mission redefinition may be necessary to the health of the institution, the choices should be made with full understanding of their academic, as well as their financial, implications.

Bureaucratization may be a problem for all—faculty, administrators, students, and external constituencies. It is common for bureaucracies to grow and to clog decision processes with standard operating procedures, regulations, and other impediments to innovation and flexibility. It is common for bureaucratic reward systems to encourage perverse behaviors. It is common for rational decision-making techniques to be utilized without a full understanding of the assumptions that underlie their method. In those regards, universities are suffering the same problems that other large organizations have suffered after long periods of growth. It is also common, however, for large organizations to reinvent themselves, reducing
bureaucracy to provide greater procedural flexibility and to encourage programmatic innovation.

Traditional university governance processes, as aggravating as they may be for all involved, may be far more appropriate to the university role in society than centralized, bureaucratic processes. Collegial processes, in the long term, will be more effective in maintaining the health of academic programs. Admittedly, change is difficult in traditional academic institutions where programs are run by faculty with interests rooted in narrow disciplines and where departments are heavily dependent on internal resources. Changing a few courses in a core curriculum, for example, might radically alter the fortunes of a department faculty. It is no wonder that academic turf battles erupt over changes in core curricula when so many credit hours are generated through service courses, like those English, history, and political science courses that are required of all students. The loss of a course in the core curriculum can mean a loss of thousands of credit hours and result in the loss of one or more faculty members. Service courses also draw majors and minors and provide institutional visibility. Losing a faculty member or two might mean that there will be no one to cover Asian politics, contemporary European history, environmental chemistry, or other important academic areas.

To be sure, the articles and letters to the editor of the Chronicle indicate that while some faculty are experiencing a loss of power or control over curricula, courses, and instructional delivery, not all are. Moreover, not all faculty regret the loss of administrative responsibility. For some, expectations are different. They have little or no interest in academic policy making or politics. If the work environment becomes unpleasant, they will simply move on. The reduced administrative load means more time for consulting, research, student contact, and other activities. A question that should be asked is whether disconnecting faculty from those responsibilities contributes to a sense of disconnection with the institution itself.

The distinction between administration and governance is important, and it is a distinction that is increasingly overlooked as university presidents and governing board members extol the virtues of business management techniques in higher education and leaders seek to effect fundamental change in mission and method. Administration is those processes that are related to the allocation of resources, including planning, human resource management, and particularly financial management. Governance is those processes related to the technology of the university, including the academic programs, faculty, and scholarship. Preserving the distinction, so that the dog wags the tail, rather than the reverse, is essential for maintaining healthy academic institutions.

An answer may be to separate academic and nonacademic units. Ironically, businesses long ago learned that their more creative units may have to be located away from their production or factory units because of differences in organizational culture and operational imperatives. Research and development units also are often located in different buildings or in wooded industrial parks, away from the headquarters, so that creativity will be nurtured rather than managed. The cultures of some of the most technologically creative firms in our society have become the stuff of legend. As a result, creative organizations may now be more closely associ-
ated with nonhierarchical structures, informal relationships, casual attire, and minimal attention to the clock. In short, business campuses have come to look very much like traditional university campuses, and they have taken on the ivory tower role. Given that university faculty are generally considered the creative technology of the university, the logical answer might be to relocate the more factory-like business operations to the fringe of campus or to another site altogether to prevent contamination.

References


THE END OF SHARED GOVERNANCE: LOOKING AHEAD OR LOOKING BACK

Robert Birnbaum
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“Governance” is the term we give to the structures and processes that academic institutions invent to achieve an effective balance between the claims of two different, but equally valid, systems for organizational control and influence. One system, based on legal authority, is the basis for the role of trustees and administration; the other system, based on professional authority, justifies the role of the faculty. The importance of legal authority was recognized with the founding of our first colleges. The acceptance of the role of professional authority is a more recent phenomenon that has evolved over time.

The original argument for faculty participation emphasized only their competence to deal with strictly academic matters. President Henry P. Tappan of the University of Michigan, for example, proposed in 1858 that the faculty should enjoy sovereignty over teaching methods and the curriculum since scholars “are the only workmen who can build up universities” (Tappan, 1961, p. 519). This principle, while broadly recognized, was honored more in the breach than in the observance by many institutions for the next fifty years. But the increasing professionalism of the faculty during the early decades of the 20th century, accelerated by the academic revolution following World War Two, led at many institutions not only to faculty control over the curriculum but to a strong faculty voice in other education-related matters as well.

The publication in 1967 of the canonical “Statement on government of colleges and universities” (American Association of University Professors, 2001), jointly formulated by three national associations1 and therefore often referred to as the Joint Statement, for the first time formally articulated

1 The Joint Statement was formally adopted by the American Association of University Professors, while committees of both the American Council on Education, and the Association of
and legitimated the faculty role in academic governance. Describing the essential relationship between trustees, presidents and faculty as based on “mutual understanding,” “joint effort,” and “inescapable interdependence,” the Joint Statement laid out two basic principles of what has come to be known as “shared governance”:

(1) important areas of action involve at one time or another the initiating capacity and decision-making participation of all the institutional components, and (2) difference in the weight of each voice, from one point to the next, should be determined by the reference to the responsibility of each component for the particular matter at hand....(p. 218).

Not only did the Joint Statement confirm the faculty’s “primary responsibility” for educational matters such as faculty status, and programs of instruction and research, but it also articulated the importance of faculty involvement in educational policy more generally, including the setting of institutional objectives, planning, budgeting, and the selection of administrators.

The various systems for consultation and decision making created by individual institutions to operationalize the “shared” aspects of governance appear today to be working well, and are generally supported by both faculty and administrators (Cox, 2000). For example, senate chairs, academic vice presidents, and institutional presidents agree that campus senates operate efficiently and smoothly, consider important issues, and are believed to be associated with good communications and trust between institutional constituencies (Gilmour, 1991; Minor, 2003). Minor’s study of four-year colleges and universities indicates that “shared governance remains a strong institutional value among all campus

Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges “commended” it to their member organizations.
constituents” (p. 970). Nevertheless, there are increasing criticisms about the effectiveness of shared governance, and proposals for radical change. These proposals do not challenge the role of trustees and administrators; their latent, if not their manifest, purpose is to rationalize governance by reducing the involvement of the faculty in institutional decision making.

Current criticisms about academic governance focus attention on changes in the external environment, and claim that because of faculty obstructionism contemporary governance systems cannot respond appropriately. In the words of the 1998 statement on governance by the Association of Governing Boards (AGB) (Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, 2001, p. 3), “Many governing boards, faculty members, and chief executives believe that internal governance arrangements have become so cumbersome that timely decisions are difficult to make, and small factions often are able to impede the decision-making process.” Among AGB’s recommended solutions are that boards should reiterate their ultimate responsibility and authority, explicitly clarify who has the right to make or participate in specific kinds of decisions, establish deadlines to speed up decisions, and clarify ambiguous or overlapping areas of stakeholder authority.

There are dire warnings of the consequences if governance reforms are not enacted. “Institutions ignore a changing environment at their peril,” said the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges. “Like dinosaurs, they risk becoming exhibits in a kind of cultural Jurassic Park: places of great interest and curiosity, increasingly irrelevant in a world that has passed them by” (Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Colleges, 1996). The dinosaur simile is evocative for anyone who has seen Fantasia, but perhaps should not be particularly distressing; after all, dinosaurs ruled the earth for over 150 million years and might be the rulers still (thus making moot the
problem of academic governance) but for an unpredictable and catastrophic asteroid impact.

Calls to revise governance systems to permit institutions to respond to the environment in a more timely fashion appear to accept two questionable assumptions; first, that today’s colleges and universities have not been responsive enough, and second, that speed in making decisions is an asset in academic institutions.

The first assumption, that under existing governance arrangements institutions have not been responsive enough, is a puzzling one. Specific examples are seldom given and counterexamples are numerous. Institutions appear to be actively responding to environmental pressures by, for example, computerizing, raising external funds, establishing joint programs with industry, offering external degrees, and reducing full-time faculty. There are few if any emerging professions -- and indeed few if any vocational or technical areas -- that do not have academic programs dedicated to them. An alternative view, as Mingle (2000) has pointed out, is that “higher education, contrary to popular political belief, is in many ways extraordinarily responsive to the external environment -- especially when that external environment demands market-driven solutions and orientations.” As a consequence, “in striking new ways, American colleges and universities no longer look or act much as they did 30, or even 20, years ago” (Eckel, 2003, p. 865).

The second assumption, related to the speed of institutional decision making, is also problematic. The effectiveness of normative institutions is not based on efficiency and speed but on reliability and trust, and any process that makes it possible to make good decisions more quickly also makes it possible to make bad decisions more quickly. Faculty involvement in shared governance processes may slow down the making of decisions, but it also assures more thorough discussion and
provides the institution with a sense of order and stability (Kerr, 1963). The greatest danger to higher education may be not that decisions are made too slowly because of the drag of consultation, but that they are made too swiftly and without regard for institutional core values. As Bok (2003, p. B9) has commented,

The entrepreneurial university, it is said, must be able to move quickly. It cannot wait for windy faculty debates to run their course lest valuable opportunities be lost in the fast-moving corporate world in which we live. In fact, there is remarkably little evidence to support this view. Looking over the checkered history of commercial activity on campuses, one can much more easily point to examples of costly unilateral decisions by impatient administrators, such as ill-advised Internet ventures or grandiose athletic projects, than to valuable opportunities lost through inordinate faculty delays.

Bok’s criticism suggests that the essential debate may not reflect differences about how a university should be governed, but rather conflicting ideologies and differences in belief about what a university should be. The complaints are not really about the inability to move quickly -- they are about the inability to quickly change a university into something else. This paper argues that governance and institutional purpose are related, and that proposals that suggest, either explicitly or implicitly, that the faculty role in shared governance should be reduced or limited is more likely to diminish rather than improve institutional effectiveness. Before presenting these arguments it is important to differentiate between two types of institutions, which I shall refer to as “academic” and “market,” two separate aspects of governance, which I shall refer to as “hard” and “soft,” and to posit a relationship between institutional type and governance emphasis.
“Academic” and “Market” institutions

Although the great diversity of colleges and universities is widely recognized, this appreciation has not been properly extended to an understanding of diversity in their governance. The culture, structure, programs, personnel and technology of different institutions all influence participant expectations of how decisions are to be made and influence is to be allocated. For that reason, conceptual discussions of the importance of “shared governance” are often fruitless unless the characteristics of the institutions being discussed are specified. In this paper I will oversimplify a multidimensional construct by suggesting that institutions can be placed on a continuum of purpose anchored by polar types that I shall refer to as academic and market. They roughly correspond to the distinction that Gumport (2000b) has made between colleges and universities as social institutions or as an industry, and the conflict described by Enders (2002, p. 85) between “the university as the curiosity-driven institution in the cultural belief system, and as a service enterprise according to an utilitarian belief system.”

Although all institutions of higher education have some admixture of academic and market elements, my comments about shared governance are meant to apply only to those institutions nearest the academic pole of the continuum which have norms and values that identify them as social institutions concerned with education primarily as an end, and not as a means. Shared governance may often be frustrating and exasperating, but I believe that is the most effective process through which academic institutions may achieve their indefinite goals, just as concepts such as consent of the governed, checks and balances, and the right of legitimate yet contending voices to participate makes democracy itself ungainly yet ultimately effective. To the extent institutions move away from the academic pole and
emphasize education as a means rather than as an end by offering products based on consumer
demand, deviations from shared governance may potentially be useful.

At the market extreme of the academic/market continuum, for example, there is no compelling
reason for implementing processes and structures of shared governance in a profit-making corporation
such as the University of Phoenix that markets vocationally-oriented credentials and offers simplified and
centrally-planned, “lowest common denominator” curriculum materials capable of being “taught” in
multiple locations by inexperienced, part-time employees. The “trustees” and “administration” are
happy with their profits, the “faculty” pleased with earning additional income without having to design
their own classes, and the “students” satisfied with earning degrees “quickly and with as little resistance
as possible” (Farrell, 2003). Faculty are transmitters of training material, not autonomous scholars;
students are consumers purchasing products, not learners being educated. In such institutions,
corporate structures and processes may not only be acceptable but in fact may improve both efficiency
and effectiveness.

In contrast, academic institutions are those that give priority to education as an end in itself, and are
deeply rooted in a culture that prizes academic freedom, critical discourse, creativity, and liberal
learning. Their normative institutional nature is illustrated by Clark Kerr’s (1970, p. 116) reference to
the university as “a church with a religion. It believes in the unfettered search for truth, in free expression
of opinion without fear, in preservation of the past, including books however offensive they may be
currently, and in access on merit and the granting of grace on merit. Its principles are more important
than service, or rules, or votes, or consumer preference. It is the keeper of the good, the true, and the
beautiful; of culture. It perpetuates a spirit of inquiry and integrity. Its religion is not subject to
compromise.” These are not market concepts but core values that are antithetical to the market (Ikenberry, 2001).

The academic vs. market tension in higher education, in which academic institutions are compared to businesses, is not a new one. The arguments were the same about a hundred years when Andrew S. Draper, president of the University of Illinois, opined that “the university cannot become a business corporation, with a business corporation's ordinary implications. Such a corporation is without what is being called spiritual aim, is without moral methods. Universities are to unlock the truth and turn out the best and the greatest men and women.... A university cannot become such a [business] corporation without ceasing to be a university” (Draper, 1906, p. 36). Draper knew that proposals to change structure are at the same time proposals to change purpose and culture. And changing character and identity risks losing the core expertise, commitment to mission, and long-term perspective that gives the university its unique character (as well as what contemporary marketers would refer to as its “competitive advantage”).

“Hard” and “Soft” governance

“Hard” (or “rational”) governance refers to the structures, regulations, and systems of sanctions in an organization that define authority relationships, prescribe certain organizational processes and encourage compliance with enacted policies and procedures. “Soft” (or interactional) governance encompasses the systems of social connections and interactions in an organization that help to develop and maintain individual and group norms. Hard and soft governance are based on quite different conceptual foundations.
The theoretical underpinnings of hard governance are to be found in theories of rational choice. Rational actors are presumed to be “entirely forward looking, and entirely self-interested” (Blackburn, 1998, p. 29). Rational systems are based on calculations of costs and benefits, and are set in place to maximize the likelihood that certain desirable outcomes will occur in the future. Hard governance is forward-looking.

The theoretical foundations of soft governance are located in the concepts of how organizational cultures are created over time through the interaction of people, and the cognitive processes through which they come collectively to share perceptions and “make sense” of what they are doing. Soft governance is backward-looking. The essence of soft governance is embedded in the socialization and expectations of the participants; institutions justify their behaviors, participants their roles, and society its support, based on their consistency with processes, roles and missions established in the past.

Proposals to alter shared governance, such as those by AGB mentioned earlier, are predicated on a rationally-based claim of cause and effect – that changing governance structure, and in particular those aspects of structure that affect the participation of faculty, will improve institutional performance. The history of attempts to reform hard governance does not provide a great deal of support for that claim. Nevertheless, there are continual calls for the reform of hard governance despite the lack of evidence that such changes are consequential. This is due, in part, to the ideological belief that it should be consequential, and in part because such structural changes are, at least in theory, administratively feasible. Less attention is given to the normative issues of soft governance (Gumport, 2000a), in part because changes in hard governance often deny the importance of soft governance, and in part because no one knows how to do it.
While hard governance can channel and to some extent harness the power of soft governance so that they are mutually reinforcing, in and of itself it appears to have little influence. As Clark Kerr (1982, pp. 29, 30-31) reported, “I once thought that alternative modes of governance had substantial significance in American higher education.... I would now advance the conclusion that, within the range of alternatives considered in the United States, forms of governance make some difference but not as much as often supposed.... [G]iven the heavy emphasis on individually made decisions by faculty members and the active competition among institutions, one specific arrangement in government versus another has minor implications for what actually happens in a university.”

Hard governance makes little difference because most of the important decisions made in the university occur outside the formal system. As Cohen and March (1974, p. 33) have it, “each individual in the university is seen as making autonomous decisions. Teachers decide if, and when, and what to teach. Students decide if, when, and what to learn. Legislators and donors decide if, when, and what to support.... The "decisions" of the system are a consequence produced by the system but intended by no one and decisively controlled by no one.” Of course, it is precisely this lack of control that hard governance reformers seek to change, despite the generally accepted belief that it has produced a system of higher education of unequaled quality and diversity. Ironically, it is usually those most philosophically supportive of a market economy who are among the first to suggest the need to rationalize systems when they don’t care for what the market has produced.

Looking back on the failed governance innovations of the turbulent 1970's, Kerr (1982, p. 31) remarked “changes in formal governance have generally made little difference and, when they did, mostly for the worse. All that effort, all that passion, all that turmoil was mostly for naught....” More
recent attempts to change governance through the creation of such new structures as joint big decision committees (Yamada, 1991) seem to have met the same fate, as have numerous attempts over the last 50 years to impose on academic institutions rational management systems that, by altering decision making processes, were also disguised attempts to change governance structures (Birnbaum, 2000). Hard governance proposals almost always sound reasonable and self-evident. But when they conflict with soft governance, they inevitably fail. Soft governance rules!

**Isomorphism of governance and institutional type**

It was suggested earlier that shared governance may be important to the proper performance of an academic institution, but may be counter productive in a market one. Governance may therefore be isomorphic with program. If so, attempts to change one will also change the other. If institutions become less academic, governance is less likely to be shared, and as governance is less shared institutions are likely to become less academic. As the faculty role is diminished, declining trust in faculty leads to increasing interest in rational management (Gumport, 2000a); in the same way, implementing new management techniques may further reduce trust in faculty. The change from an academic to a market institution may be neither immediate nor direct -- the loosely coupled properties of institutions will prevent that -- but over time it is likely to occur; we have already seen that “academic planning, budgeting, and day-to-day administration is becoming more like the management processes developed for the private sector and increasingly reflects values that conflict with the traditional values of university governance” (Waugh, 2003, p. 85). Proposals to alter the management or governance systems of universities are really disguised (and sometimes not so disguised) attempts to make academic
institutions into something else, so that the institutions lose “moral legitimacy, core purposes, and values such that it is no longer recognizable and identified as the entity it was supposed to be (Gumport, 2000b, p. 85).

THE CONSEQUENCES OF PROPOSED GOVERNANCE CHANGES

All governance systems must deal with two issues: making good decisions, and getting those subject to those systems to accept the decisions as legitimate. People in general, and academics in particular, do not automatically accept the decisions of authorities. Boards of trustees, if they wished, could impose the governance recommendations of AGB on their institutions. Their legal right to do so is unquestioned and, although the Joint Statement recommends that boards undertake appropriate self-limitation, it recognizes them as the institution’s final legal authority. Yet there are several reasons to believe that any unilateral actions to change the faculty role in shared governance would not be accepted, regardless of the nature of the faculty role it would establish, or the effects on the institution it promised to create. Aside from issues of academic freedom that faculty subject to these changes would almost surely raise, such actions would violate principles of procedural justice, diminish faculty status, and reduce institutional social capital. As a consequence, levels of trust and cooperation would diminish, processes of social regulation would be compromised, and institutional viability as an academic (as opposed to market) entity would be threatened.

Procedural justice
Procedural justice refers to the perceived fairness of the processes through which organizational decisions are made. Fair processes may be desirable in all organizations, but they are of particular importance in normative organizations, such as colleges and universities, in which goals are unclear and the consequences of decisions are not easily assessed. Unable to obtain reliable feedback on decision outcomes, participants in these “process cultures” (Deal & Kennedy, 1982) instead focus their attention on how things are done. Decisions that are made “in the right way,” are more likely to be considered legitimate, and perceived legitimacy in turn makes voluntary compliance with social regulations more likely.

Social psychologists have studied several alternatives to the principle of procedural justice that have been posited to explain why people are liable to accept the regulations of authorities as legitimate and therefore are likely to voluntarily comply. Social exchange theories assume that people will accept decisions in a calculative way in order to maximize their outcomes. Distributive justice theories also emphasize outcomes, but focus on the fairness with which resources are distributed and the degree to which personal benefits are appropriate. Procedural justice theories also emphasize fairness, but instead of looking at outcomes the judgment is made based on the degree to which the procedures used to reach the directives are consistent with the values of the group (Lind & Tyler, 1988, p. 222). After comparing these three principles, Tyler and Lind (1992, p. 163) conclude:

In study after study, our research and that of other psychologists has shown that the favorability of a decision or even the fairness of the decision plays only a minor role in determining legitimacy. Much more important, it appears, are judgments of the fairness of the procedures. And judgments of procedural fairness are based, in turn, on process-based inferences about
one’s relationship with the authority. The belief that the authority views one as full member of society, trust in the authority’s ethicality and benevolence, and belief in the authority’s neutrality – these appear to be the crucial factors that lead to voluntary compliance with the directives of authority.

Although much of the work done on procedural justice has been based on legal settings, it has been proposed (Lind & Tyler, 1988) that these processes operate in all societal settings. Procedural fairness is considered to be an antecedent to cooperative group behavior which, in turn makes groups more efficient and effective (Tyler & Blader, 2000).

“Fairness” of procedure has no objective criteria - it is what the members of the group believe it to be. Agreement on “fairness” comes from the processes of socialization through which group members come to share values and beliefs; new members of the group learn these values from the older members (Tyler, 1990, p. 176). Students of governance have long recognized the value of fairness as an academic value, suggesting that good governance is based on “open plans, open policy statements, open findings, open reasons, open precedents, and fair informal and formal procedures” (Mortimer & Caruso, 1984). Any change in the faculty role in shared governance that is made without itself following the procedures of shared governance accepted by the faculty is likely to be considered procedurally unfair and therefore unacceptable

Governance and status

In Leadership and Ambiguity, Cohen and March (1974, p. 121) proposed the simple hypothesis that “most people in a college are most of the time less concerned with the content of a decision than
they are with eliciting an acknowledgment of their importance within the community. We believe that
some substantial elements of the governance of universities can be better understood in terms of such a
hypothesis than in terms of an assumption that governance is primarily concerned with the outcomes of
decisions.”

The structures and processes of shared governance identify the rights of the faculty to participate
in the making of important decisions, and therefore certify their status and importance. People are
concerned about their status in groups because high status within a valued group validates their own
self-identity (Tyler & Lind, 1992). The importance of status in academic institutions can be gauged
with a small thought-experiment; faced with a choice between a promotion in rank with no salary
increase, or a salary increase with no promotion, what proportion of faculty would choose the former
over the latter?

Status, while important in its own right, is reinforced through its relationship to procedural justice
because being treated fairly is, itself, a recognition of status. “To the extent that a procedure is seen as
indicating a positive, full-status relationship, it is judged to be fair, and to the extent that a procedure
appears to imply that one’s relationship with the authority or institution is negative or that one occupies a
low-status position, the procedure is viewed as unfair” (Tyler & Lind, 1992, p. 140). Perceptions of
self-worth and perceptions of fairness are related; when one feels valued, one is also more likely to
believe that the group is functioning effectively and fairly.

Governance and social capital

Reducing the faculty role in shared governance is likely also to inhibit the development of social
networks and thereby reduce social capital. Academic institutions are rich in human capital because faculty and administrators are highly educated. At the same time, faculty autonomy, loose-coupling, and the anarchical nature of academic institutions often means that colleges and universities are impoverished in terms of social capital. By increasing participation in governance activities, providing a sense of influence, and creating mixed senates, joint-task forces and other forums for interaction, shared governance is a means by which social capital may be created. In the same way, reducing opportunities for shared governance may also reduce social capital within an institution. Social capital is important because it leads to trust and cooperation; a reduction of social capital not only weakens the influence of constituents within an organization, but also reduces the effective influence of their leaders.

Social capital creates value by increasing the productivity of people in groups. According to Putnam (2000, p. 19) in Bowling Alone, “social capital refers to connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them... [C]ivic virtue is most powerful when embedded in a dense network of reciprocal social relations. A society of many virtuous but isolated individuals is not necessarily rich in social capital.” (p. 19). Putnam supports his argument with a mass of data showing the relationship between indices of social capital and other desirable social outcomes. Among the reasons for these outcomes is that networks sustain rules of conduct and expectations of reciprocity that lead to trust, and a trustful society is more efficient than a distrustful one. Social capital makes it easier for constituents of a group to resolve collective problems, and the development of social networks provides the institutional means to encourage socially desirable behavior.

Trust between authorities and constituents can be developed when each believes that the other will
act in a predictable way, and that each is concerned with, and is able to act in the interests of, the other. Trust strengthens the legitimacy of leaders, and creates mutually-reinforcing bonds of identity, confidence and support between them. One of the main organizational consequences of trust is the willingness of constituents to voluntarily comply with the directives of authorities without the need for the offering of rewards or the threat of punishment (Tyler 1998). Trust is therefore an essential component of democratic governance that leads to compliance and cooperation with the group without inducing alienation. Trust in an authority can be based on the ability of the authority to successfully compete for and allocate resources (exchange trust, which is forward-looking), or it can be based on the ability to predict the authority’s behavior because of social connectedness leading to shared norms and shared social identity (communal trust, which is backward looking) (Braithwaite, 1998). One consequence of communal (or social) trust is that it leads constituents to identify with the authority, and to draw their identity from their work (Tyler, 1998). Communal trust depends on identification with the group and perceived agreement on common norms. Social trust is particularly important “within existing groups, in which social bonds are in place and people have already internalized group values” (Tyler, 1998, p. 287). If organizations which rely heavily on communal trust begin to give increased attention to exchange trust norms it may undermine the effectiveness of communal trust (Braithwaite, 1998).

Governing alone is like bowling alone - regardless of how wise or virtuous the person or office that determines what the “rules” should be, social capital within the group may not be increased and, in fact, is likely to be diminished as it transforms a process of reciprocal social interaction into an exercise in unilateral decision making. It is the process of shared governance, and not the outcomes, that helps to build the dense network of connections that creates social capital.
CONCLUSIONS

A number of generalizations can be drawn from the preceding concepts related to procedural justice, status, social capital and social regulation. First, decisions made in social systems are more likely to be accepted when the procedures creating them are seen as legitimate and “fair.” “Fairness” is related to the expectations of people involved in the process, who learn them through processes of socialization. Second, when structures and processes are developed so as to be consistent with existing social norms, people are more likely to defer to their moral authority. Procedures or sanctions seen as illegitimate not only may lead to non-compliance, but can also create disrespect for the system that created them. Additional procedures, also seen as illegitimate, may be created to respond to non-compliance, thus reducing even further the influence of authorities. Third, changes in social systems are more likely to be accepted when they do not challenge the social status of participants in that system, and are less likely to be accepted when they do. Fourth, systems that provide forums in which people can interact on matters related to their group norms and personal values help to create dense networks of interaction that increase social capital within the system. Higher levels of social capital, in turn, lead to increased trust and cooperation which are related to organizational effectiveness. Fifth, informal social controls may be more effective than formal legal controls in influencing social compliance with
organizational values. The strength of these informal controls will decline as the frequency of interaction within organizations decrease. Sixth, attempts to design utilitarian systems to increase organizational effectiveness may instead reduce effectiveness because they are inconsistent with participants’ sense of what is proper. In summary, normative, backward-looking processes may be more likely than utilitarian, forward-looking processes to support compliance in social systems, and they do this by increasing social capital and trust. The consequence is that rational processes meant to achieve specific outcomes in normative institutions are likely to be less effective than normative processes that are consistent with social norms and moral principles approved by the community. Utilitarian decisions may create rules, sanctions and incentives, but since they are often not developed through legitimate processes, and are often narrowly focused and difficult to enforce, they may decrease confidence in the system and increase alienation. The irony, as Robinson & Darley (1997) point out, is that while utilitarian approaches may appear to have some short-term benefits, normative approaches based on the values of social groups often turn out to be the most utilitarian.

Applying these ideas to academic institutions suggests that since shared governance is a generally accepted normative principle, attempting to alter it by reducing the role of faculty is likely to have a number of predictable, and negative, consequences. Faculty expect to play the preeminent role in issues related to the educational program, and to have their voices heard on other important institutional matters including those of governance itself. These expectations are inculcated during their professional socialization, reinforced by institutional history and academic tradition, articulated by respected leaders who reiterate the principle that the faculty must be involved in “developing and enforcing all the rules that protect academic values” (Bok, 2003, p. B9), and legitimated in authoritative documents such as the
Joint Statement. Attempts to unilaterally alter the faculty’s role will be seen as an attack on faculty status and will be considered illegitimate; shared norms will no longer provide a guide to behavior.

A further consequence is that the institution is likely to make less effective decisions. The three main parties to academic governance focus their attention on different things: trustees are concerned with responsiveness, administration with efficiency, and faculty with academic values. Each group has been socialized in different ways, is exposed to different aspects of the environment, has competence and expertise in different areas, and “sees” the institution from unique perspectives. Effective governance requires that all these perspectives be considered in making decisions. In the words of W. H. Cowley, “academic governance is far too important to be left entirely in the hands of professors or entirely in the hands of boards of trustees. The enterprise requires the participation of both....” (Wicke, 1963, p. 65).

In terms of the faculty role, “shared governance” is just another way of saying that those with expertise in an institution’s core technology should have some important role in governing it. When that is not the case, “levels of satisfaction are likely to be low, the system may become too simple for its environment, problems are not properly attended to, and the institution may appear to lurch from crisis to crisis.... Governance systems that are not accepted by the parties lead almost inexorably to disruptive conflict” (Birnbaum, 1989, p. 39).

For all these reasons, changes in hard governance are unlikely to have the outcomes claimed for them. The configuration of hard governance itself, as long as it is accepted as legitimate by the participants, makes little difference because “governance guidelines in themselves have no animating power. In its most authentic sense, governance is simply the process by which people pursue common ends and, in the process, breathe life into otherwise lifeless forms. The best measure of the health of
the governance structure at a college is not how it looks on paper, but the climate in which it functions” (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1982, p. 88). It is the climate of “soft governance” that encourages trust, which makes it more likely that constituents will be influenced by institutional norms and values without requiring formal rules and processes. Interaction and reciprocity build up the dense social networks that lead to trust between participants and to confidence in both the processes and the outcomes of the governance system (Del Favero, 2003). The best governance is invisible. Whenever an institution spends inordinate time and energy on issues of governance, whenever it must rely on hard governance to work, it is almost certainly a sign that an institution is not operating well.

THE END OF SHARED GOVERNANCE

The end of governance can only be to support the purposes of the institution which has created it. For market institutions, the purpose can be identified in terms of profit or some other quantifiable economic metric, and rational, forward-looking governance structures and processes may be quite effective. For academic institutions, however, the purpose is much less clear. These institutions are not concerned with profit, but with performance of mission; because that mission cannot be clearly articulated, the means to achieve it is always a matter of contention rather than certainty. These institutions may find the justification both for their mission, and for the governance systems that support it, by looking backward. “The university,” said Emerson (1856, p. 882) “must be retrospective. The gale that gives direction to the vanes on all its towers blows out of antiquity.”
The purpose of academic institutions is not to create products but to embody ideas. Academic governance cannot be rationalized for the same reason that it is not possible to rationalize the purposes for which academic institutions exist. What kind of governance system can support academic institutions if their task is “the creation of the future” (Whitehead, 1938, p. 233), if their aims are “wisdom and goodness” (Hutchins, 1943, pp. 23-24), if it is (in Lord Haldane’s words) “in universities that...the soul of a people mirrors itself” (Flexner, 1930, p. 186), if their purpose is, as John Stuart Mill had it, the “laying open to each succeeding generation...the accumulated treasure of the thoughts of mankind” (Garforth, 1971), if they are “the best and most benign side of our society insofar as that society aims to cherish the human mind” (Hofstadter, 1979, p. 38), if they are to provide “a constant conversation...between past and present, a conversation the culture has with itself, on behalf of the country... making the world, for all its pain, work” (Giamatti, 1988, pp. 24-5), and if their “ultimate business... is human freedom” (Bailey, 1976, p. 76)?

Abbott Lawrence Lowell (1934, pp. 290-291), the president of Harvard, provided in 1920 one backward-looking answer:

[T]he respective functions of the faculties and the governing boards -- those things that each had better undertake, those it had better leave to the other, and those which require mutual concession -- are best learned from experience and best embodied in tradition. Tradition has great advantages over regulations. It is a more delicate instrument; it accommodates itself to things that are not susceptible of sharp definition; it is more flexible in its application, making exceptions and allowances which it would be difficult to foresee or prescribe. It is also more stable. Regulations can be amended; tradition cannot, for it is not made, but grows, and can be
altered only by a gradual change in general opinion, not by a majority vote. In short, it cannot be amended, but only outgrown.

Lowell recognized that the governance of an academic institution is organic, not mechanical. It is not designed as much as it evolves because it uniquely supports the activities of a social institution whose processes and goals cannot be clearly defined, whose outcomes cannot be precisely measured, but whose critical importance to society is indisputable. Proposals to improve governance by clarifying roles are as problematic as suggestions that institutions can become more effective by specifying outcomes. Both are likely to lead to increased bureaucratization, administrative influence, and the selection of data based on availability rather than on importance. Both are likely to strengthen hard governance at the expense of soft governance.

Governance is a means to an end. Therefore, the best forms of governance are those that evolve because they are most fit for a specific end. The calls for governance reforms that are more flexible and permit rapid decision making are rooted in classic notions of rationality and rational choice. The proponents of governance reform commonly take a forward-looking, utilitarian approach. Their arguments, however, are often based on ideology. They “do not only or so much analyse reality but prescribe an ideal of ‘good governance” (Enders, 2002, p. 80). It is relatively easy to understand what they are against, but much more difficult to comprehend what they really want, and the system itself is so complex that the consequences of their recommendations cannot be predicted.

It is certain that while academic institutions that remain true to their traditions to some extent will be responsive to contemporary pressures for economic or political “relevance” in the future as they have been in the past. However they will not be as responsive as their critics demand. The fact that academic
institutions cannot be expected to do everything is not necessarily bad. As Abraham Flexner (1930, p. 27) pointed out, “universities that are held to their appropriate tasks will be unfit to do other things.” Other institutions will be created to do what academic institutions should not. The competition of these new educational entities for resources should not be viewed as a threat, but as an opportunity for academic institutions to relieve themselves of programs and clienteles that are inappropriate to their purpose.

Advocates for reform may argue that “faculty no longer can shut themselves off from the rest of society as the commonly accepted notion of the ivory tower once implied” (Del Favero, 2003, p. 918). But it is difficult to argue that, even when stressing its commitment to intellectual and personal development, academic institutions have ever been separated from the needs and interests of society, although there are disagreements about what those interests may be. Ivory towers have their place, and there are elements in the higher education that cannot – and should not -- be thought of as purely driven by society’s manifest interests. After all, as Nisbet (1971, p. 208) has argued,

What, in a civilized society, could possibly be wrong with, or stagnant, archaic, or antiquarian about, the vision of an enclave in the social order whose principal purpose is working creatively and critically with ideas through scholarship and teaching? Is not man's highest evolutionary trait thus far precisely his capacity for dealing with ideas: learnedly, imaginatively, and critically? Is there any more promising hallmark for a civilized society than its willingness to support a class of persons whose principal business is to think, to arrive at knowledge, and to induct others in this principal business?

There is no crisis of governance among those institutions that emphasize academic as opposed to
corporate values. Claims that such institutions are risking disruption or failure because they cannot respond quickly enough to a changing environment are both inaccurate and misplaced. It should not be surprising that such institutions are more stable and resistant to change than other kinds of organizations - indeed, that is what makes them institutions. And the older and more successful they are, the more difficult the change. Because of the uncertainty of their technologies, universities have evolved so that their core activities are only loosely coupled to both their formal structure and their environment. One consequence is that they are less responsive to both administrative and political influence; the tradeoff is that their core technologies can continue without disruption. The principles of shared governance enunciated in the 1967 Joint Statement continue to serve these institutions, and the larger society, well.

The crucial contemporary issue of governance, as Steck (2003, p. 81) has pointed out, is to reclaim the traditional roles of academic institutions. "The core values and mission of the university must be sustained if the university is to fulfill its traditional role of learning, scholarship, and service. A fully corporatized university is only the shell of a university, and the task facing the academic community is to ensure that the inner core as well as the outer shell are preserved." This preservation will require that potential reform efforts "reflect upon histories as well as futures" (Gumport, 2000b, p. 87).

There is no doubt that, as its critics suggest, faculty participation in shared governance will have the effect of making it more difficult to change the programs and purposes of higher education. Whether this is a good thing or bad thing is a matter of ideology. The faculty are the primary upholders of the academic culture, and so those that give precedence to the idea of a university as an academic institution -- who believe with Masefield that "there are few earthly things more splendid than a university" -- are likely also to continue to believe in the importance of shared governance. The basic question to ask is
not whether we want to make governance more efficient, but whether we want to preserve truly academic institutions. If the answer is affirmative, then shared governance is an essential precondition.

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A Case of Complex Governance

A Structural Analysis of University Decision Making

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Abstract: Recent studies of university governance focus on cultural elements of decision-making processes. However, structural aspects of university organization are equally important for effective governance. Using an adaptation of rational decision-making theory, I consider the effectiveness of university governance structures. Through the use of a case study of a large public research university, I analyze how the structural configuration of universities potentially influences the quality of governance and decision making. In addition, I discuss reconciling cultural and structural aspects of governance, eliminating spurious governing bodies, and reframing governance reform as ways to improve the effectiveness of university governance.

Some scholars suggest that the future of higher education depends on the capacity of universities to transform the way that they are organized to make decisions critical to institutional vitality (Collis, 2001; Eckel, 2000; Longin, 2002). Yet colleges and universities employ governance structures as diverse as the population of institutions themselves. The configuration of governing boards, campus administrators, and faculty senates can vary significantly from campus to campus (van Ginkel, 2001).

 Scholarship on academic governance promotes the purported virtues of effective governance systems. For example, many in higher education believe that the concept of shared governance should be upheld as an institutional value (Burgan, 1998; Tierney & Minor, 2003). Others believe that governance systems void of legitimacy or trust are problematic (Scott, 1996; Sitkin & Stickel, 1995). Benjamin and Carroll (1999) suggest that effective governance systems are open, participatory, collaborative, and contextual. However, universities have distinctly different goals and are uniquely situated in various decision-making contexts; making sweeping declarations about what constitutes effective governance likely yields overgeneralized observations.

 Governance theory, from a phenomenological perspective, provides explanations of how university decision making works (Birnbaum, 1988; Richardson, 1974). Yet, few theoretical models or frameworks take into account what governance should be in light of new and continually changing structural or contextual dynamics. The relationship between the following two widely held conclusions represents the focus of this article: (1) effective governance is important for institutional success; and (2) the organization, structure, and decision-making context at many institutions has changed significantly over the last two decades. One question raised by these two ideas is: How does the structural configuration of campus governing bodies influence the effectiveness of institutional decision making?

 Undoubtedly the effectiveness of governance structures has significant consequences for institutional performance (Mortimer, 1971; van Ginkel, 2001). However, the literature offers few insights on how structure (e.g., the configuration of governing bodies) influences campus decision making or institutional effectiveness. As the environment of higher education continues to change, governance structures have remained relatively static (Longin, 2002). A better understanding of how organizational structure influences campus governance will be useful for researchers and campus leaders concerned with improving decision-making processes.

 For colleges and universities, the 1980s and 1990s meant increased government involvement, drastic changes in information technology, and competition among institutions for limited resources. In turn, institutions were forced to govern themselves in a rapidly changing environment demanding faster-paced decision making (Schuster & Miller, 1989; Zusman, 1994). Many institutions now struggle with how to make decisions faster in the interest of being responsive while also maintaining the traditions of shared governance (Collis, 2001; Duderstadt, 2001). Issues such as intellectual property, distance education, the place of college athletics, and corporate partnerships force campuses to reconsider the role of the board, president, and faculty.

 In this article, I utilize a case study to examine the relationship between institutional structure and the quality of academic governance. To begin, I define governance and provide a theoretical frame using an adaptation of rational decision-making theory. I then describe the case study and use data from interviews and documents to consider the effects of structure on institutional governance.

The Function of Governance

The term shared governance generally implies the coming together of multiple university constituents to make decisions that affect an institution (Hamilton, 1999). The appropriation of authority among various constituents, however, is often a point of contention (Lazerson, 1997). One model of academic governance, collegiality, acknowledges the benefit of shared authority and participation as equals. This model emphasizes the process of continuous communication and deemphasizes status and power differences (Wolvin, 1991). However, the range and complexity of university decisions threaten traditional views and practices of shared governance.

University governance has been the subject of study for more than three decades, but the literature has not identified an authoritative theory of university governance (Allan, 1971; Corson, 1960). Richardson (1974), more than 30 years ago, noted, “There is nothing that can be properly regarded as an accepted theory of college governance” (p. 347). The diversity of colleges and universities and the structures within them make it nearly impossible to prescribe a “one size fits all” approach to governance. Many early studies of governance attempted to delineate the function of various governing bodies (i.e., governing boards, the president, and faculty) and the responsibilities of each with little attention given to context (American Association of University Professors, 1966; Baldridge, Curtis, Ecker, & Riley, 1977; Dykes, 1968; Gross & Grambasch, 1974; Mortimer & McConnell, 1978).
Governance research leaves many questions about the effectiveness of particular governance structures unanswered.

For the purpose of the present study, the term governance refers to the university structure that dictates decision-making authority: the organization of decision-making bodies. Decision making then refers to the processes employed by decision makers to reach a conclusion on issues under consideration. The literature points to various cultural models of university governance and to a lesser extent structure (Campbell, 2003; Del Favero, 2003; Kezar & Eckel, 2004). The case presented here is used to consider the question: How do structural configurations of governing bodies influence the effectiveness of campus decision making?

Theoretical Framework: Bounded Rationality

There are widely accepted theoretical assumptions about how universities are organized (Birnbaum, 1988; Mortimer & McConnell, 1978; Weick, 1976). I draw upon what might be considered classic organization theory in higher education. Such theory treats institutions of higher education as distinct organizations. Even lay observers of higher education recognize that colleges and universities are organized and function significantly differently than business and industry entities. Universities are said to have ambiguous goals, nonroutine technology, and a professional culture that demands high levels of autonomy (Baldridge et al., 1977). These nuances increase the difficulty of making sense of organizational behavior in higher education, yet our need to understand requires the continued development of theoretical frames to interpret institutional behavior.

I utilize rational decision-making theory as a way of understanding university structures and their influence on outcomes. Many scholars call for the use of political, cultural, or anarchical theories in order to understand the organizational behavior of colleges and universities (Boss, 1988; Cohen & March, 1974; Floyd, 1985; Pusser & Ordorika, 2001; Tierney, 2004). Collectively these models are useful for interpreting a range of institutional activity and the interplay among structure, culture, politics, and outcomes (Del Favero, 2003; Eckel, 2000; Ferren, Kennan, & Lerch, 2001; Rhoades, 1995). My use of rational decision-making theory recognizes the social, cultural, and political dynamics of institutional behavior but also focuses on the organization as a whole versus specific interactions of individuals or subgroups.

A strict interpretation of rational decision-making theory maintains that decisions must involve clearly defined goals that must be known before decision making takes place. Concerning university decision making, there are a few limitations to this theoretical approach: (a) universities have multiple goals; (b) it is often difficult to know the consequences of a decision before making it; (c) many decisions are time bound, limiting the amount of information gathered about alternatives before making a choice; and (d) the consequences of decisions are often difficult to measure.

Consequently, I employ an adaptation of what Simon (1976) called bounded rationality. This theoretical model extends the fundamental assumptions of rationality. Bounded rationality maintains that an organization is a reified entity that can be understood and that members of the organization are able to interpret its parts in a similar manner. Bounded rationality from a decision-making perspective employs four slightly different assumptions: (a) Goals are inferable; (b) alternatives cannot be completely known; (c) some, but not all, organizational behavior can be predicted; and (d) resources interact with decision processes (Nutt, 1976).

The use of bounded rationality allows for what Weick (1976) calls loose coupling, but it also assumes that the institution, as an entity, is structured to make rational decisions that can be understood by its members. Bounded rationality assumes that one might not be able to make sense of each organizational nuance, yet its goals, structure, and decision-making patterns are consistent.

To be clear, the aim here is not to account for or dismiss the importance of social exchanges between individuals but to examine the rationale of structures that often dictate how individuals interact. Bounded rationality is used to understand the extent to which decision-making bodies are organized to promote effectiveness (however defined) and the degree to which individuals within institutions make sense of the existing structures. Recent governance studies characterize governance structures as a challenge to institutional performance at multiple levels, because they are often inconsistent with institutional needs and individuals’ understanding of the organization (Baldwin & Leslie, 2001; Dika & Janosik, 2003; Duderstadt, 2001; Jordan, 2001).

Based on this understanding of bounded rationality, two main theoretical assumptions help frame the present study. First, institutions with governance structures congruent with the practice of actual decision making are likely to experience more stable participation in campus governance and satisfaction among constituents with the process. In other words, given a particular type of decision one can predict the process that might ensue and the locale where decisions are likely made. Second, flexible governance structures able to respond to changes in the decision-making environment are more useful than static nonconforming structures. Governance structures should be rational in that decision-making bodies are intentionally arranged (or rearranged) to make determinations most effectively on issues under consideration.

Methodology

This approach is not prognostic but, rather, seeks to make sense based on the analysis of data derived from the case (Denzin, 1988). The use of an interpretive approach allows participants to define and assess the effectiveness of their institution. Case study methods are intended to provide a description and/or analyses of a single instance or phenomenon, in this case, the governance structures and decision-making processes at a large university (Hatch, 2002; Merriam, 1998). The case study method is particularly useful given the difficulty of making an outside judgment about the effectiveness of governance. This method also takes into account contextual conditions inextricably linked to decision making in universities (Yin, 2003).

Selection of Site

This study is a follow-up to a national study on academic governance (Tierney & Minor, 2003). During the initial study, site visits to 15 campuses were conducted in conjunction with other research activities to better understand the challenges associated with academic governance. To better understand governance and decision making at institutions with more complex organizational configurations, a follow-up visit was conducted at two large
public research universities during the 2004–05 academic year. One of those institutions is the subject of this case study. Confidentiality agreements prevent disclosing the name of the institution or participants. The pseudonym complex university (CU) is used for the institution and only the positions of participants are disclosed. The particular institution was selected because of its structural characteristics and the potential for making inferences about similar institutions, or those becoming more organizationally complex.

**SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS AND DATA ANALYSIS**

I conducted one-hour interviews with 21 members of the campus. Interviewees included the provost, members of the university senate (including the chair), members of CU’s faculty council, and a group of deans and faculty members from various disciplines. The participants were identified with the help of an “insider” and selected according to specific criteria provided as a means to enhance trustworthiness of the data. The criteria for selecting participants was purposed to gather diverse views concerning the quality of governance. Participants represented various vantage points within the institution. For example, some were without tenure, others were in administration, a number of them were longtime affiliates of the campus, and still others were newcomers.

In addition to the interviews, I collected governance-related documents such as minutes from the university senate meetings, the faculty handbook, the university constitution, and bylaws that direct governing bodies. Field notes, interview transcripts, governance-related documents, and observations of meetings provide the data for this case. The data were analyzed using a grounded-theory method, an inductive strategy used to develop themes based on a continual comparison of the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Themes were developed according to the relationship between structural aspects of university governance and participant perceptions about how such structures influence the effectiveness of decision making. Grounded theory is a continual approach that uses data to support or reject developing theories about a particular phenomenon. Consequently, I view theoretical understanding about university governance as developmental more than established. In the following sections, I describe the campus, organizational characteristics, and themes that developed from the analysis.

**Findings**

**CU: A DESCRIPTION**

CU is a “flagship” public institution founded in the mid-1700s. It now boasts more than 25 undergraduate colleges and graduate and professional schools with a student body of more than 48,000. The racial/ethnic composition of the student population is approximately 60 percent White, 14 percent Asian, 11 percent African American, 9 percent Latino, and 7 percent foreign or unknown. More than 90 percent of students are in-state residents, with just more than half living on campus.

CU is recognized as a research-extensive university with more than 100 research institutes and many distinguished faculty members. The university has three campuses throughout the state: the main campus is located in “College Town,” an urban campus in “City,” and a rural campus in “Country.” The president is located at the main campus, and the two other campuses are run by vice presidents for academic affairs with complete administrative staffs.

Although CU is one university, each campus has distinct academic programs, admission policies, and faculty. For example, the main campus and the rural campus each have law schools but do not share faculty, students, or standards for admission. The urban campus is distinguished by a more ethnically diverse student body and a significant proportion of students who attend class at night. The urban campus also contracts with a local private technology institute to exchange courses in liberal arts for higher-level math and science courses offered by the institute.

The main campus comprises five colleges, each located in geographically different places within College Town. Although undergraduates take courses across colleges, each college on the main campus has a distinct mission as well as admission standards. The colleges are physically held together by a bus system. Each college also has separate social activities and a reputation for hosting “particular types of students.” Cambridge College, for example, has a reputation for admitting higher-achieving students whereas Liverpool is said to be where students who “require special academic attention” reside.

CU is governed by a matrix of bodies. To begin, the university has a board of governors composed of 11 voting members. The president of CU is an ex-officio member.
Additionally, two faculty members and one student are elected as nonvoting representatives. Of the 11 voting members, the governor appoints 6 who are confirmed by the state Senate; five are elected by the board of trustees.

At the campus level there is both a university Senate and an administrative assembly. The administrative assembly is an elected deliberative body representing the university’s nonunion, nonfaculty, administrative, professional, and supervisory employees. It consists of delegates elected annually, CU’s president appoints a nonvoting delegate. The university Senate is a representative university-wide deliberative body consisting of faculty, students, administrators, and alumni. The Senate meets six times during the academic year to consider matters of general university interest and to make recommendations to the administration. In addition to the university Senate, each of the three campuses employs a faculty council, the principal faculty body that deals specifically with academic matters pertaining to faculty on a particular campus. Fig. 1 provides a sketch of the university.

The following sections represent emergent themes that provide understanding about the governance structures and their perceived effectiveness.

THME 1: ENIGMATIC STRUCTURES
I found in speaking with campus constituents that many did not fully understand how the campus was organized or where many decisions were made. For example, while explaining the organizational structure, one faculty member and affiliate of the faculty council stated that “this is a really difficult university to understand. I’ve been here for 12 years and I still don’t fully understand how things fit together.” In addition, as a former chair of the Senate deliberated on how campus decision-making bodies are organized, this individual paused and remarked, “I’ve never considered how what I’m explaining doesn’t make a whole lot of sense.”

The colleges on the main campus of CU are governed by faculty and faculty associates from different colleges. “Associates are faculty from other colleges that sit on schoolwide governing bodies that determine admission and graduation requirements. Faculty from one college can be associates in another. I know it’s very bizarre,” said one professor of eight years. Many campus constituents perceived the organizational and decision-making structure to be “unusual,” “unnecessarily elaborate,” and “complex.” A longtime member of the campus and biology professor explained, “It’s a very uneasy system with a lot of historical aspects still in place.”

In addition to the elaborate and confusing structure, informal governing bodies also exist, that is, decision-making bodies that are not a part of the formal governance structures. “To further complicate things, there are also a few decision-making bodies set up by the president,” explained the faculty leader of the campus American Association of University Professors chapter. The chair of the faculty council on the main campus reported not knowing the names of faculty who occupy these committees. The provost, however, claimed that “these committees are quite representative and communicate with a wide range of faculty.”

A review of documents for each formal governing body revealed several inconsistencies and underlying ambiguities. For example, the bylaws for the faculty council (made up of 11 committees) states, “The faculty council will be the principal faculty body from which the administration will seek advice and to which the administration will be accountable on campus-wide academic policy issues.” The university manual states that the Senate (made up of 17 committees) “shall regulate formal relationships among the academic units within the university.” Faculty associates do not fall under either of these bodies but have substantial influence in determining the academic matters in particular schools. Additionally, there are no clear indications of how academic matters concerning all three campuses are to be decided. From an organizational perspective, the governing bodies and academic units at CU are characterized as loose but not necessarily coupled.

THME 2: THE INFLUENCE OF HISTORICAL ASPECTS ON STRUCTURE
Understanding contextual aspects of an institution helps to better situate it and comprehend its organizational activity. Institutional history is, in part, responsible for the organization of CU. A dean, former provost, and campus historian by his own account provided some context that helps one understand the main campus:

The president in the late fifties tried to make [CU] the Cambridge or Oxford of America. He had a plan of setting up 15 undergraduate colleges but that only went so far—the College of Arts and Sciences and Liverpool. In the sixties the university acquired three small private colleges which became CU’s in name and association. Each had its own faculty and course offerings, which meant we had five different chemistry classes and five different sociology classes with faculty who didn’t talk to each other. It remained that way until the early eighties. When I became provost we began to merge these faculty into departments but as you can see evidence of the old system is still present.

The former Senate president explained the collection of governing boards. “The governor is pretty hands on. Neither the trustees nor the faculty will have much to do with decisions that come from the state.” When asked why, she noted:

Complex University is still a private institution that is under contract with the state. That’s why we have both a board of trustees, the original governing body, and a board of governors that was put into place once we, in essence, became public. Today it’s very clear that the board of governors wields the power, not the board of trustees.

Participants in the study referred to a state government proposal to drastically reorganize the campus as an issue illustrative of CU’s governance system. The introduction of the proposal from the governor took most at CU by surprise. When asked how the plan was developed, a dean asserted that “the plan to reorganize the university was basically announced to the campus.” Essentially the plan was to reorganize all state institutions into a system similar to the way higher education is organized in California. A member of the Senate’s executive committee claimed that “not a single member of the [CU] faculty was involved in the planning process.” A former dean attested, “The campus after learning of the proposal was given the luxury of responding to the plan.” The provost, who chose to
focus on shaping the plan through shared governance rather than dwell on how the proposal was developed, stated: “I’ve sent out a memo to all deans and directors asking them to solicit input and reactions from their faculty about the governor’s proposal. Once I’ve gotten feedback we will craft an institutional response to the proposal and maybe some recommendations for change.”

Still, many faculty members expressed low expectations, doubting that their input will make much difference. In response to questions about the faculty’s role in modifying or approving the plan, the former Senate president stated: “I doubt if the faculty will have any role in deciding if we reorganize. We might have some say about how it’s done.” The governance climate at CU is one marked by faculty apathy, complexity, and illegitimacy. Although more than half of the participants agreed that the university needs to be reorganized, all except two disapproved of the governor’s proposal and the method by which it was introduced.

THEME 3: INCONGRUENCE OF AUTHORITY

Equally important to understanding the configuration of governing bodies is the extent of their authority. In the case of CU, statutory authority and “real” power are not necessarily congruent. “The Senate has a lot of power on paper,” claimed one member of the faculty council. This individual also asserted that “the only thing [the Senate] actually does is decide on the academic calendar.” According to a department chair, “The Senate is more of an information-sharing body that brings the multiple constituencies across the campus together to report more than dialogue.”

Other decision-making bodies across the campus also have authority that is more spurious than real. For example, the president often ignores recommendations made by the faculty council. A dean suggested that “the faculty council was created because the faculty voice was being diluted in the Senate. Theoretically, it made sense but I can’t point to anything significant the council has done.” A member of the faculty council lamented, “The council is good for bringing up issues that affect faculty but there are so many other decision-making bodies that the council often has to compete for an ear to listen.” Decision making on academic matters such as curriculum or graduation requirements are localized to schools and colleges. At CU an asymmetrical relationship exists among the structures of the campus, the organization of decision-making bodies, and authority.

In addition to the collection of decision-making bodies, CU has, for the last 12 years, employed a president “uninterested in faculty governance,” according to more than half of the participants. The bylaws for the main campus state that the faculty council is the primary decision-making and advisory group on campus. According to one professor of 32 years, “The president listens to a special committee of which he selects the members—that’s his version of faculty governance.” There is a committee on institutional priorities appointed by the president that reports only to the president on special projects assigned to the committee members. “No one knows who’s on this committee and they sure as hell don’t consult with anyone outside of themselves,” exclaimed one professor and faculty associate. The provost signaled that the president has, by his actions, alienated many faculty. He stated, “I see my role with the faculty as critical. I serve as a buffer between them and the president. In years past there were incidents where the president chose to ignore the advice of faculty to pursue initiatives he thought would benefit the campus.”

The organization of governing bodies at CU does not necessarily serve as an indication of where decision-making authority resides. In addition to the previously mentioned governing bodies, a collective bargaining unit for faculty is also in operation. Although the union deals “primarily with salary standards and grievances,” it adds yet another piece to CU’s governance puzzle and thus evermore the authority of other governing bodies. Faculty members view the president and board of governors as powerful. The provost sees each constituency, especially the faculty, as empowered, and only individuals who participate in the Senate and faculty council view those bodies as significant.

Discussion

Given the characteristics of the present case, there are many directions one could take in discussing the relationship to governance. The focus here, however, is the extent to which governance structures influence effective university decision making. Bounded rationality as a frame is used to address how university structures relate to the expectations and understanding of those within an organization relative to the function of governance. A review of the interviews indicated that perceptions of effectiveness for 14 of the participants had much to do with making sense of the organization and the processes one might expect to be carried out during decision making. As one participant remarked, “Why waste time meeting? … I understand why most people are skeptical about the values placed on shared governance.” The context in which these comments were offered suggests that decision making at CU is more inscrutable than rational. In other words, if a decision-making body has no authority, then why bother having its members meet?

To be clear, I do not use the term rational to suggest that all decision-making processes within universities are such. In fact, I acknowledge contextual and interpersonal dynamics within university settings that significantly challenge rational-choice models of decision making. Bounded rationality is offered to suggest boundaries or a rational frame that offers legitimacy and reliability to university governance. The use of bounded rationality does not go so far as to suggest that every university decision should be predictable or carried out the same way in each instance. At the same time, capricious structures seem to negatively affect perceptions of effectiveness related to shared governance as well as participation among campus constituents. The findings revealed three considerable challenges for academic governance: (1) enigmatic governance structures, (2) inhibitive historical features of the organization, and (3) incongruence between the articulated decision-making patterns and actual execution. I next discuss the implications of each and how the challenges might be reconsidered.

RECONCILING GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

Kezar and Eickel (2004) conclude through a synthesis of the literature that the majority of studies conducted on governance focus perhaps too heavily on structure. Like other scholars, they suggest that cultural or social perspectives are useful for understanding governance (Del Piavero, 2003; Tierney, 2004). Although I agree that cultural approaches are useful, they alone do not complete the picture of academic governance. Concerning the effect on
the quality of academic governance, structural and cultural aspects are not so easily distinguished. In other words, it may be more useful to consider structural and cultural aspects of university governance in relation to one another rather than in contrast.

From the present case it is apparent that cultural issues such as trust, communication, or perceptions about institutional values placed on shared governance are affected by structural characteristics. For example, trust between constituents was not necessarily mentioned as a problem. Participants did not view others from various governing bodies as distrustful. Most believed that members of the community were all working hard to improve the institution. It was trustworthiness of the system that represented the problem. That is, many participants did not believe that the system of governance, the collection of governing bodies, was legitimate. Structural inadequacies of the system and mere confusion significantly contributed to feelings of apathy, disempowerment, and modest participation among faculty—all cultural components of governance. When asked about changes that would make to improve campus governance, 17 of 21 interviewees alluded to reforms that would logically streamline governing bodies and grant them legitimate authority. Individual trust and trustworthiness of the system are cultural elements of sound governance affected by structure.

Having attended meetings, the Senate at CU seemed to serve as a source of information (one directional), not necessarily communication (bidirectional). At each meeting, the vice president from one of the campuses reports about the activities of that particular campus. Other members of the Senate are not there to debate, contest, question, or rebut as much as simply to listen. The organization of governing bodies at CU significantly limits the facilitation of healthy debate on issues that affect the campus. A longtime professor and member of the Senate explained, “You can get information around here if you are diligent in your search, but once you have found out about something it usually means that communication about it has already taken place.” Another longtime faculty member who disapproves of the way the campus is managed had this to say: “Like this plan to reorganize, communication usually means being made aware of something that’s already been decided. I don’t think that it’s a matter of people being secretive but more an issue with how we’re organized to communicate with one another.” The poor practice of information sharing and the lack of communication are, in part, a result of the organization of formal and informal governing bodies.

The link between the structure and culture is evident at CU. Structural reforms and the empowerment of faculty governing bodies will likely improve cultural aspects such as apathy, trust, and communication. Challenges are intensified by the apparent mismatch between the structure and culture of decision making. CU’s structure is built on separate units that never fully integrated. As a result, their interdependence is artificial, resulting in the ineffective integration of governing bodies.

TRADITIONAL VERSUS REFORMED GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

One intention of this article is to consider the actions universities can take to improve the function of decision making. At the core of this examination is the issue of evaluating the effectiveness of traditional structures that exist versus reformed structures that do not. By traditional structures I mean systems of governance that are the same as or closely resemble the original configuration of governing bodies. Traditional structures could also be systems of governance that have been slightly adjusted but are essentially built on the original structure. By reformed structures I mean systems of governance redesigned or transformed based on an assessment of current needs and decision-making context. Reforming systems are pliable and regularly undergo reconsideration based on the relationship between governance activity and institutional effectiveness. Complete abandonment of traditional governance structures seems radical, and research on reformed or alternative structures does not exist. The lack of research on reform models, combined with relatively stable institutions of higher education, potentially make reforms less attractive.

Research that examines institutions with reformed or alternative systems of governance is only now being conducted. The for-profit sector is one target of such research (Morey, 2001; Sperling, 1998). The point here is not to pit the two (traditional and reformed structures) against one another. Instead, considering the benefits and drawbacks of traditional versus reformed structures would likely position institutions to make determinations about the effectiveness of their governance systems and how they might be improved. In the case of CU, it is clear that reforms are needed. Perhaps more important, the fact that no institutional efforts are directed toward assessing the effectiveness of its governance system jeopardizes institutional quality. The structure at CU has, over time, evolved rather than reformed. “Instead of creating a new system, [campus leaders] decided to just tack on [governing body] after [governing body] in an attempt to appease every constituent,” explained one dean. This is promoted by the fact that in most universities it is much easier to add components to an existing structure than eliminate units, even if they are ineffective or irrational.

Most participants identified the structure as problematic and in need of reform. Many universities over the last three decades have changed significantly in response to changing student demographics and expectations, external pressures, and competition (Zusman, 1994). Yet, the structures by which they are governed have not kept pace with such changes (Amaecher & Meiners, 2003). Institutions that engage in assessment of their governance system are likely better organized to make decisions in response to their needs and environment. In the absence of research and institutional assessment, the debate about traditional versus reformed systems of governance is immaterial.

LOOSELY COUPLED OR SPURIOUS?

Inefficiency is one feature of loosely coupled systems. Weick (1976) notes a relative lack of coordination, multiple activities to achieve one end, and infrequent inspection of activities as just a few problematic aspects of these systems. One assumption of organizational theory in higher education is that although decision making in the university is diffuse, governing bodies have legitimate authority. In other words, the curriculum committee decides on curriculum; the outlined responsibility or authority of a particular body is actually where related items are decided upon. In such cases, university decision making is still loosely coupled but not spurious. The term spurious in a research context implies that the effect of a particular variable is thought to be correlated to another when in fact it is not. I use the term spurious in a governance context to mean decision-making bodies that appear to have authority but do not. Illegitimate governing bodies create spurious governance systems in which participants are never certain where authority lies.
Both the organization and authority of governing bodies at CU create challenges that threaten the legitimacy and effectiveness of their governance system. The provost has made attempts to gather input about the reorganization plan, but many faculty members feel as though their opinions will have little influence on the final decisions. "If the governor wants this to happen then it will. The president and vice presidents will have some say in how it’s done and the faculty will be left to implement drastic changes," said a department chair. Another faculty member claimed, "Few of the governing bodies have real authority." One faculty council member lamented, "You never really know who’s doing what or whether input of a particular group will even matter in the final decision." Although the organizational complexities represent an obvious challenge for effective governance, dissatisfaction appears to be compounded by spurious governing bodies. Not only is the structure of governing bodies exceedingly complex; it is also illegitimate.

Loose coupling in universities also suggests that the activity in individual units is separate but, at the same time, responsive to the direction of the institution. At CU individual units are "loosely aligned," rather than loosely coupled. Institutional activity and decision making at CU is, in many cases, "fragmented," "completely separate," and void of association with other units. Two glaring examples of this are the process by which undergraduate students are admitted and the presence of two law schools. Admission standards and the mission for various colleges are significantly different. According to one professor, "Much of the reason no one knows what’s going on is because our activities are so disjointed that there is very little to keep various departments or colleges linked to one another." This claim does not suggest that every unit at CU is disconnected from another. Rather, too much university activity and decision making takes place without clear paths of authority, accountability, or communication, creating a loosely aligned and spurious system.

Implications for Faculty and Future Research

Recently, researchers have paid more attention to the quality of faculty work conditions as a determinant of institutional quality (Austin, 2003; Burgen, 1998; Finkelnstein, Seal, & Schuster, 1998). Effective university governance and faculty participation are said to be in conflict (Scott, 1996; Trow, 1990). On the one hand, faculty participation in university governance is vital for communication with administrators and the protection of academic quality and is associated with job satisfaction among faculty (Evans, 1999; Floyd, 1994; Miller, 1999). On the other hand, the nature of faculty work, increased expectations placed on pretenure faculty, and the expansion of administrative duties in the university represent challenges for effective faculty participation in governance (Austin, 2003; Benjamin & Carroll, 1999). These difficulties are related to the structural challenges that many universities confront, which heightens the need to consider how universities might be better organized to support and involve faculty in decision making.

This does not suggest that at CU faculty involvement in decision making is dead. Faculty members tend to be more involved in department- and college-level decisions. Decisions at the university level represent a primary challenge. Issues such as institutional planning, budget priorities, university policy, and selection of the president and senior administrators are universitywide decisions for which the involvement of faculty is more contentious (Duderstadt, 2004). From the present case there was also an indication that improving the quality of academic governance is also dependent on the willingness of faculty to be more involved in university-level decision making, as a means to improve overall university quality and the culture of participation (Evans, 1999; Longin, 2002). This notion of faculty responsibility for the improvement of university governance is one deserving of more attention.

A fundamental challenge is advancing reform efforts that honor the traditions of the academy yet attend to contemporary aspects of universities. The scope of the present study is limited to one large public research university. Although there are some inferences that might be made for other large public universities, this study does not address issues more prevalent at smaller institutions such as liberal arts colleges. Research that attempts to delineate differences among various institutional types would provide needed nuance to governance research. This study also views the issue of academic governance from a structural/rational perspective. Although structural and cultural models of governance represent the most common perspectives used for research, alternative perspectives would expand understanding of this issue. For example, perspectives that view governance from an accountability standpoint would add an important dimension for understanding university governance. Additionally, studies able to demonstrate the relationship between governance models and university performance would also be useful.

Conclusion

At a time when the environment surrounding higher education is continually changing, transforming the structure by which decisions are made is worth consideration. Many in higher education have given up on change, resorting to beliefs that it is beyond them or will not happen during their career. As one faculty member expressed, "I doubt that much will change with respect to how we’re governed." The traditions of academic governance are so ingrained that a complete overhaul is unlikely. An assessment of governance structures in relation to decision-making cultures and institutional effectiveness represents a more plausible start to improvement. At colleges and universities where innovation is a cornerstone, the lack of change to governance structures is peculiar. The word reform does not mean that traditions of the university will be lost. It is difficult to imagine a time when curriculum is not the domain of the faculty. I interpret the term to mean adjustments made in response to changing contextual circumstances in the interest of improving institutional performance. The alternative is employing ineffective governance structures for the sake of tradition.

Birnbaum (1988) noted that the organization of higher-education institutions is inefficient yet effective in serving the ambiguous goals. Still, there is the assumption that governance activity is organized rationally to maintain the system. Is there a threat of becoming too loosely coupled? In the case of CU the answer is yes. As universities continue to fulfill extensive missions, what are the implications for governance? Clearly, as universities undertake more activity, organizational structures will expand. However, expansion without consideration of the effects on governance and decision making will significantly compromise the ability to effectively manage a university and change. In fact, I offer this point retrospectively. That is to say, a large number of institutions today employ governance structures inconsistent with their current activity.

The CU case may also provide an indication of one consequence for institutions unable to remedy inadequate governance structures. The governor’s proposal for restructuring was in response to CU’s organizational dilemma. Issues of inefficiency were of great concern.
A few participants, although in disagreement with the process, were of the opinion that "this is the only way CU will effectively reorganize itself. We would never get it done on our own, which is why I [we] think the governor forced his hand." Although every consequence of ineffective governance structures is unknown, the continued success of academic institutions is dependent on the ability of campus leaders to position and reposition their institutions for effective decision making. "Yes, the time has come to identify and develop new governance structures and processes—ones consistent with institutional mission, culture, and traditions, but not rigidly limited by past assumptions and antiquated practice" (Longin, 2002 p. 219).

References
The Danger of Deference: A Case of Polite Governance

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Over the past decade numerous arguments have been put forth that campus governance needs to be reformed to meet new challenges. Rethinking admission standards, implementing distance learning, increasing fund-raising, diversifying the faculty, and creating external partnerships are just a few issues that demand timely and informed decisions. For some individuals, these topics create decision-making contexts that stand in contradiction to the tradition of shared governance. To others, shared governance becomes an obstacle to effective decision-making rather than its vehicle. This study explores a campus where the perception is that “governance works.” The university enjoys a stable organizational history, climate, and administration that are circumscribed by what we will define as a culture of deference. The institution, however, does not appear to struggle over questions of quality such as how they might improve and what actions might create these improvements. The authors question whether a decision-making culture of deference promotes effective campus governance. The text begins with a discussion of what the authors mean by effective governance within an organization’s culture and they then present data from an intensive case study of one campus. The authors conclude that cooperation and trust are foundational but insufficient indicators of good governance.

Over the past decade numerous arguments have been put forth that campus governance needs to be revised to meet new challenges (i.e., Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, 1996). Rethinking admission standards, implementing distance learning, increasing fund-raising, diversifying the faculty, and creating external partnerships are just a few

This article examines the use of cultural perspectives for assessing the quality of university governance. The authors argue that outcomes are more useful indicators of effective governance rather than the amiability of campus constituents.
issues that demand timely and informed decisions. For some individuals, these topics create decision-making contexts that stand in contradiction to the tradition of shared governance (Baldwin & Leslie, 2001; Benjamin & Carroll, 1999). To others, shared governance becomes an obstacle to effective decision making rather than its vehicle.

From time to time one hears about a president who has received a vote of no confidence from the campus senate, or a senate that is dissolved by the president. Such cases exemplify campuses with troubled governance. However, dramatic examples of this kind are rare. The larger problem pertaining to shared governance rests with the ability to make decisions intended to improve the quality of the institution that have the sustained input and support of multiple groups rather than sporadically involved or disengaged constituencies. In a recent national survey of four-year institutions we found that more than 80% of campus constituents believe that shared governance is an important part of their institution’s value and identity. Yet more than 50% percent of the faculty expresses dissatisfaction with the way shared governance is employed (Tierney & Minor, 2003). Based on these findings and the case study that will be discussed here, we suggest that one challenge of shared governance lies with cultural processes used to reach decisions. Although structural aspects of governance are important, they alone do not fully explain the problems that exist. Vitriolic statements that call for the elimination or diminution of shared governance do not reflect the broad support this form of governance has on campuses across the country (Carlin, 1999). At the same time, many in higher education believe that shared governance can be improved, and they ask whether the presidency should be strengthened or the faculty’s role lessened. The question revolves around how academic leaders might improve governance for the dynamic contexts in which academy currently exists. The answer is twofold. First, we suggest that to improve governance one needs to understand the cultural processes at work in organizational life. Second we argue that an organization’s participants need to attend to how those processes that pertain to governance improve the quality of the academic community.

Apart from the debate about why governance fails, research on decision-making, culture, and institutional performance is limited (Kezar & Eckel, 2004; Tierney, in press). If one assumes that faculty involvement in decision-making affects institutional performance, then what aspects of faculty participation are important to sustain in the shared governance process and what aspects might change? We argue that the answer to that question centers on definitions of quality and how effective governance improves the quality of the institution.

This study explores a campus where the perception is that “governance works.” The university enjoys a stable organizational history, climate, and administration that is circumscribed by what we will define as a culture of
deference. Everyone, ostensibly, gets along. At the same time, the institution does not appear to struggle over questions of quality such as how they might improve and what actions might create these improvements. We question whether or not a decision-making culture of deference promotes effective campus governance.

We begin with a discussion of what we mean by effective governance within an organization’s culture and then present data from a case study of one campus. We conclude with an analysis of the data and argue that cooperation and trust are foundational but insufficient indicators of good governance. For the purpose of this study we focus on governance that involves the faculty and administration—saving discussions about board-level governance and student governance for subsequent investigations.

RETHINKING GOVERNANCE

USING FRAMES

One central precept shared among higher education scholars is that universities, as organizations, can be interpreted using multiple theoretical frames. These frames represent adaptations from the larger body of organizational literature to account for the unique nature of colleges and universities (Cohen & March, 1974; Kuh & Whitt, 1988; Masland 1985; Mintzberg, 1979; Peterson, 1985). Universities, unlike business and industry organizations, are said to have ambiguous goals, use non-routine technology, and exhibit high levels of professional autonomy (Baldridge, Curtis, Ecker, & Riley, 1977). Additionally, it is well known that colleges and universities have distinct cultures, histories, and operate in various social and political contexts (Clark, 1970). Consequently, discussions about university activity usually take place within one or another theoretical frame, which helps understand various aspects of the organization.

Concerning governance, scholars have also used various theoretical frames to explain university decision making. Collegial, political, bureaucratic, and cultural foundations each lend different perspectives on governance. Yet, the notion that no single theoretical perspective can fully explain university activity is a well accepted. Instead, it is often useful to employ multiple perspectives to understand university governance and decision making. Birnbaum (1988) uses four theoretical frames (collegial, bureaucratic, political, and anarchical) which are used comparatively to understand “how colleges work.” In a similar vein, for the purpose of this study we call upon two theoretical frames (rational and cultural) to advance our argument about university governance.
A Rationalist Frame

Many definitions of shared governance work from a rationalist framework. The rationalist frame is built on four basic assumptions that shape the nature of an organization’s reality. First, rationalists assume that the organization is a reified entity that can be understood. Second, rationalists argue that an organization functions effectively through manifest meanings; all participants are able to interpret the organization in a similar manner. Third, they suggest that insofar as it is possible to codify abstract realities, one can then create generalizable rules for governance. Fourth, they assume that since rules for effective governance exist, organizational life can be predictable (Tierney, 1987).

Rationalist beliefs circumscribe organizational life and have important implications for the manner in which one thinks about and participates in shared governance. If an organization “exists” as an entity then the manner in which one tries to create change is through structural reconfigurations. One might think of an organization as a mechanism with multiple structures. Structures exist to create and maintain an effective and efficient organization. When one wants to improve decision-making the challenge is to figure out how to improve the mechanisms. From this perspective an organization’s actors need an “owner’s manual” of sorts that explains to them how the organization functions and what needs to occur when the structure does not do what it is supposed to do. The personalities and beliefs of those who participate in the organization are relatively unimportant in the rationalist framework. What matters is the ability of the individual to diagnose what is wrong with the structure and to fix it.

From a rationalist perspective, shared governance generates two assumptions. On the one hand, scholars define shared governance as the cooperation of various campus constituencies—namely the board, the president, the administration, and the faculty—in making decisions concerning the direction of an institution (Mortimer & McConnell, 1978; Ramo, 1997; Schick, Novak, Norton, & Elam, 1992). On the other hand, scholars write of shared governance as independent decision-making in which different issues belong to specific constituencies (American Association of University Professors, 1966; Kezar & Eckel, in press). That is, the board holds fiduciary responsibility, the president manages the campus and decides on executive matters, and the faculty oversee the curriculum. Both views ring true and overlap with one another for those who work at postsecondary institutions. Shared governance does, in part, pertain to multiple constituencies “sharing” responsibility for decision-making. The survey referred to above also pointed out that there is wide agreement that faculty have a substantial say in academic matters—curricula, admissions requirements, promotion, and tenure criteria—but relatively little authority in fiscal matters.
The concern with a rationalist frame of shared governance is particularly germane insofar as a great deal of discontent is voiced about the shortcomings of shared governance (Amacher & Meiners, 2002; AGB, 1996). From a rationalist perspective the structures of decision-making have become inadequate for the fast-paced needs of the 21st century. What needs to be done is to overhaul the structures of decision-making. The critics’ concerns are that shared governance is messy and slow—one is never quite sure who decides what on a particular issue, and when faculty are involved in decision-making an endless round of debate ensues so that a logjam occurs. These critics suggest that the way to fix the situation is to clarify who decides what and to lessen the role of the faculty in decision-making.

However, shared governance is not an enumerated list that transcends institution and context. We will argue that those who seek to improve shared governance ought not to define governance from a rationalist perspective, for any such definition is foreshadowed by the surrounding contexts and actors. The challenge is to work through the cultural meanings of shared governance and consider how those meanings lead to institutional quality.

A Cultural Frame

The underlying premise of a cultural perspective is the need to constantly interpret the environment and the organization to internal and external constituencies. The organization is a social construct that undergoes transformations and reinterpretations based on dynamic contexts and the constant entry and exit of individuals. If a key determinant of governance is interpretation, then how one thinks of governance changes over time. All acts are interpretive and dynamic.

If an organization’s participants think of governance as symbolic and interpretive processes devised to achieve particular outcomes as determined by the institution’s actors, what are the implications of sharing this perception? As we elaborate in the case study, our point here is not that governance should be what it once was, or that governance is simply a ritualistic interaction that allows a cacophony of voices to be heard. Instead, we argue that understanding governance from an interpretive perspective enables individuals to develop culturally specific definitions of organizational mission and quality, which in turn, helps determine effective governance processes.

One flaw of some analyses that employ a cultural framework is the assumption that the purpose of studying culture is little more than enabling a Babel of voices. We suggest that when one works from a cultural perspective, the ability to come to terms with how quality might be improved within
an institution becomes manifest in the processes, dialogues, and symbols of
the organization. In addition to considering structural reforms, it is im-
portant to determine how to generate open discussion to achieve particular
agreed-upon ends that will improve the quality of the institution. How one
reaches agreement depends upon the culture in which one resides. Thus,
from a cultural perspective, simply because structures exist and they appear
to be in working order does not enable an organization’s actors to claim that
governance works. Instead, an organization’s participants need to ask: What
kind of governance processes ought to exist so that institutional quality
occurs?

What are the indicators one might employ in judging the strengths and
weaknesses of the governance processes of a particular institution? The
answer to such a question goes well beyond bemoaning or celebrating an
organization’s academic senate, faculty involvement, or a strong board of
trustees. Instead, the answer pertains to how one might gauge the effec-
tiveness of these bodies in relation to institutional quality. If a cultural
framework for governance is in a constant state of creation and recreation,
then on-going reflective dialogues and debates need to focus on who is
involved in governance, what particular structures are used, and how much
authority one or another constituency has. The collegial assumption of
consensus is dropped in favor of a cultural model of creative conflict. Cul-
tures are not consensual; different individuals and groups will have differ-
ent perspectives. Cultures also are not monolithic, so it stands to reason that
governance structures will not be uniform. Power in an organization is
variable and shifts due to an organization’s history, culture, and current
contexts. In what follows we elaborate on these ideas using a case study of a
small private university.

GOVERNANCE AND CULTURE

METHOD

We conducted a case study of a single institution. A case study approach is a
useful method for this investigation given that significant contextual rele-
vance can be diluted during cross comparisons (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).
Pleasant University (PU) was selected as a part of a larger study on academic
governance. While visiting Pleasant University, we interviewed 22 members
of the campus and held subsequent interviews with key informants. Inter-
viewees were identified with the help of a PU staff member and according to
criteria set by researchers such as the informant’s role in governance. We
sought individuals who had been at the institution for many years and those
who were newcomers, as well as faculty from multiple disciplines in order to
gain diverse perspectives on governance. To enhance trustworthiness we conducted hour-long interviews with campus members who represented a cross-section of perspectives and vantage points on governance (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Interviewees included the president, provost, leaders of the university Assembly (the formal faculty governing body), deans, junior and senior faculty, and faculty from the humanities, social sciences, and professional schools. We also made sure to interview a mix of male and female faculty. In addition to interviews, we collected and reviewed campus documents. These include faculty handbooks, presidential speeches, strategic plans, and minutes from meetings in which decision-making took place.

In keeping with a cultural framework, we employed an interpretive perspective; intentions, circumstances, and actions were carefully considered and filled with multiple meanings (Denzin, 1988). This perspective is not predictive; it seeks to make sense out of social interaction within a particular context. We analyzed and coded the data using a grounded theory method which sought to develop themes inductively through a constant comparison of data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). We now turn to an overview of Pleasant University and then consider how governance functions.

PLEASANT UNIVERSITY

Founded at the turn of the 20th century, Pleasant University is a private liberal arts and science university that offers more than 40 undergraduate programs and grants masters degrees in limited areas. PU enrolls more than 4,000 students and has a 12:1 student/faculty ratio. Located in the western United States, the University is sprawled across an exceptionally beautiful campus populated with lush lawns and tall leafy trees. Over the past 10 years, PU has invested over 90 million dollars in the physical plant. “When people arrive on campus we want them to be impressed and get the message that we’re a serious university,” the president remarked.

The campus has a small-college flavor of a previous era. An interesting paradox emerges from reports of faculty and student demographics. The student body is more diverse than most institutions in its class. Among 3,015 undergraduates more than 13% identify themselves as Latino, 7% African American, and 13% report race unknown. Almost 60% of the undergraduates report they are white, and 6% are Asian American. There are roughly 133 faculty, 83% of whom are white or Asian American, and 7% are either African American or Hispanic.

The university has a college of arts and sciences, a school of education, and a school of business. The schools of business and education are new, a result of a recent reorganization. About two thirds of the 133 faculty are in the college of arts and sciences. The new deans of business and education are charged with securing accreditation and are developing those schools.
As one might imagine, the new schools have encountered resistance in their pursuits because many university constituents hold fast to the historical emphasis on liberal education.

Traditionally, the nature of faculty work at PU involves teaching up to six courses a year, service, and, to a lesser degree, research. Teaching is viewed as the cornerstone of faculty work. Service is viewed as a critical component of the culture and is necessary to secure tenure. “Service is a must for getting tenure here. There is a strong expectation that you should be involved, and people know who you are,” one faculty member explained. “We don’t want new professors to be preoccupied with service,” added a second person, “but we always make sure they’re on some committees so they get known, get to know the place.” “I’d tell a new hire don’t shirk your service,” added another. “We talk about service mattering,” summarized a fourth person. “You need to get involved beyond your department.”

Over the past decade faculty work has increasingly involved research as the institution attempts to grow and compete with peer institutions for prestige and constituent advantage. This new direction is expressed most visibly in the recently revised faculty handbook. “In the last few years there has been an apparent emphasis placed on conducting research. This will change the nature of faculty work and modify what faculty spend their time doing” stated a faculty member of 32 years. “Research is now more important,” added another, “but it’s still a distant third in terms of priorities.”

Service to the university seems to have been embedded in the culture, in part because of the small-town flavor of the surrounding town. However, the town has grown and is now less of a “small town.” There is also an increase in faculty who live outside of the local community. “Fewer people live here,” bemoaned one individual. “People used to be on campus all the time. It was expected, but now people live further away and don’t come as much.” An additional person explained, “Two-career marriages make living here difficult. So people commute here to work, and it’s changed the place some.”

For some, the move away from the local community has meant a weakening of the academic community. “People are less willing to get involved because when they come here their day is packed,” stated one person. A second added, “It’s understandable. It’s happening everywhere. But we just have less time.” “Email has replaced face-to-face,” opined a third person. “They’re all interrelated. People live an hour away, and they use email to get their work done. But it’s impacted our sense of service, what governance means. It’s not terrible. Times change.”

For now, the president of 16 years and the vice president of 10 years provide a sense of institutional stability. Additionally, the university employs many long-time faculty committed to teaching and to liberal education sustaining and reinforcing the culture that holds together the community.
Over the past decade PU has experienced minimal growth in the population of students or faculty. The university is built upon a foundation of community, teaching, service, and sturdy leadership. This foundation is about to change.

GOVERNANCE AT PU

The campus governance structure is comprised of a 36-member board that has the traditional responsibilities of overseeing the financial, investment, and personnel matters of the university. The president has garnered a great deal of support from the board, providing him broad leeway in decision making. The president holds weekly cabinet meetings that include the vice presidents and deans.

Faculty participate in governance mainly through the Academic Assembly. Approximately 60% of the faculty attend each assembly. The assembly was recently restructured to accommodate the new schools and reduce the number of committees; it meets once a month. Additionally, each school has an assembly that governs matters pertinent to the college and presents issues of concern to the larger assembly. There has been a gradual shift toward more involvement at the school level rather than at the university level. Although the assembly is seen as the most important governance structure on campus, when coupled with the creation of the schools (business and education) and the decrease of individuals living in the community, all-campus governance as defined by primary involvement, and attendance in the assembly seems less strong today than a decade ago.

We selected the pseudonym “Pleasant University” for this case study based on the way members of this community expressed satisfaction with the governance of the campus that in turn creates a sense of contentment with campus life in general. “People sense that the administration is trying to do the right thing,” explained one person. A second added, “We’re listened to, and I suppose we all recognize that we give more advice than consent, but that’s ok. We’re moving in the right direction.” The faculty expressed high levels of satisfaction with their work conditions and the management of the campus. We were hard pressed to find disgruntled members. “Things are good here,” one faculty member remarked. Another exclaimed: “This is an extraordinarily civil campus. People get along and there is a sense that everyone wants what’s best for the university.” “Angry outbursts or yelling are extremely rare,” said another, “It’s not that we wouldn’t tolerate disagreement. We do! It’s that most of us feel that things are pretty good.” The ethos of PU is marked by civility and courtesy reminiscent of mid-America in the 1950s.

The culture of governance at PU is based on trust and deference to the administration. The trustees are viewed primarily as ambassadors that
help raise money. The senior administration—the president in particular—represent the locus of authority on the campus. The faculty voice is represented mainly through the University Assembly but essentially it exists as an advisory body. Decision-making authority is freely granted to the president and there are few occasions where differing opinions are represented formally.

When asked about whether they had a good governance structure, the participants generally agreed based on deferential relations. Individuals’ comments painted the picture of effective decision-making but did not clearly delineate what good governance meant other than that people agreed with one another: “Yes, governance works here. Everyone gets along,” said one person. A second added, “Governance is always dicey on any campus, but the faculty respect the president and the vice president, so it’s pretty good, yes.” A third noted, “It hasn’t always been good, but for a very long time we’ve cooperated with one another. This president’s administration has focused on good relations with the faculty.” And a fourth person summarized, “Governance succeeds when faculty and administration work together. That’s what we’ve got.” Thus, the members defined governance not by outcomes, such as an increase in quality. Instead, good governance meant the faculty and administration enjoyed cordial relations with one another.

DECISION MAKING AT PU

Every summer after commencement the president takes the vice presidents and deans away on a 2-day retreat to evaluate the past year and to plan for the upcoming year. “During this time I ask each of them to really think about where we are and how we can improve,” said the president. By July each of the deans and vice presidents are asked to submit written ideas about the direction of campus. “During that process I ask them to talk about their ideas informally to different people across the campus,” the president further explained. In August the group meets again to present ideas and compile a plan that will guide the campus. “Afterwards any faculty member or board member can call me and comment on the plan,” said the president. The plan is published in October and serves as the administrative agenda for the year.

One person commented on the process by noting:

There is a veneer of decision-making on the part of the faculty. We’re told a certain number of positions exist, and we can then decide with the provost what we should do. But that’s a predetermined decision. Who’s to say that we can only hire three new faculty this year? Other decisions lead into that one, but we’re not involved in those. It’s like
the table is set and we get to choose where we want to sit. But who decided to set the table with that many chairs?

Other individuals also commented that faculty participation “was not as significant” as they’d like and that “the president has broad authority,” but individuals appeared content. The portrait was neither of an individual who governed through intimidation nor a faculty that was disengaged. Rather, individuals were content with the direction the institution because they largely trusted the president and his staff even though some might have desired a bit more influence. “He has developed a reservoir of support through the years,” said one person. “It’s not hero worship,” said another, “It’s just that we understand the system and it appears to work. What’s the problem?”

The creation of two new schools and the revisions to the faculty handbook were the most frequently mentioned recent changes. Both initiatives came from the administration. When asked about the faculty’s role in creating or rejecting major initiatives one professor responded: “Minutes ago in the Assembly meeting, we were just verbally contemplating the issue of how much power we actually have. The problem I saw was that few Assembly members could answer the question.”

“The plan to create the schools of education and business were fashioned before the faculty were asked about it,” one professor stated. The process of decision-making at PU involved what one Assembly member called “selective consolation” by the president. The decision to create the new schools was announced by the administration. Many faculty members recalled that announcement as the first time they had heard of the restructuring. When asked about the faculty’s response to the decision to create two new schools, an education professor explained that “there was not much reaction to the decision. The faculty just went about doing the work of getting it done without having much to say.” A former dean recalled: “The faculty in many of the programs that would be moved into one of the schools were not even consulted during the process of decision-making.” Yet when asked about the decision to create the schools of business and education, once again many faculty expressed satisfaction and concern but did not mention disappointment with the process of decision-making. A business professor remarked:

The president has a good track record with the faculty, and most people trust him to do the right thing. Some people had questions about creating new schools but those voices were so faint that the administration didn’t hear them. I would say that people are just accustomed to the president making decisions. Most faculty don’t really
seem to mind and the few willing to challenge him recognize that they are the minority.

The Academic Assembly was viewed as an information-sharing venue more than a governing body. A long-time English professor expressed little confidence in the assembly’s ability to influence decisions: “the Assembly is useful for information but it has no power.” An assistant to the vice president stated that “the Assembly is sort of a show and tell that is manipulated by the administration. I even remember a faculty search that was manipulated by the administration as an example of just how compliant they [faculty] can be.” Of interest is not simply the individual’s comment but the manner in which it was said. When some individuals comment that something is a “show and tell” it is often said to demonstrate distrust and dissatisfaction. However, this speaker, as many other interviewees, expressed little unhappiness. Faculty and administration were aware of the processes of governance and appeared content.

Revising the faculty handbook into “the handbook for faculty” was another example of an action in which the administration led the changes. A member of the assembly recalled:

Originally the faculty were charged with revising the handbook. There were some things that really needed to be changed but like most places the faculty fumbled around with [the handbook] never being able to get it done. The provost then headed up the process which was fairly contentious at times. What was interesting to me is that as the process went along you could see the administration positioning itself to take decision-making authority out of the hands of the faculty. Ironically, the handbook for faculty, as it’s now called, is the document that puts into effect these changes.

Others agreed that revising the handbook was a process that involved the faculty and administration in an adversarial relationship. “Everyone has a story. Some will blame the vice president and others one or another professor. What’s important, though, is that we resolved them. We worked through the process. The vice president deserves credit.” “It’s an example,” claimed another, “of one of those things that could have gone either way. It could have ended badly, but I think the history of how we work with one another saved us.” They also agreed that the process was “at times litigious” because of changes to the tenure requirements which placed a slightly greater emphasis on research and changes to the salary structure. Still, faculty accepted the fact that the administration, and to some extent the board, exerted decision-making authority without much consultation of the faculty.
In spite of widespread satisfaction with governance many faculty were of the opinion that they did not have “real” power. “The faculty, at best, serves an advisory capacity and most people seem to be OK with that” one English professor stated. When asked about his relationship with the faculty, the president stated that “there’s almost too much trust. I can set pretty strong agendas. People give me the liberty and will to do so.” He then stated that “it’s nice to be liked but it’s more important to be respected and trusted.”

A recent newcomer to the campus summarized the pervasive culture of deference by saying:

There is a structure that allows for dialogue but the president is so well liked that faculty defer their will and rights to him. It’s an enormous display of trust. I’ve been here for two years and have been amazed at how central the decision-making is and even more amazed at how satisfied the faculty are with this kind of structure.

QUALITY: NEW CHALLENGES AND CHANGES

The challenges and changing environment facing PU likely will create a significantly different decision-making context from what currently exists. Almost 40% of the PU faculty, for example, will be eligible for retirement within six years. At the same time, the schools of education and business expect to undertake significant recruitment. The assistant to the provost explained:

We are really concerned about what our faculty will look like in the near future. With the changes to the university there is a concern that new faculty will care less about teaching and more about research and won’t be concerned the least bit about service.

There are also concerns about socializing new faculty in the ways of PU according to a professor of philosophy and member of the campus for 15 years:

I fear that the faculty will turn over at such a rate that we won’t be able to acculturate them or subject them to the type of social pressure to serve the way we once could. When I first got here there was an unspoken rule that to be a member of the community you had to be involved with the work of the campus. That’s how you gained your acceptance. As we look to expand I don’t think that we’ll be able to leverage that kind of pressure.
In addition to faculty turnover, concerns about a changing student popula-
tion exist. Not only is PU expected to increase its traditional student pop-
ulation, it also intends to increase enrollment among professional stu-
dents, which means holding classes at night and possibly on-line. “We were
one kind of campus,” said one individual, “and now we’re becoming an-
other.” Another summarized: “You can’t stay stuck in the past. But I hope as
we get new students, new faculty, a new president and administration,
there’s still some of what makes us ‘us’ left.”

We asked participants about the effects such changes might have on PU
over the next 5 years. Most expressed a mixture of optimism and fear. It is a
well-known fact that the president is nearing retirement. Additionally, the
changes that will result from the new schools create a sense of uncertainty
across the campus. The dean of one school commented:

I would bet on this place. If the president sticks around through the
capital campaign you’ll see that we’ve incorporated the new schools.
We will grow our enrollments, move up in the rankings, and we’ll have
a more diverse student population in the professional schools.

Concerning governance, a professor of 33 years and chair of a school As-
sembly predicted:

I think you’ll see that we’ve changed. The governance activity will be
separate and I think that the faculty workload will change, which in
turn affects the number of days people come to campus. This essen-
tially means that we’ll be a different campus.

The chair of the university assembly stated:

There will be a new president and administration. Governance for the
most part will be secondary because people will be so busy with their
work. What all of this means is that the university will be much more
segmented and the culture of service at PU is at risk of being broken
down into service for self and service for the school.

Another dean explained:

With the new schools there is going to be a need for more autonomy.
For example, right now in order to make any purchase over $500
dollars forms must pass through the administration for processing and
approval. Well, you can’t even buy a computer with $500 dollars and it
makes building a school difficult with those kinds of constraints in
place. So my guess is that we are going to have to disburse much of the responsibility that once existed in the central administration down to the school level to enable us to do our work effectively.

Although some could point to changes, few were able to tie the future to an explicit sense of quality or excellence. Rather, most individuals talked about the environment from a rationalist perspective and suggested ways that the organization might react to the change. Faculty will retire and new faculty need to be hired. Schools need to grow and there will be autonomy. A president will retire. Although many of these issues are social “facts” in the sense that they will occur, what one did not hear at PU is how individuals tied change to any explicit sense of organizational excellence.

When asked, for example, where the institution will be in 5 years, one person said: “We’ll be bigger, that’s for sure. I can’t predict much more.” Another stated, “I hope we still have a fairly inclusive structure, not hierarchical.” A third person commented on structures: “We need to figure out how to get the committee work under control; the faculty review process is unwieldy.” Another faculty member said, “We’ll be pretty much the same. We’re pretty satisfied with what we’re doing now.” A final person predicted, “We’ll be about what we are today. I sure hope we are.”

What might one make of such an institution’s culture and how governance functions within it? On many levels, the institution appears strong. Campus facilities are attractive and abundant. Basic indicators such as enrollment, endowment, completion rates, and student satisfaction are good when compared to peer institutions. The faculty respect the administration and the administration asks for input from the faculty on many issues. The structures of governance appear to be what exist on manifold campuses—departments, schools, and a campus-wide governing body—and they entertain typical issues such as revisions to the faculty handbook, curricular reform, and issues pertaining to student life. The vitriol and suspicion that marks many campuses is absent. Thus, one might conclude that Pleasant University is a campus where governance works. People respect one another, and from that respect comes a culture that enables the institution to move forward. In what follows, however, we offer a caution and expand on the notion of governance as a culturally mediated process.

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND THE DANGER OF DEFERENCE

Pleasant University is a campus where individuals trust one another, and the administration and the faculty have exceedingly cordial relations. Trust
and civility are important precepts of sound governance (Kramer & Tyler, 1996; Tyler & Huo, 2002). Indeed, distrust is often associated with failed governance systems. Pleasant University, in many ways, is a model campus for communication and trust between campus constituents. One professor proclaimed: “I guess we are more efficiently run as a result of the president’s ability to make decisions and our trust that he’ll do the right thing.” Common sense suggests that fundamental trust and civility among members of any organization is useful for progress. We do, however, wish to suggest that trust and civility alone are not sufficient criteria to enable quality to occur.

While a culture of trust and deference may enable individuals to “get along” in the words of one individual, simply because different groups trust one another does not ensure quality. Indeed, sometimes to create the conditions of quality an organization’s structures need to ensure that thoughtful dialogue and debate will ensue. We are suggesting that a culture of trust needs to be something more than everyone simply deferring to leaders. Governance needs to be linked to an increase in institutional quality rather than simply a series of harmonious structures. At PU, those very structures that might enable debate are under-utilized. In the words of one faculty member:

Although the Assembly exists, it doesn’t have power to do anything. The president and the administration really run the place. What’s amazing is [the president] has, for the most part, made decisions that the faculty can live with. Although we may not like something, there is not much discussion about it and no real prescribed steps to do anything about it. I guess that’s the down side of entrusting a campus to the president and his administration. For this very reason a lot of people will be nervous about the selection of his successor.

An additional concern is whether the current structures are able to accommodate conflict and disagreement. The lone example from the recent past when the faculty and president could not agree over an issue is illustrative. A faculty member explained:

For a long time there has been discussion about moving our interim session. The decision went to the Assembly but the faculty could not make any decision about what to do with it. Finally the president decided for them. The interim session is important to many faculty here for a number of reasons. Well, the faculty were dissatisfied with it being moved to the summer and many have decided not to participate. Since the move we have had trouble with that session because many faculty refuse to teach.
A rare faculty disagreement with the decision of the president provided the campus with a glimpse of the current strengths of their culture and the potential dangers of deference. On the one hand, the president was able to implement an idea without a faculty vote because they trusted him. On the other hand, over the past decade PU has experienced few decisions that create disparate positions. Some governance scholars have mistakenly assumed that a productive organizational culture is one where individuals agree with one another, as if cultures are communicative entities in which individuals interpret actions from a similar perspective. We suggest that inclusive decision-making structures that are based on trust in individuals and trust in an established process need also to legitimize contentious decision-making.

Our point is delicate; we are not suggesting that an organization’s culture should be one that is distrustful. However, the opposite is also incorrect. Simply because everyone trusts a long-time leader does not ensure organizational quality. From this perspective, is PU well situated for the future? They have the conditions for quality to arise insofar as the culture is one of trust. Rather than focus on rationalistic changes that are sure to occur—the retirement of the president, and the like—we are suggesting that the organization’s participants will be well served if they concentrate on cultural values and how discussions about values might enable the promulgation of quality.

Consonant with the issue of decision-making culture is faculty responsibility. Two instances of important decision making at PU were assigned to the faculty. The revising of the faculty handbook and changing the interim session were both issues originally sent to the Assembly for faculty to decide. In both cases the PU faculty admit to being unable to forward a resolution. “The faculty fumbled around with the [handbook]” said one member of the Assembly. Another commenting on the interim session stated that “the faculty could not make any decision... Finally the president decided for them.” In the interest of promoting cultural values that ensure institutional quality, faculty are obligated to assume responsibility for making informed and timely decisions. The inability to do so can silence faculty voice in decision making and further compromise institutional quality.

CONCLUSION

We have argued here that a rationalist framework assumes reality as objective and understood whereas a cultural frame assumes that organizational reality is created. While such a comment is not surprising, we then pointed out that the implications for governance are quite different. The rationalist assumes that structures exist that can be improved to create more
efficient and effective decisions, whereas proponents of a cultural approach suggest that governance exists through the communicative and symbolic processes of the organization. We then suggested that trust among individual campus constituents provides the scaffolding for effective systems of governance, but that trust alone is an insufficient variable to increase organizational quality. Trust is a process rather than an end.

The case of PU highlights the dilemma of deference. The president at PU is of the opinion that the faculty trust him too much. This, in some ways, signifies not so much an abandonment of faculty responsibility, but the danger of a culture where trust is seen as an end in and of itself. Neither the president nor the administration was characterized as autocratic. Instead, a culture has been created where “getting along” has been at a premium. Our concern is not that trust is useless, but rather that, in a time of change, organizations need to develop cultures that have the expectation of improving quality. In order to improve quality, individuals need to create and sustain ways to effectively engage one another about what the institution’s goals are and how to reach them.

Campuses with deferential systems of governance might examine the expectations of the faculty. Although the PU faculty were service oriented, their service involved carrying out decisions of the administration. Faculty more meaningfully involved in decision-making might likely assert themselves as responsive partners in campus governance rather than as workers.

Governance needs to be more aimed at improving organizational quality than with placating constituencies. The case of Pleasant University serves as one example of the potential dangers of a culture based on agreement. In the development of understanding governance, a consideration of the cultural and structural aspects of an institution is always useful, particularly during times of change. The importance of trust, the issue of faculty responsibility, and the matching of cultural processes with an organization’s structures, represent areas that provide significant insight to the understanding of the complexities of governance.

This case also serves as an example of the need to create governance systems and cultures able to withstand transitions. Many of the PU constituents were concerned about what will happen when the current president retires which indicates that their confidence is based on the current collection of personnel. We suggest that effective governance systems are related to personnel but should transcend individuals. As it stands, PU faculty are without effective formal mechanisms that support their involvement in governance. Additionally, the institutional transition will likely incite disagreement, increased autonomy, and a more ambiguous mission—all factors for contentious decision making.

The culture of decision making is then complimented by structural mechanisms that reinforce the values of a campus community. Scholars
often discuss structure to the exclusion of culture or vice versa. Although our focus here is on culture we do not intend to suggest that structure does not matter. Instead the two (culture and structure) should reflect one another and not been seen as exclusively separate. A cultural perspective helps us view academe from one angle but effective systems are comprised of balance between both cultural values and flexible structures that support them.

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References


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Understanding Faculty Senates: Moving from Mystery to Models

James T. Minor

Undoubtedly faculty play an integral role in the intellectual enterprise of colleges and universities (Barnett, 1994). Their role in governance and decision-making, however, is a point of contention on many campuses (Gerber, 2001). In the tradition of higher education, approximately 90% percent of four-year institutions have a faculty governing body that, for better or worse, participate in campus governance (Gilmour, 1991). Yet research and theoretical knowledge about their involvement in campus decision-making is limited (Kezar & Eckel, forthcoming). For example, functional and structural differences that exist among senates, within or across institutional types, are virtually unknown. As a result, litigious discussion about faculty governance continues in the absence of descriptive or theoretical understanding about how faculty senates participate in decision making.

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Still, faculty participation in decision-making is ardently associated with institutional ineffectiveness (Burgan, 1998). Campus decision making, according to the American Association of University Professors’ (1966) statement on governance requires the participation of all institutional components, although faculty, the president, and governing boards are referenced as primary caretakers of the university. Robert Birnbaum (1999) stresses that governance is a shared responsibility, a joint effort involving multiple constituencies with particular emphasis given to the participation of faculty. Faculty participation in governance is accepted as intrinsically desirable and as improving institutional effectiveness (Floyd, 1994). However, during a time when effective governance systems are becoming increasingly important for institutional success, faculty senates are often viewed as dysfunctional, underperforming, or impeding (Jordan, 2001; Trow, 1990).

Many higher education scholars point out the importance of effective governance systems for managing this era of change and innovation in the academy (Amacher & Meiners, 2002; Duderstadt, 2001a). Although government agencies, trustees, and university presidents will affect campus governance, faculty are often deemed the most conspicuous of internal governing bodies. They are structurally and culturally diverse and have varying levels of influence on multiple decisions (Minor, 2003). Additionally, increased institutional autonomy and lack of research limit theoretical understanding about the role senates play in governance. Consequently, many campus leaders struggle to make informed sustainable changes that improve the effectiveness of senates.

Although faculty can participate in decision making through multiple venues, such as academic departments or ad hoc committees, this study focuses on faculty senates as a primary location through which faculty are involved in campus governance. I argue that improving faculty senates depends on understanding the various roles they play in decision making. Various organizational structures, senate structures, and decision-making cultures can muddle assessments of senates and confuse understanding about their role in governance. This study augments the perennial debate on how to enhance faculty senates by advancing a conceptual frame to serve as a base for discussion and research. Doing so provides a construct for understanding senates and their role in governance across various institutional types. I offer four models of faculty senates: functional, influential, ceremonial, and subverted and discuss key variables important for comprehending them.

Based on 12 site visits and telephone interviews with 42 senate presidents, I provide these models of faculty senates in order to establish a taxonomy by which senates can be better understood and studied. To begin, I review the handful of studies on faculty governance. I then describe the study and introduce the models. Lastly, I discuss the parameters of these models and their use for understanding other aspects of faculty governance.
Faculty involvement in governance receives a good deal of scholarly attention (Collie & Chronister, 2001; Hollinger, 2001; Miller, 1996). Yet scholars tend to pay less attention to the function of faculty senates as the predominant organization whereby faculty participate in institutional governance. Most literature on faculty governance discusses the involvement of faculty broadly and from a variety of perspectives (Baldrige & Kemerer, 1976; Kolodny, 2000; Morphew, 1999; Schuster, Smith, Corak, & Yamada, 1994).

For example, numerous articles discuss the importance of shared governance (Hardy, 1990), examine the impact of institutional change in relation to current governance structures (Benjamin & Carroll, 1999), or generally discuss the importance of faculty participation in governance (Miller, 1999). While these approaches to the challenges of governance are each helpful, they do not distinctly analyze the role of faculty senates. As a point of departure, I use the existing literature to understand the concept of faculty participation in governance and perceptions about the role of senates in decision making.

**Democratic Participation**

Much of the literature on faculty governance is based on the assumption that faculty participation is crucial to effective institutional decision-making (Birnbaum, 1988). This assertion is based on the view that increased employee participation in decision-making is associated with improved employee satisfaction and performance (Floyd, 1985). Several scholars call for more faculty involvement as a way to improve institutional effectiveness, noting that faculty serve as moral guides for institutions that would otherwise respond solely to market demands (Gerber et al., 1997; Richardson, 1999). In contrast, others claim that faculty’s over-involvement in governance inhibits the institution’s ability to make the fast-paced decisions necessary given the current environment (Association of Governing Boards, 1996; Duderstadt, 2001b). Even institutions that are able to move beyond the issue of democracy, or how much faculty should participate, still struggle with how to effectively involve them in governance.

More than a decade ago, David Dill and Karen Helm (1988) claimed that faculty participation in governance had gone through three different periods which they term faculty control, democratic participation, and strategic policy making. Whether most institutions have moved to strategic planning is questionable. Democratic participation appears to be a more accurate description of faculty involvement, as much of the literature still views governance as a democratic process into which faculty should be incorporated (Hardy, 1990; Mortimer & McConnell, 1978). In that vein, many scholars examine the effects of faculty involvement (or its lack) in specific institutional decisions such as fund raising, budget cuts, program discon-
tinuance, strategic planning, and athletics (Dill & Helm, 1988; Dimond, 1991; Kissler, 1997; Newman & Bartee, 1999). The focus on democratic participation (for the sake of democracy) unfortunately overshadows discussions about how to effectively involve faculty in governance and to what extent more or less involvement improves the quality of decision-making.

Perceptions of Faculty Senates

Incessant concerns about governance and the effectiveness of faculty senates are difficult to address in the absence of models that explain senate involvement in governance. Concerning faculty senates, the majority of institutions operate without benchmarks or comparative perspectives to assess their own behavior. A recent survey (Tierney & Minor, 2003) found that the majority of campus constituents believe that shared governance is important but have little confidence in the senate’s ability to influence important decisions. While these findings reveal cultural perceptions of the senate, the issue of effectiveness is more difficult to discern. Perceptions about the behavior of the senate need to be situated within a frame that explains senate involvement in governance. In other words, to simply say that a particular senate is “ineffective” or “successful” means little without benchmarks against which to evaluate behavior.

Although only a handful of studies directly address the role of faculty senates in governance (Baldridge & Kemerer, 1976; Birnbaum, 1991; Gilmour, 1991; Lee, 1991; Moore, 1975), even fewer provide a theoretical frame for understanding them. Birnbaum’s (1989) study is probably the most widely accepted theoretical work on senates. In an attempt to explain “why senates do not work but will not go away,” he offered a symbolic perspective claiming that senates, although ineffective organizationally, still perform symbolic or cultural functions that are purposive.

While Birnbaum’s study is helpful, there is also a need to understand alternative senate types. For example, what are attributes of senates that are perceived as “working”? My study provides models of faculty senates across institutional types and across varying levels of involvement in decision making.

Three points help summarize the literature on faculty governance and senates. First, faculty involvement in governance remains a cornerstone of higher education and an institutional value for many campuses. Still, disagreement exists over the areas in which faculty should have decision-making authority and the extent of their involvement in campus governance. Second, little is known about the structural, cultural, or functional qualities of faculty senates. Different senate types or variations in different institutional sectors have not been delineated. Third, the development of theory explaining the role faculty senates’ play in governance is primitive. The limited theoretical understanding of senates impairs the ability of those in higher
education to develop policies that more effectively involve faculty in governance. The lack of empirical and conceptual work specifically on senates leaves a distinct gap in the literature. This study, to the extent possible, intends to narrow that gap. Providing a contemporary conceptual frame to view senates is one way of doing so.

**Creating Models of Faculty Senates**

In general, theoretical models are intended as tentative descriptions that account for the known properties of a particular subject matter or object. My purpose in creating faculty senate models was to capture the essence of how senates operate in relation to campus governance but not to suggest that one is better than another or that one model is most appropriate for a particular institutional type. As prelude to such analysis, these models simply provide a way to comprehend faculty senates and their role in governance.

**Methods**

I developed these models of faculty senates based on data collected from 12 site visits and telephone interviews with 42 senate presidents. Based on the Carnegie Classification of Higher Education Institutions (2000), six of the sites were doctoral universities, two master’s institutions, and four baccalaureate colleges. Nine were public and six private. I sampled seven of the institutions purposively and accepted recommendations about the remaining five from an advisory board composed of higher education association leaders, based on the institutions’ emblematic and distinctive governance characteristics. The sample represents institutions across various sectors of higher education and campuses that employ varied methods of governance. These campuses also represent a cross-section of institutions where governance systems are perceived by internal and external constituents as more or less effective. In other words, some campuses have received national attention due to controversy over governance while others maintain a relatively satisfied constituency.

At each campus, I targeted approximately seven individuals for interviews, for a total of 86 participants during the site visits. To enhance the trustworthiness of the data, participants held diverse perspectives concerning the health of governance and the senate (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). They included presidents, vice presidents for academic affairs (provosts), faculty senate presidents, senior academic officers, and faculty from various disciplines. Advocates, critics, long-time participants, newcomers, and observers were all included. The hour-long interviews focused on the institutional concept of shared governance and the involvement of faculty senates in decision making. Through a series of open-ended questions, I asked participants to provide examples of major institutional decision making.
In addition to the site visits, I conducted telephone interviews with 42 faculty senate presidents at doctoral institutions across the country. On average, these senate presidents had been affiliated with their institutions for 23 years. Thirty-one of the institutions were public and eleven were private. I used a set of 12 semi-structured questions, focusing on structural and cultural aspects of senates and factors that the interviewees perceived to be associated with senate effectiveness. Gaining additional insight from leaders of senates concerning perceptions about the role they play in governance served as the goal for conducting these interviews.

Analyzing the data from both the site visits and telephone interviews involved using a constant comparative method and axial coding techniques to establish models of faculty senate involvement in campus governance (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The constant comparative method allowed for simultaneous coding and analysis to develop general themes. I then used axial coding to reduce the data and refine the categories. Based on the themes, I initially identified six models of senates, which I subsequently reduced to four.

Through this analysis, I identified themes in relation to how faculty senates functioned in the overall context of institutional governance. Based on a review of the literature and these data, I offer the following four models of faculty senates. (By “faculty senate” I mean the formal faculty governing body on a campus, although terms such as “faculty council,” “academic senate,” and “academic assembly” are alternatively used by some campuses. These models are intended to provide four conceptual frames within which to understand senate involvement in governance.

**MODELS OF FACULTY SENATES**

*Functional Senates*

Functional senates primarily operate to represent and protect the interest of faculty in university decision making. The structure of functional senates is relatively traditional. The senate membership is elected and representative, usually acting through a faculty-led executive committee. These senates can also involve deans or other administrators as members of the senate. Various committees have specific responsibilities and carry out the work of the senate. The senate’s decisions or recommendations usually result from formal procedures and voting. Governing documents such as by-laws, a faculty handbook, a constitution, or statutes determine the extent of its authority. One senate president explains: “The involvement of our senate is dictated by state statutes that clearly spell out procedures and the extent of their power.”
These senates usually maintain authority in areas that are traditionally the domain of the faculty such as curriculum, promotion, tenure, and academic standards. They usually influence decisions by way of making recommendations upon which the administration may either act or which it may dismiss. Such senates have minimal influence over “nonacademic” areas of university decision making. Often such influence is merely a matter of being consulted when the administration deems it necessary. The faculty senate president at a doctoral university claimed that “[the senate] engages in deliberations about campus decisions but ultimately we decide nothing.”

In essence, these senates are somewhat perfunctory, given their limited authority. Even in academic decision making, these senates sometimes operate in only an advisory capacity because approving a curriculum change or new program rests with higher authorities (governing boards or trustees). A faculty member at a master’s institution reported that “new courses and changes to a particular program although debated and proposed in the senate have to be approved by the board, and requests are sometimes rejected.” One long-time faculty member at a doctoral university warned: “It is not uncommon for the administration to proceed with academic initiatives without the approval of the senate.”

Functional senates are not particularly assertive and usually do not set their own agenda. Instead, they respond to the initiatives and actions of the administration or issues that arise from the environment. A faculty member at the same doctoral university remarked, “I can’t think of anything significant that the senate has initiated. Their actions are often in response to administrative or circumstantial events.” A newcomer at a baccalaureate college stated:

I’ve been amazed at how passive the faculty are. You would think that at the beginning of each academic year [the faculty] would set an agenda for what they might accomplish over the course of the year. There is no such thing. Instead [the senate] deals with the winds as they blow.

These senates do safeguard faculty rights against perceived administrative transgressions. In the event of contentious action by the administration, these senates can become a legitimate force that check and balance administrative authority. In these institutions, presidential and administrative authority is often strong. Overall these senates function as an association that represents faculty interests rather than a lateral partner in campus decision-making. “There are times when faculty feel threatened or there’s something to be gained or lost. It is usually during those times when faculty will occasionally assert a role in decision-making,” explained one assistant provost at a master’s institution. Still, this form of participation is
responsive and usually occurs to block an action rather than support an initiative.

These senates’ limited role in decision making is often an accepted part of the organization’s structure and culture. In other words, the role that functional senates play is important for maintaining the organizational status quo. “Everyone here knows that [the senate] makes decisions on academic matters; but for everything else and even some academic issues, we serve as an advisory body to the president,” claimed one faculty member. The provost at a master’s institution adds, “Our senate might not be the most powerful or energetic, but I think one advantage is that the relationship between faculty and administration is established.” Generally these senates are viewed by the campus as “the place where faculty go to at least feel like they have some control of over the university, when in actuality that control is very limited.”

**Influential Senates**

Influential faculty senates serve as a legitimate governing authority within the institution. They maintain a traditional structure that is electoral and representative of the faculty. However, they usually exist on campuses where the power center shifts between constituencies as the contextual circumstances change. Their authority usually stems from institutional cultural aspects which legitimate their power. Still, power can result from the formal provisions in governing documents. These senates are occupied exclusively by faculty, and the presence of the provost or president is usually ex officio. Overall, these senates represent the locus of faculty authority.

Like functional senates, influential senates maintain authority over curriculum, promotion, tenure, and academic standards. These senates also participate in and significantly influence decision making that encompasses a broader spectrum of the institution. Decisions involving athletics, development, budget priorities, and the selection of new senior administrators are a few areas where these senates are meaningfully involved. One faculty member from a baccalaureate institution explained that “most faculty recognize that creating change on this campus is usually done through work in the senate.” Another added that “the senate really has been influential in shaping major decisions on this campus. [The senate] is very well organized to get information, analyze it, and provide direction on a wide range of issues.”

Influential senates drive issues and promote policy changes that result from having an agenda concerned with the entire university, not just faculty issues. As one faculty senate president explained:

[The senate] has two issues that we’re going to take up this year. The first is the issue of prioritizing athletics on this campus. The second is developing a
same-sex benefits policy. I expect that, by the end of the year, we will have made significant progress on both.

While influential senates are responsive to the administration, the administration also responds to them as a result of being a recognizable governing body on the campus. These senates view themselves as responsible for the general welfare of the institution and assume responsibility for improving its overall quality.

The campus community views these senates as influential because they can create change and other decision-making bodies perceive them as a legitimate governing authority on the campus. The president of a baccalaureate college explained: “It is nearly impossible to get things done without the involvement of the senate.” A faculty member from the same institution remarked, “I think the faculty are well respected because the senate has proven to be responsible, fair, and not only committed to issues that will improve the conditions of faculty.” These senates usually maintain a collaborative, rather than a confrontational, relationship with administration. “The faculty and the administration have been able to maintain a respectful working relationship that allows us to focus on the things that matter,” described one doctoral university president. Consequently, these senates can influence major decision making in a variety of areas. The provost at a master’s institution claimed that “the faculty senate has a history of being effective at representing the faculty view as well as significantly shaping other important decisions such as institutional priorities, budget cuts, and redefining our student profile.”

Ceremonial Senates

Faculty senates that are ceremonial are relatively inactive and inoperable, with low-level organization. In essence, they exist in name only and operate as symbolic artifacts. They seldom meet regularly, and faculty express little interest in governance. The structural power of the president and administration is correspondingly strong. Additionally, only modest communication takes place between faculty and administration concerning decisions under consideration.

On traditional academic issues, ceremonial senates are inactive as organizations. Decision-making authority over academic matters frequently rests with individual schools and colleges. The senate’s agenda may consist of routine functions such as electing new officers. One long-time faculty member at a doctoral university described his senate as “a place where faculty go to discuss what they think is going on or talk about decisions after they have been made.” One critic from the same campus asserted: “Nobody pays attention to the senate. It is inconsequential to anything that happens on this campus.”
However, in line with Birnbaum’s theory of faculty senates, these senates may perform latent functions that are not related to university governance. For example, the senate may serve as a scapegoat for the administration, provide status for particular faculty, or act as a screening device for future administrators (Birnbaum, 1989). Because campus constituents view these senates as dormant, organizationally they have no role in decision making.

When I asked one faculty member at a doctoral university what the senate had accomplished in the last two years, he laughed out loud. A dean from the same institution commented: “To be honest, nobody really takes the senate seriously. [The senate] is like a dinosaur. It used to be really powerful but now their impact is nonexistent. They are unimportant to life as we know it today.” Others from the campus community explain ceremonial senates a result of faculty apathy or an institutional history of strong presidential authority. “For many years the president ignored the faculty, in some cases for good reason. The result has been that faculty are apathetic and the senate has died,” explained a humanities professor of 28 years. A former member of the senate at a master’s institution explained: “It didn’t take me long to figure out that the senate was like a sad bird with no feathers; who wants to be a part of that?”

Subverted Senates

The fourth model is the subverted senate. Their role in governance is undermined by alternative venues of faculty participation, usually by informal decision-making processes that occur in place of, or in addition to, the senate’s formal operations. These senates maintain operable structures that involve formal proceedings. However, the informal processes by which faculty participate in decision making are more effective in determining decision outcomes. For example, well-respected senior faculty may be able to influence decision making on a particular issue more than the formal proceedings of the senate.

Administrators on these campuses may employ “kitchen cabinets,” a term referring to small groups of “trusted faculty” or individuals who influence major decisions through informal processes. One new faculty member at a baccalaureate institution claimed that “the president has a special committee that he appoints members to. Whenever he wants faculty perspectives, he consults that committee, not the senate.” The disregard of decision-making protocol, weakened structure, or distrustful decision-making cultures can cause these senates to be incapacitated.

These senates maintain authority in areas of curriculum, tenure, promotion, and instruction. Members of the academic community, due to disagreements, occasionally challenge their authority. These senates are often accused of being narrow in focus, confrontational, and, in some cases, marred by a history of irresponsible decision making. Concerning issues of institu-
tional improvement, the administration often views these senates as an obstacle to be avoided. As a provost at a master’s institution put it, “Over the years the president has continually taken decisions out of the hands of faculty due to resistance and an inability to get things done.”

Subverted senates usually suffer from negative cultural and communicative aspects that affect their role in campus decision making. Institutional history, rumination over past fall-outs, or confrontation between key players in the senate and administration can lead to senate subversion. The combination of personnel, type of decision, and poor communication affect, in varying degrees, the influence of these senates. “The faculty view the administration as oppressive, and administrators see faculty as disengaged,” explained one former senate member at a master’s institution. “The senate then serves as a battleground for perceived power rather than a playing field to make decisions.” Distrust between constituents can lead to “deal-cutting” and other actions that circumvent the senate as an organization. In some cases, failed senates resulted in alternative decision-making processes. A provost from a master’s institution emphasized, “I think the president only trusts the senate with issues that he can afford to lose on, which are usually things that he doesn’t care much about.”

Campus perceptions about these senates indicate a lack of confidence that they can or will make sound decisions as the chief reason for their being subverted. Others point to an inability of faculty and administration to work together. One former senate member at a doctoral university lamented: “For many years there has been a deep-rooted distrust between the faculty and the administration. I get the sense most people can’t really point to the source of such animosity, yet holding on to it seems to be a part of the culture which inhibits faculty involvement in governance.”

Analyzing Key Variables

As a way to elaborate on these models, I now consider key variables for making better sense of them. Taking into account (a) what issues are under consideration, (b) personnel and culture, and (c) the ability of senates to shift from one model to another is important for understanding and using these models. I believe that these issues influence the role faculty senates play in campus governance.

Importance of Type of Decision

The roles that faculty senates play in campus decision making are affected, in part, by the type of decisions under consideration. The decisions to discontinue football, launch a new academic program, or set policy for distance education curriculum, for example, can affect how faculty senates operate. In other words, it is possible that a senate can function uncharac-
characteristically when involved in a decision that holds extraordinary consequences. Given the unique nature of colleges and universities, it could be said that no decision is ordinary. However, these institutions show that while making high-stakes decisions or resolutions that carry negative consequences for faculty, senates tend to be more engaged. This pattern emerged at five of 12 sites visited and 13 of 42 cases from the telephone interviews. A faculty

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Senate Characteristics</th>
<th>Perception of Campus Constituents</th>
<th>Areas of Decision Making</th>
<th>Relationship with Administration</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Functional</td>
<td>An association that represents the faculty. Exists to protect and preserve faculty rights.</td>
<td>Curriculum, tenure, promotion, and issues relevant to faculty work conditions.</td>
<td>Cooperative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influential</td>
<td>A governing body that can initiate change on campus. Viewed as a partner in campus governance.</td>
<td>Curriculum, tenure, promotion, faculty issues, institutional improvement, strategic and budget priorities.</td>
<td>Collaborative/collegial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ceremonial</td>
<td>Not an important part of campus governance. Faculty are disengaged and senate activity is viewed as a pasttime.</td>
<td>The academic calendar, election of new officers, and other routine/mundane decisions reserved for the senate.</td>
<td>Cooperative/passive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subverted</td>
<td>Could be more effectively involved in governance; lacks the confidence of other important governing constituencies to do the right thing.</td>
<td>Institutional decisions reserved specifically for the senate; uninvolved in other areas of decision making where it has no formal authority.</td>
<td>Skeptical/confrontational</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
member from a campus with a functional senate reported, “Our senate is usually very modest; but every now and then, there is an issue that they feel strongly about. It is during these times when the senate can take on a more assertive character.”

Based on the number of campuses that show differences in character during particular types of decision, it is therefore important to consider how decision types influence the senate’s role. For example, functional senates showed greater levels of interest in decision making when faculty could potentially lose or gain authority in a particular area. A member of a ceremonial senate claimed, “When the university was considering instituting a post-tenure review policy, the senate was more alive than ever because everyone was worried about what would happen to them.” Another added that “the only time the senate is really engaged is when decisions directly affect or threaten the comfort of faculty.”

This insight raises questions about faculty participation in governance according to issue. Some scholars suggest that faculty are capable of constructive participation during “hard decisions” that may have negative consequences for their work conditions (Eckel, 2000). However, it is not clear which types of decisions generate more or less participation. Considering participation according to decision-type is also important for the number of new decision areas in higher education. For example, for-profit endeavors in which two institutions join their curricula to offer market-driven programs is one issue that will likely create questions about faculty involvement in decision making (Eckel, 2003; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997).

It is equally important to note that all senates did not show differences in character while making high-stakes decisions or in dealing with issues that directly affected faculty. Functional senates showed the most significant change during high-stakes decision making. Other senate types (influential, ceremonial, and subverted) were more stable across various decision types. These differences may be attributed to the fact that, culturally and structurally, the role of functional senates is continually negotiated while influential, ceremonial, and subverted senates have more stable roles.

For example, one functional senate at an urban doctoral school would not normally have been involved in budget issues, but when the university was deciding whether to build new dormitories on campus during a time of fiscal constraints, the senate took an unusually active role. Building new dormitories on this largely commuter campus would significantly improve the climate of teaching and learning, a point of particular interest to the faculty. However, the administration framed the proposal to build the dorms as a way of improving enrollment and thus increasing revenue. Because of the potential consequences for teaching and improved intellectual environment, the senate became uncharacteristically involved in a matter that the administration viewed as budgetary, an issue from which functional sen-
ates are normally excluded. One senate member explained, “Never would [the senate] be so involved in budget matters, but this issue of building new housing seems to be one of the few things both the faculty and administration want to do.” A senate president from the same campus commented: “Our senates might be more or less involved in decision making depending on what’s at stake. If there are no empires to build or money to be had, then we pretty much stay out of the way and mind our own business.”

In short, the dynamics of particular decisions can involve faculty senates in ways that stretch the parameters of these models.

**Personnel and Culture**

Another variable that influences the role of senates is personnel—or the extent to which key governance personnel effectively communicate, cooperate, and collaborate. These persons include senate leaders, the president, the chief academic officer, and others who play key roles in campus decision making. Their interaction can significantly shape the role of faculty senates. The social and cultural aspects of campus governance influence decision making as much as structural characteristics. The majority of studies on governance tend to exaggerate the need to reform governance structures but pay little attention to the influence of communication and cultural aspects (Tierney & Minor, in press). This study provides an indication of how personnel affect the role of the senate. The configuration of personnel appeared to affect subverted senates most significantly and, to a degree, the role of functional senates.

Participants involved in governance can, through their interactions, influence the role of senates by continuing to operate within existing cultural norms or by creating new ones. For example, a faculty senate president from a doctoral institution with a functional senate explained: “Under our old president [the faculty] were never involved in governance. He just didn’t believe in it; and as a result, we were shut out.” A former faculty senate president from a master’s institution with a subverted senate lamented:

> Unfortunately, I don’t believe anything the administration tells [the faculty]. For a long time they have shown an unwillingness to work with us on hard issues. In their minds it’s much easier to bulldoze ahead, and maybe consult us along the way or at the end. The relationship between the old administration and the old senate wasn’t that way.

One long-time faculty member at a baccalaureate institution with a functional senate stated:

> It’s hard for me to think that structural qualities are problematic for senates. We’ve had the same structure for 30 years and governance never worked. In the last five years we’ve gotten a new president and provost, and now it works but the structure hasn’t changed a bit.
These quotations illustrate the influence that personnel and institutional culture can have on the role senates play in governance. Issues such as trust, preservation of cultural norms, or aversion among actors are important for developing a more complete picture of governance. Distrust, for example, was shown to interrupt communication on one campus. “We have an issue of screening,” said one senate member. “In senate meetings there is the sense that you can’t tell everything, and you can’t trust that everything is being told.” The senate on this campus invites the provost to meetings to establish communication between the administration and faculty, normally a helpful measure, but one that inadvertently resulted in self-censorship because many faculty did not trust the provost. In this case, cultural aspects of governance were more problematic than structural configuration of governing bodies.

Conflicting perceptions about authority also appeared to inhibit governance. Faculty usually had perceptions of authority that were somewhat different from the administrators’ perceptions. For instance, faculty usually perceived administrators as more powerful than the administrators viewed themselves. Conversely, administrators viewed faculty as more powerful than faculty viewed themselves. On a campus with a subverted senate, a provost expressed discontent with the faculty: “I would like to see faculty take advantage of the authority they have been given to affect positive change.” However, a member of that campus’s senate commented, “I think the faculty would be more willing to participate in governance if the administration took us seriously and faculty felt [as if] their input mattered.” Conflicting perceptions of governance can result in poor communication or a culture of distrust. More importantly, these dynamics are cultural elements that can significantly impact the role that senates play in governance.

Many efforts to improve governance focus on structural elements, probably because they are more tangible and easier to change. Cultural aspects of governance usually represent a more difficult task that involves the breaking down of established norms, sustained efforts that are focused, and, in some cases, personnel changes. Reform efforts and arguments that consider structural aspects of governance will benefit from cultural analyses that provide a more complete picture of campus decision making.

**Ability to Shift Models**

Throughout the study it became apparent that some senates had, over time, transitioned from one model to another or were currently in the process of shifting. Personnel and structure significantly impact senates’ ability to shift. For example, hiring a new president or provost, or making definite structural changes that grant more or less authority to senates are issues that impact a senate’s ability to shift. Cultural shifts that restore trust or improve the campus’s perception of senates can also alter their role but
Three senates from the sample (one from a master’s institution and two doctoral institutions) had recently transformed or were in transition. A provost from a small baccalaureate institution explained: “Historically I think that our senate has been inactive; however, in recent years, the president and I have really made a push to make the senate more responsible for dealing with issues they deem important.” A faculty senate president from a doctoral institution stated:

I think right now [the senate] primarily exists to make recommendations and give advice, but we are moving toward becoming more critically involved in decision making. Recently we have been trying to get a voting seat on the top administrative committee and on the board. So far we have gotten the former, which has really made a difference in how the administration views us and how much power we have.

To better understand these models, the assumption must be that they exist in a fluid environment. Different actors enter and exit from campus communities. Circumstances such as legal mandates can change the arrangement of formal governing bodies. A sudden drop in student enrollment or revenue can call for stronger presidential leadership. My point is that senates can shift from one model to another over the course of their existence. As a result, some senates might fall between models. Type of decisions, personnel and culture, and a senate’s ability to shift are important variables in determining how senates participate in institutional governance. The four models of faculty senates (functional, influential, dormant, subverted) represent a protean construct. Taking these variables into account is important for better understanding the senate models. Figure 1 illustrates how decision-type and personnel might affect the role that senates play in governance.

As mentioned earlier, my purpose is not to say which model is more effective than another. Rather it is to offer a frame by which faculty senates can be better understood. These models thus provide a construct that makes a complex collection of senates more comprehensible. I am reminded of the early organizational models explaining institutions of higher education and the impact that they still have on how we think about universities (Kerr, 1963; Masland, 1985; Weick, 1976). Moreover, those models influenced approaches to research.

Those familiar with faculty senates will be able to say, to some degree, that their institution does not neatly fit into one of the models presented here. While this may be true, the usefulness of these models is as a conceptual frame to understand the role faculty senates play in governance across a variety of institutional types. A significant need for more research is evident. The questions that drive research on governance, however, are better
focused on how university decision making can position institutions of higher education for success. After laying out these models, I now consider two aspects of faculty senates important for further research: the importance of structure and alternatives for faculty participation.

**The Importance of Structure**

During the conception of this study, I attempted to distinguish structural differences among faculty senates. I studied such structural variables such as the number of senate members, how often they met, committee structure, or who chaired the senate. However, in the course of this inquiry, it became apparent that, on the campuses in this study, structure did not necessarily distinguish the roles that senates played in governance. Senates can have distinctly different structures but serve similar roles with respect to their involvement in governance. Likewise, senates can have similar structures but serve significantly different roles.

Although structure can influence the role senates play, I do not consider it to be the most significant variable for determining models of senates. Senates are more accurately situated according to multiple aspects, including institutional context, decision-type, culture, and leadership. This is not to suggest that structure has no effect. I am, however, suggesting that the effect of structural qualities is not clear in relation to other aspects. The question then becomes: Which structural qualities significantly affect the role of senates in campus governance, and which do not?

As an example, many senate leaders view one-year terms for senate presidents as a structural flaw that inhibits effectiveness. However, on campuses where the culture of faculty participation represents the challenge, the struc-
ture of the senates may not necessarily be the most pressing problem. Cultural aspects such as trust or communication may be more serious. Research on other institutional and cultural dynamics is important in understanding of faculty senates. Also it is important to understand the interactions of cultural and structural variables.

Alternatives for Faculty Participation

Thus far, I have discussed faculty senates under the rubric of faculty involvement in governance. Senates are not, however, the only means by which faculty can significantly participate in campus decision making. Alternatives include ad hoc committees, individual advocacy, academic departments, schools, or possibly collective bargaining unions, to name a few. Such avenues for participation do not negate the importance of senates; instead, they are a simple reminder that other forms of participation exist and, more importantly, should be considered for their impact on the role of senates.

Are only certain types of faculty invited to participate in decision-making committees outside the senate? Do these alternative venues detract from senate effectiveness, or does senate ineffectiveness lead to the creation of alternative venues for faculty participation? For campus leaders attempting to make sense of decision making, understanding alternative venues for faculty participation is also important. Alternative venues can, depending on the context, enhance faculty participation by providing an opportunity for involvement or serve as a contending voice that diminishes the effect of a senate.

Conclusion

Faculty senates remain an integral part of campus governance. The role they play is the cause of much controversy, dissatisfaction, and debate. Yet, the amount of scholarship on senates leaves campus leaders interested in reform with little direction. Instead most literature on faculty governance is colored by arguments for more or less authority by particular constituencies. In my view, conversations that consider how granting more or less authority may influence institutional effectiveness are more useful. The turf wars that characterize the literature are like a tug-of-war in which the rope never moves far from the starting point. More scholarship that delineates good practice and provides better understanding of the dynamics involved with faculty senates is needed.

The models presented here are intended to lessen the mystery surrounding senates and to offer a model by which they can be understood. Secondly, these models will, I hope, encourage additional research on senates. Descriptive research that provides a sense of how senates and other governing bodies, such as governing boards, are organized represents a useful start.
Additionally, an increased focus on effective governance systems opposed to highlighting those that fail will help establish models that move campuses toward improvement. Campus leaders responsible for the development of governance policy should have the benefit of research rather than suspicion. Governance, the structure and processes by which campus decisions are made, has significant consequences for the health of institutions. The faculty senate represents just one important aspect of campus governance. However, the performance of faculty governing bodies can either promote or stymie the success of institutional initiatives.

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Cultural and symbolic processes—that is, communication—quite frequently play as important a role as structural issues in enabling effective governance.

A Cultural Perspective on Communication and Governance

William G. Tierney, James T. Minor

“I find it ironic,” said one professor, “that you can be a faculty member here and never hear from the senate. You would think there would be some correspondence, or the representative from your school would come to faculty meetings to provide some indication of what the senate is doing.” The professor’s observation is on target. The role of communication in the governance of academic organizations is frequently underestimated or, more likely, ignored. Instead, studies of governance generally involve structural or role-related analysis. Some scholars discuss the strengths and weaknesses of an academic senate or assembly, for example, and consider its size, composition, and functions in relation to its effectiveness. Others evaluate the relative power of a particular position within a governing body, such as the presidency, or the role of mid-level functionaries, such as department chairs or deans.

In this chapter we consider the role of communication in academic governance. We suggest that to become more effective in governance, faculty should focus on communicative strategies in addition to structural reforms. All too often, however, when faculty believe that their power is diminished or that their voice is limited, they argue solely for structural changes to one or another academic body. Although we do not dispute that on some campuses an overhaul of a decision-making body such as an academic senate is useful, we assert that it is necessary to consider the interpretive potential of organizational life. Colleges and universities are not simply the sum of the structural units that produce and disseminate knowledge within them; they are also places where symbolic and abstract cultural
meanings are created. From an interpretive perspective, these symbols and meanings are in part the byproduct of the cultural processes that an organization’s actors create in communicating with one another. It is these processes and communicative acts that we wish to consider here. We argue that the culture of the organization determines communication, and that communication helps constitute governance.

Our two reference points for analysis are a survey of shared governance that included 763 institutions and a group of eight case studies of four-year colleges and universities. We begin with an overview of the communicative frameworks of governance and then discuss three central aspects of communication: situated meaning, speech and literacy events, and symbols and ceremonies. The goals of the chapter are to highlight the ways in which people communicate with one another and to suggest that communication is a key component of successful shared governance.

**Governance by Conversation**

Lewis B. Mayhew (1974) wrote the following about the governance structure of the modern university: “In one sense the governance of [the] university is governance by conversation. Many of the seemingly critical matters, such as the form of the curriculum or even the size of the budget . . . are the subject of thousands of hours of consultation and conversation before a final decision is ratified” (p. 58). Indeed, it would be impossible to chart how decisions are made in a traditional college or university. Unlike in a business, where an organizational map can at least approximate the path of decision making, at a college or university ideas rarely follow a specific route to their implementation. When one looks, for example, at the issues before faculty senates at different colleges and universities, one finds that issues vary among institutions and even within institutions from one year to the next. Further, at some institutions senates are key faculty-governing bodies, while at other locales they are inconsequential or non-existent (Tierney and Minor, 2003). In a universe of four thousand postsecondary institutions, one certainly can expect a degree of variability among senates. In some senates, for example, all faculty are included, while in others faculty are represented by academic unit or popular vote. In some cases executive committees are chosen by the entire faculty, in others they are selected by the senate itself. Some senate presidents are elected faculty members, while others are the president or academic vice president of the institution.

Structurally, then, one cannot anticipate that a specific governing body will deal with particular issues regardless of institutional type or context. Among institutions, however, the delineation of formal faculty voice is relatively clear. More than 75 percent of the respondents to the survey stated that faculty had substantial influence in determining undergraduate curriculum, standards for promotion and tenure, and standards for the evaluation of
teaching. There was equal agreement among participants that faculty had relatively little formal influence in setting budget priorities or evaluating the president and provost. Perceptual indicators, however, show divergent views. For example, when asked about the quality of communication among campus constituents in decision making, 88 percent of academic vice presidents agreed that it was good, or sufficient to make progress, compared to just 66 percent of faculty who agreed.

Although faculty claimed to have little formal influence in certain types of decisions, they reported having considerable informal influence. Both formal and informal influence were evident in many different types of governance structures. Although more than 85 percent of all four-year institutions have some form of a faculty-governing body, most individuals reported academic departments, standing faculty committees, and ad-hoc committees as substantial venues for participation. One faculty member of twenty-six years responded: “Like many other institutions, we make decisions based on the outcomes of multiple formal and informal conversations.”

One commonsense observation of this process is that, among organizations, structures vary a great deal. Regardless of which venues are employed for deliberations by faculty, decisions are reached through communicative processes that take place within and outside those structures. Our point here is more than simply to assert that one group communicates by formal pathways and another by informal means. We suggest that the manner in which groups communicate with one another highlights underlying cultural beliefs within the organization. In turn, the way in which a college or university’s actors create the culture of the organization determines a host of critical issues pertaining to the faculty’s role in governance.

Accordingly, if it is determined that faculty voice should be increased or taken more seriously in the governance of an institution, then an appropriate strategy for achieving this goal would be to consider the communicative processes employed within the organization. One fruitful way to analyze organizational communication is to consider how meaning is situated, what constitutes speech and literacy events, and how communicative symbols and ceremonies are used and by whom. As will become clear, each of these ideas frames an understanding of how communication functions as a cultural process within an organization.

**Situated Meaning.** Linguists have defined situated meaning as an understanding of the specific context that is transformed and negotiated by rules of speaking, which reflect the actors’ relationships to, and attitudes toward, one another and the issues under consideration (Hymes, 1974). Although rules exist in any institution, in an academic organization populated by highly verbal participants who frequently seek to understand underlying structures, they are particularly important. Thus, we need to come to terms not only with the contexts in which communication takes place, such as a faculty senate, and the actors involved in the specific structure, such as
a senate president, but also with the wider sociopolitical structures in which
the communicative processes are embedded.

Investigations of shared governance need to move away from purely
structural or outcome-related analysis. Looking only to a senate, for exam-
ple, to define the types of issues that will be addressed ignores the ways in
which messages are created by the organization’s culture. Similarly, to argue
simply that the faculty’s power and authority can be gauged by decisions
made in a senate or committee is to disregard the idea that communication
transcends decisions and outcomes. No one has ever plausibly advanced the
argument that any one system of shared governance is better than the rest,
nor has anyone demonstrated that a particular system necessitates that fac-
ulty bodies formally vote on all issues that come before it.

To consider the situated meaning of communication, one must iden-
tify who is and who is not involved in governance, the venues where
governance takes place, and the formal and informal means used to com-
municate. Such an approach has broad implications for the study and
analysis of shared governance. Studies of academic decision making fre-
quently describe faculty governance in either-or terms: either an institu-
tion has an effective faculty senate or its system of faculty governance is a
sham. Rather than assume that everyone must participate in faculty gov-
ernance for it to be effective, we posit that the history, culture, and pres-
ent contexts of an institution frame governance in important ways. What
Clark (1970) defined as a “distinctive college” (p. 234), for example,
might have active faculty involvement on myriad topics, whereas a
research university might seek faculty engagement in only a handful of
issues. A campus with collective bargaining is likely to communicate in
ways quite different from a campus without such an agreement. The point
of our analysis is not to determine the best structure of governance for all
institutions, or to imply that certain roles must have more authority.
Instead, we seek to explore how an organization’s participants make
meaning based on the confines of the institutional context.

**Literacy and Speech Events.** A literacy event takes place when a piece
of writing plays an integral role in shaping meaning and interactions among
participants. Speech events are oral in nature and surround literacy events.
As Heath (1982) has noted, “Speech events may describe, repeat, reinforce,
expand, frame or contradict written materials, and participants must learn
whether the oral or written mode takes precedence in literacy events” (p.
93). Obviously, in an academic community a wealth of literacy events takes
place, and speech events circumscribe organizational decisions. With the
advent of Web sites and the Internet, literacy events have increased dra-
matically, just as conference calls and voice-activated referencing have led
to an increase in speech events. A student newspaper, a faculty forum, a uni-
versity newspaper, a senate Web page, and the minutes and agenda for
meetings are examples of literacy events. Each piece of writing pertains to
some aspect of decision making. It informs various constituencies about
either decisions to be made or actions taken. Writing may be used to explain actions, to argue for or against a particular idea, or to inform debate. Written materials help shape an argument.

Speech events generally take place with participants face-to-face and involve literacy events. Individuals may refer to a text or extrapolate from it, confer individually or as a group, and so on. They might speak formally or informally. An example of a formal speech act that involves a literacy event would be the approval of meeting minutes with changes to the written text suggested orally by a committee member. An example of an informal speech event that involves literacy events could be the gossip or conversation that occurs before or after a meeting about a memo that has been sent or received.

Speech and literacy events, then, are oral and written messages communicated to an organization’s constituencies. Such messages have distinct temporal frames. They can be divided into four types: preparational, presentational, preservational, and promotional. Each event has not only a distinct time frame but also a purpose within that time frame. For example, before making necessary changes to the institution, a group may utilize a Web page to develop white papers that discuss why the faculty need to revamp general education. Or, perhaps, when a presentation is being prepared for a curricular affairs committee, ideas for specific changes may be debated among faculty. Once decisions of any type are made, a faculty handbook may be amended to create institutional memory of the revision. Finally, one may utilize a literacy event to promote and communicate decisions that have been made by the governing body. Such analysis enables us to understand how members make use of particular documents and materials within governance.

When analyzing literacy and speech events, the roles of central and peripheral actors need to be considered. This information is particularly important with regard to shared governance because speech events occur between speakers and listeners. Similarly, a literacy event is an interaction over a text that someone has written and someone reads. Consider, for example, perhaps the most serious action an academic community might contemplate: the removal of an individual faculty member’s tenure. Numerous literacy events come into play—the faculty handbook, the institution’s grievance policy, and all documents pertaining directly to the case. The dismissal proceedings and the hearings of the case are examples of speech events. In analyzing these speech events, it is necessary to consider carefully who instigates the proceedings and who is involved in the hearings. These events are not disembodied scripts devoid of speakers, listeners, authors, and readers. If a faculty committee brings forth a cause for dismissal, the meaning of the scripts may well differ from those if the administration were to do the same. Literacy and speech events inevitably are defined by the situated meaning infused by an organization’s actors, history, and culture.
In one light, the kind of analysis described here does little more than state the obvious: minutes are taken at senate meetings, and individuals make oral changes to written documents that are then preserved. A university president’s memo to the faculty about general education carries different meanings than an assistant professor’s message on a faculty listserv. In this chapter, however, we argue a different point. Shared governance is more than a functional analysis of whether faculty members vote on a particular issue or whether a certain clause exists in the faculty handbook to guarantee protections. Shared governance is a cultural undertaking that reinscribes what the academic community believes about itself. These beliefs help define the speakers, listeners, authors, and readers of speech and literacy events. Just as one needs to analyze the specific protections guaranteed to faculty in a contract to ensure that academic freedom is preserved, a college or university must attend to the cultural interpretations given to communication to achieve effective governance. To ignore these interpretations permits an incomplete understanding of academic governance.

Communicative Symbols and Ceremonies. Manifest messages of governance and the latent and symbolic cultural meanings of an institution also merit attention. As Feldman and March observed, “Organizational structures and processes often have symbolic importance to participants” (Birnbaum, 1989, p. 428). The composition of faculty senates and university committees, the absence or presence of the president at a meeting, and the participation or absence of the provost in promotion and tenure meetings all send messages to the community about governance. These messages are highly unstable and vary from campus to campus. They change over time and exemplify the latent and shifting cultural meanings created within academic communities.

Active faculty participation in governance might indicate to the academic world that a college or university is in the postsecondary mainstream. A for-profit college that relies entirely on part-time faculty who utilize distance learning may seek to legitimize itself by creating a virtual academic senate to prove that it is not so different from traditional institutions. The addition of a promotion and tenure committee that includes requirements about the need to do research at an institution that has no history of doing research may signify that the university aims to rise in the traditional academic hierarchy. Statements about academic freedom that refer to the American Association of University Professors (1966) place an institution in line with mainstream ideas about the topic. Conversely, a statement that stipulates a narrow interpretation of academic freedom made by a representative of a religious institution may be a purposeful symbolic message that the college or university has made a conscious decision to distance itself from the mainstream.

It is important to recognize that symbols and ceremonies, as interpretive acts, rarely have a singular meaning. A president’s absence from senate meetings may indicate that the president’s schedule is too full, but senators may interpret this absence as an affront to shared governance. The faculty’s
extended deliberations over a move to dismiss a colleague accused of terrorist acts may appear to external constituencies as foot-dragging, whereas the faculty may perceive it to be evidence of their devotion to due process and academic freedom. A faculty committee that votes to move from an all-faculty assembly to a smaller group of elected representatives may be motivated by trying to increase faculty voice. However, others might see the change as an attempt to stifle faculty voice. Attending to the symbolic side of academic life is necessary to improve governance. Therefore, those who seek to rethink how governance functions at their institution need to take into account the specific symbolic and cultural meanings that infuse an organization’s structures.

Perceptions of governance on a campus are determined in part by the ceremonies and culture that exist within those organizational structures. Ceremonies are important sites for the analysis of the values of an academic community. At some institutions, for example, during convocation, a faculty member, perhaps the president of the senate, will lead the procession of faculty, administrators, and graduates in the ceremony. The message of this action is that the faculty “lead” the institution. Similarly, when faculty recommend candidates for an honorary doctorate to a board of trustees, they simultaneously highlight their ceremonial and “real” roles in shared governance. Ceremonies provide individuals with a sense of membership and integration in an organization. They convey to faculty that they are not simply members of a guild, rather that they play a central role in determining the institution’s well-being and future. An organization deprived of ceremonies that celebrate or dramatize organizational values is one in which little explicit attention is paid to the cultural aspects of academic life. A de-ritualized organization is one bereft of meaning. In such cases, the actors have assumed that the institution is a collection of instrumentalities in which decisions are made through chains of command. While one cannot dispute the benefits of effective and efficient procedures for an institution, if one ignores the cultural aspects of organizational life, one runs the risk of overlooking the invisible bonds of communal affiliation that tie the professorate to their institution and to one another.

**Improving Communication and Governance**

For those who subscribe to a cultural view of the academic world and are concerned about enhancing faculty involvement in governance, there are at least two central suggestions that logically follow the arguments raised here.

**Focus on Communicative Pathways.** David Leslie has argued cogently (1996) that “change in colleges and universities comes when it happens in the trenches; what faculty and students do is what the institution becomes. It does not happen because a committee or a president asserts a new idea” (p. 110). Unfortunately, there is often a temptation to revert to old-fashioned notions of power, so “where the buck stops” indicates who
has the final authority. If the buck does not pass by the faculty or if individuals believe that the buck actually stops at the faculty’s doorstep, then governance does not appear to be shared. From a cultural perspective, however, governance needs to be more than a basic check of who gets to vote and who is denied the opportunity to do so.

Shared governance does not result solely from the formal allocation of spheres of responsibility and authority (Trow, 1990). Instead, informal arrangements and processes should be interpreted by the academic collective with regard to the relative influence of different academic bodies and the significance of different decisions. It is important to recognize that faculty involvement in governance occurs on many levels and in many forums. Simply because faculty do not vote on a preponderance of issues does not mean that shared governance is not functioning. Meaningful involvement is achieved when multiple constituencies are able to communicate with one another across multiple venues.

Colleges and universities exist in “loosely coupled” environments (Weick, 1976, p. 3). A mistaken tendency among those attempting to improve faculty governance is to try to tighten this loose coupling. Far too often individuals assume that for meaningful engagement to occur all decisions must be processed through a governance structure such as a senate. Such a mindset creates the potential for faculty governance to deal with just a few issues over the course of a year. Instead, those involved would be better advised to accept that institutions exist in decentralized organizations and that the faculty’s engagement with an issue may be sporadic. Effective governance, then, is defined not so much by the presence of an efficient structure or by the number of votes the faculty concludes in a year. Effective governance pertains more to the understanding and management of meaning such that the core values of the faculty and of the institution are not merely preserved, but advanced.

**Accept the Potency of Speech and Literacy Events.** Those who understand the symbolic functions of speech and literacy events within an organization are more likely to use these communicative vehicles than those who ignore them. At a time when faculty have numerous communicative outlets at their disposal, it is imperative that they use them in a systematic fashion. As analysis of typical speech and literacy events at colleges or universities demonstrates, too often it appears as if the administration owns the airwaves. The alumni office puts out the university magazine. The president’s office issues quarterly newsletters. The provost’s office publishes a weekly news magazine and has periodic e-updates to advertise a particular idea. The provost currently is engaged in writing a strategic plan and has sent drafts to the entire faculty asking for feedback. The office of information services reports to the vice president for administration and manages the university’s Web site. The deans send out weekly bulletins on listservs for their individual schools and send out a biannual update to donors, alumni, students, and faculty regarding the state of the school.
Meanwhile, the faculty senate tries to publish one or two newsletters a year that arrive three months late. Their Web site seldom is updated, so one is never really sure what topics are being addressed. The faculty have created a campuswide listserv, but after a heated debate about whether faculty messages should be edited or simply published, only two kinds of messages have appeared: occasional announcements about sublets from faculty who are about to depart on sabbatical, and messages from three professors who do not hesitate to use the listserv to expound on their most recent complaint. As a result, a third of the faculty also has removed itself from the listserv.

Such a portrait may seem like a caricature of academic life, but unfortunately, this scenario often closely reflects the reality of the situation. Some will respond that the administration naturally does a better job of communicating with the academic community, as they have both resources and time at their disposal. At the same time, some leaders are better at symbolic management than others. Faculty who are concerned about governance need to consider ways to communicate a message in a timely, concerted, and systematic manner. Yet, in an era when technology has increased our capability to communicate, faculty communication with one another and with university administration seems to have only decreased. Administrators have mastered ways to get their message out. In contrast, faculty often do not seem to recognize the importance of communication, which returns us to the central precept of this chapter.

Communication is not a cure-all for the current woes that confront those involved in shared governance, but a concern for organizational reform must be balanced with an awareness of the communicative codes within the workplace. Academic organizations are rich in cultural meanings. Intellectual work, in part, involves the understanding, decoding, and manipulation of symbolic messages. If faculty follow such methods in their intellectual endeavors, they can use a similar, critical approach in their efforts to improve shared governance within their academic communities.

References


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FOUR CHALLENGES FACING FACULTY SENATES

by James T. Minor

In this age of institutional change and competition, effective governance and decision-making is more important than ever for higher education.¹ Yet, for more than three decades institutions of higher education have struggled with how to best make decisions and appropriately grant authority.²

Traditionally, it is during times of change or crisis when contention is most apparent. Institutions facing changes such as program discontinuance, turnover in leadership, or the implementation of new initiatives often struggles with who should decide. Accreditation challenges, budget shortfalls, or scandal are just a few other issues that create tense decision-making environments. Distance education, for example, has significant consequences for multiple university constituents. Additionally, competition from the for-profit sector now compels many institutions to adjust admission policies, curriculum, and student services in accordance with market forces.

The role of faculty in campus decision-making is of particular interest because many consider it the core of academic governance.³ Compared to other campus governing bodies—governing boards and administra-

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tors—the role faculty play in campus decision-making is the subject of more concentrated attention and criticism from scholars, but as we shall see, not much research.

The idea of faculty being marginalized is of particular concern for faculty leaders. At the same time, campus administrators are under pressure to make fast-paced decisions in response to a constantly changing climate. How are faculty most effectively involved in decision-making given the current higher education environment?

One constant quandary for those in search of ways to improve governance is insufficient knowledge about where exactly the challenges lie. Although governance seems ubiquitous, many erroneously believe it is well understood. Research on governance and faculty involvement is scant. Much of the work relies on experience-based anecdotes and work using small case studies. In essence, the higher education community is left to speculate about what factors critically impact the role faculty senates play in governance.

In a recent survey, over 50 percent of faculty expressed dissatisfaction with their involvement in decision-making. This combined with the frequency of campus fallouts is sufficient reason to seek improvements. Before doing so, however, it is necessary to be clear about what challenges exist. This article uses two research projects, a national survey, and interviews with faculty senate presidents to identify four challenges for faculty senates. I first describe the studies from which the data are derived. I then describe the challenges and discuss ways to potentially improve the performance of senates.

To better understand aspects of faculty governance, a three-year research project was initiated. The first phase involved a national survey of 763 four-year colleges and universities. Based on the Carnegie Classification of Higher Education Institutions, the random sample included 150 doctoral universities, 302 master’s institutions, and 311 baccalaureate colleges. The sampled institutions represent approximately 55 percent of all schools in each sector. For example, of the 611 existing master’s colleges, 302 (49%) were sampled. Among the doctoral universities, 79 were public and 71 were private. Among the master’s institutions, 140 were public and 162 were private. And among baccalaureate colleges, 68 institutions were public and 243 were private. These ratios also closely
resemble the ratio of public to private institutions in the total population of each institutional sector.

For each institution the vice president for academic affairs or provost, the faculty senate president or equivalent, and three department chairs were targeted. Overall, more than 3,760 individuals were solicited. Among the 150 doctoral universities targeted, 119 (79%) responded. Among the 302 master’s institutions targeted, 236 (78%) responded. And among the 311 baccalaureate colleges, 233 (77%) responded. Table 1 reports institutional and constituency response rates.

**Table 1: Response rate for institutions and constituency groups**

**Institutions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>Targeted</th>
<th>Response Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>119 (79%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>236 (78%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baccalaureate</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>233 (75%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>N= 763</td>
<td>N= 588 (77%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Constituency Groups**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constituency Groups</th>
<th>Targeted</th>
<th>Response Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Vice President</td>
<td>757</td>
<td>416 (55%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Senate Chair</td>
<td>749</td>
<td>509 (68%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>2256</td>
<td>1128 (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>N= 3,762</td>
<td>N= 2,053 (55%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second phase of the research project involved telephone interviews with faculty senate presidents. To search out more details about the challenges of faculty governance and to flesh out the survey data, I contacted 50 senate presidents at doctoral institutions (not included in survey) to arrange telephone interviews. Overall, 42 senate presidents participated in hourlong interviews. Thirty-one of the institutions were public and 11 were private. Each participant responded to 10 semi-structured questions. Both the survey and telephone interviews were intended to provide insight about the structural, cultural, and functional aspects of faculty senates.

For this study, I define faculty governance as the formal participation of faculty governing bodies in campus decision-making. In many cases this involves the faculty senate. However, on a number of campuses an
academic senate, faculty council, faculty assembly, or an alternative faculty governing body is employed. As a caveat, it is important to acknowledge that faculty occasionally participate in governance and decision-making outside the senate or formal governing body. For example, an ad hoc or special committee can serve as an alternative venue for faculty participation. Additionally, not every campus has a senate. Senates, however, remain the most common vehicle for formal faculty participation in governance and provide a common unit of analysis across campuses.

The analyses of the survey data include regression analysis, cross-tabulations, and ANOVA. The interviews were analyzed using axial coding techniques to develop themes related to the role senates play in campus governance.

Based on these data and analyses, I found the following four challenges facing faculty senates and impacting their role in governance.

**Challenge 1: Faculty senates are understudied.**

At the outset of conducting the survey on faculty governance, I searched several educational databases from 1970 to 2001 for articles on academic or “shared” governance. Excluding the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Black Issues in Higher Education*, I found approximately 154 articles in refereed journals, special reports, and other higher education publications. Forty-two articles particularly address the involvement of faculty in governance. Just 13 specifically address faculty senates. Of those 13 articles, six are based on a literature review or lack empirical data. A mere seven are based on sample data, two of which are based on single-institution case studies. If the amount of scholarship available is indicative of how much is known about faculty senates, the need for more research is compelling. Attempts to make determinations about restructuring governance systems and senates without the benefit of sufficient research can lead to precarious action.
In the absence of comparative data, a national snapshot of how senates operate, or clues to what contributes to effective senates, campus leaders have relied on experience and intuition to manage institutions. Although discussion on faculty governance and senates appears regularly in publications, it is often viewpoint-based or in response to crisis. Consequently, the opinions offered reflect, in many cases, narrow or parochial views of institutional governance and of faculty senate involvement. How do senates in similar or different institutions deal with curriculum change? How does senate leadership affect its performance? What are attributes of senates that are effective in improving institutional quality? These are only a few questions that, if informed by research, could substantially help the development of policy and practice as it relates to faculty senates.

Also problematic is the lack of theoretical work concerning senates. While the number of publications on governance reflects the importance of the subject to those in higher education, the lack of research has limited theoretical development and subsequent understanding about senates. Probably the most well-known theoretical contribution is Birnbaum’s work that outlines the latent functions of faculty senates. In explaining, “why senates do not work but will not go away,” he suggests that senates perform a number of important latent (or symbolic) functions. Because senates are traditionally viewed using bureaucratic criteria of organizational effectiveness, they are viewed as failing. However, Birnbaum argues that the latent functions senates perform, although viewed ineffective structurally, are important to the overall institutional function. For example, he claims that the senate can serve as a status provider for faculty members whose status based on traditional norms are hampered by a lack of scholarly achievement.

Research on faculty senates lags far behind the discussion and debate that takes places around the topic. The fact that over 90 percent of four-year colleges and universities have a faculty governing body makes the lack of research in this area ghastly. While searching databases, I found that the most recent articles on senates using sample data were published more than a decade ago. Enhanced understanding about how senates contribute to, or inhibit, effective campus governance will come through the extensive research. Over 70 percent of senate presidents from the telephone interviews

If the amount of scholarship available is indicative of how much is known about faculty senates, the need for more research is compelling.
Challenge 2: There are multiple concepts of shared governance. Multiple interpretations held by campus constituents about what the term “shared governance” actually means remains a challenge for improving faculty governance. Many campuses experience strained decision-making as a result of competing interpretations of the meaning and process. From a rational standpoint, high-stakes decision-making on campuses where multiple constituents hold disparate views about decision-making processes inevitably leads to contention. Usually faculty feel they should be more involved in campus decision-making. While administrators may agree, it is the nature of faculty involvement that creates controversy. Ambiguity within and across campus constituencies over how shared governance is employed creates challenges for faculty senates.

Eighty-seven percent of respondents from the survey believe that shared governance is an important aspect of their institution’s value and identity. However, over 50 percent of faculty are dissatisfied with the nature of their involvement in campus decision-making. Respondents were asked to use their own words to provide a brief definition of shared governance. A content analysis revealed three distinct categories by which respondents define shared governance: 1) fully collaborative, 2) stratified, and 3) consultative. I briefly define each and include quotes from the survey participants to further explicate the descriptions.

Fully collaborative. This view believes that all constituency groups should be meaningfully involved in the decision-making process. Many respondents defined shared governance as the structure and process by which all constituency groups (i.e., governing boards, the administration, faculty, and students) work together to make institutional decisions. This definition of shared governance grants decision-making power to each campus constituency regardless of decision type. Forty-eight percent of participants subscribe to this definition.
One respondent explained that “shared governance is constant consultation between all internal constituencies on all policies and procedure issues.” Another defined it as “a transparent, engaged process in which key constituencies and stakeholders (administration, faculty, staff, and students) work collaboratively towards problem definition and solutions.” In agreement, another described it as “faculty and administration functioning as partners in charting the strategic direction of the institution. Decisions are made collaboratively and, when possible, by consensus.”

Stratified decision-making. According to this view, different constituency groups have authority over specific areas of the institution. This definition of shared governance assumes that the decision type dictates decision-making authority. In other words, governing the institution is shared because each constituency group has authority in a particular area. Decision-making in particular areas is not shared but stratified. Faculty, for example, have authority over curriculum and faculty appointments, administrators have authority over the budget and university policy, and governing boards have ultimate legal authority. This definition draws clear lines of decision-making authority with minimal influence from other constituency groups except under unusual circumstances. For this group shared governance is the structure that grants decision-making authority to different constituency groups. Decision-making is then the process by which those given authority make determinations on issues under consideration. Twenty percent of respondents define this as shared governance.

“Virtually all decisions on curriculum, work conditions, and academic organization are made by the faculty themselves. Faculty contributions to academic decision-making are substantive and significant, and if faculty have a serious gripe, their opinions carry great weight,” wrote one respondent.

Another participant explained “not that faculty make all decisions regarding the institution... however, faculty are responsible for development of the academic programs and content. They might, or might not, be consulted on matters of the overall development of the institution.”

A third defined shared governance as “faculty having full responsibility for curriculum and the administration being responsible for the operation and policies of the campus. The two [faculty and administra-
Consultative. For these respondents the administration has principal authority but consults with faculty and other constituents before making final decisions. This definition grants the majority of decision-making authority to the president and other top administrators with the expectation that they take into consideration the input of campus stakeholders. Important to this definition of shared governance is effective communication about decisions, the sharing of important information, and maintaining the trust and confidence of constituencies. Thirty-two percent of respondents assert that this is “actually” shared governance.

One respondent commented that shared governance “is when the faculty senate is routinely asked for its advice on matters affecting the institution in a timely fashion permitting thoughtful response and when it is clear that this advice is valued and frequently followed.” Another defined shared governance as “an environment in which faculty concerns are always heard and maybe even sometimes heeded.” The person further explained that “the optimal word here is shared, which at least implies that the administration puts forth a good faith effort to seek advice and maybe even listen.” Another participant expounded the definition by asserting that shared governance is employed when “faculty recommendations and resolutions are seriously considered, and if rejected, a clear rationale is provided by the decision-makers.”

Imagine a campus where all three definitions are at work during major decision-making. Even on campuses faced with reconciling two competing definitions of shared governance, the path to effective decision-making is likely to be treacherous. The words of one respondent might more effectively capture the state of many campuses: “We have much work yet to do to define shared governance in a way that allows this rapidly growing institution to make the changes believed necessary by the board and administration and yet to provide appropriate involvement of faculty.”

Challenge 3: Faculty lack interest and involvement in the senate.

Among the respondents in the survey, just 19 percent of those in doctoral universities agree that faculty have a high level of interest in the
activities of the senate. This compared with 39 percent in master’s institutions, and 54 percent in baccalaureate colleges. The problem of marginal faculty participation in the senate has significant consequences for performance. Campuses where faculty have higher levels of participation and interest in the senate are campuses that have more effective senates. Overall, institutions report that just 41 percent of faculty have high levels of interest in senate activity (see Table 2).

Table 2a: Faculty have a high level of interest in the senate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Strongly agree/agree</th>
<th>Disagree/strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baccalaureate</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2b: Faculty involvement in the senate is highly valued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Strongly agree/agree</th>
<th>Disagree/strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baccalaureate</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Doctoral institutions, where faculty interest and participation is lowest, also report lower levels of confidence in their senate’s ability to contribute to campus decision-making. The data also show that those institutions where numerous faculty are disinterested in the senate are also institutions where other governing bodies—administrators and governing boards—view the senate as being less powerful. As a result, one question is what can faculty in doctoral institutions learn from baccalaureate institutions where the highest levels of faculty involvement exist?

The answer likely has to do with institutional culture as well as structural constraints. To further illustrate the challenge, one faculty senate president in a telephone interview explained: “One of the biggest challenges to moving forward is that we can’t find good people [faculty] willing to assume leadership roles in the senate.” Another lamented: “There’s never been more than two candidates interested in being the president. I ran unopposed.”

One common explanation of such lack of interest is the notion that participation in the senate is a “waste of time” and participation requires sacrifices that yield little to no change. At the same time, some argue that in order to create noticeable change the most influential faculty must
be involved. Survey respondents were asked, in an open-ended question, about the most difficult challenge to faculty participation in governance at their institutions. Their responses reflect two general categories: structural challenges and cultural challenges.

Structural challenges include lack of time, scheduling, or faculty workload that inhibits participation in the senate. Many faculty report that finding time to meaningfully participate in governance is difficult because of their workload and other institutional and/or professional commitments. Senate presidents from the telephone interviews report spending an average of 16 hours per week on senate-related work. Structural challenges also refer to bureaucratic obstacles or untimely action that hamper decision-making. Respondents report that long meaningless processes, irrelevant meetings, or “red tape” often serve as obstacles for participation.

One common explanation for lack of interest is the notion that participation in the senate is a ‘waste of time.’

One respondent from the survey claimed that a serious challenge to faculty participation in the senate is that the “board of trustees and the president are adopting a top-down, corporate, bureaucratic model of management and increasingly ignoring the role of faculty.” Another claimed that: “the biggest challenge to faculty governance is the time and opportunity for faculty to participate given their teaching and advising loads, not to mention any disciplinary commitments one might have.” A third commented: “There are time constraints. Meetings are once a month for 50 minutes and they just let motions pass because they know there isn’t enough time for discussion. There is currently discussion about moving to a more representative structure because our senate has grown too large to conduct business effectively.”

While considering structural challenges such as those mentioned by respondents, institutional support for the senate is often thought of as one remedy. However, the survey findings indicate that institutional supports, such as support, release time, or stipends (for the senate chair) are inversely correlated with faculty participation. For example, baccalaureate colleges that show the highest levels of faculty participation in the senate, receive the least amount of institutional support for senate operations.

Conversely, doctoral universities where faculty interest and involve-
ment in the senate is lowest, receive the most institutional support. I am not suggesting that institutional support is not needed or important. Rather this finding calls into question the effectiveness of institutional support as it relates to faculty participation. Could resources be better used to encourage faculty participation?

Cultural challenges can involve negative perceptions held by faculty or administrators about the trustworthiness or credibility of the decision-making processes. Cultural challenges also refer to the lack of confidence faculty have in campus governance. Many do not believe that they can actually make a difference. Cynicism based on past transgressions of an administration can infuse distrust, causing faculty to withdraw or feel apathetic. One faculty member exclaimed: “The president is a fascist!” While this may seem extreme, it illustrates the level of distrust some faculty have about the process of shared governance.

One individual explained that one challenge to faculty involvement is “the willingness of administration to acknowledge that faculty have something important to contribute to the institution’s improvement. Additionally, the hostility of administration toward faculty who desire to participate in decision-making is discouraging.” Another described the problem as “convincing the faculty that they have the ability to effect change in the decisions that are made. Instead of consistently participating in problems as they are presented, the faculty wait for the administration to take action, then they register their dislike.”

A former participant in the senate offered another perspective. “The main hurdle to a better faculty senate is an inept [senate] president with a hidden agenda. The faculty senate here is made up of malcontents and 1960s-type radicals who spend too much time trying to circumvent policy due to personal beefs with the president.” The cultural challenges to faculty participation in part stem from various concepts of what shared governance means.

Cynicism based on past transgressions of an administration can infuse distrust, causing faculty to withdraw or feel apathetic.
Challenge 4: Incongruence between the idea and function of governance

Although nearly half of campus constituents define shared governance as a collaborative decision-making process, the data show faculty have decision-making authority mainly over academic issues and minimal involvement in matters traditionally considered administrative. While some constituents hold collaborative views of shared governance, many campuses actually employ stratified governance structures. That is, in many cases the idea of shared governance held by campus members does not reflect the actual process of decision-making. Survey findings show that 57 percent of university constituents who believe shared governance is an important part of the institution do not believe that the faculty senate is an important governing body. As another indication of incongruence, a concern over budget shortfalls was the most consistently mentioned challenge facing the sampled institutions, yet only 16 percent believe that faculty have substantial influence in determining budget priorities.

Table 3 shows perceptions of faculty influence among only those respondents who believe that shared governance is an important aspect of their institution.

Table 3: Responses of those who believe that shared governance is important on the influence of faculty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents who believe that shared governance is important</th>
<th>Strongly agree/agree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree/disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The faculty senate is an important governing body</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty have substantial influence in setting strategic priorities</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty have substantial influence in setting budget priorities</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One consistent theme among senate presidents interviewed by telephone was that the senate should assume more responsibility than is tra-
ditionally prescribed for faculty. Involvement in issues related to budget, athletics, and having more formal authority over academic matters were among the goals most frequently mentioned. Many senate presidents viewed the senate as able to do more if governance was “in fact shared.”

One senate president lamented: “It would be nice if the administration would put some meat on our plate. We often hear about the importance of faculty governance, but the practice of listening to advice after the decision has already been made sends a very different message.”

Fundamentally, the incongruence between the idea and actual function of governance is a conflict between collegial and bureaucratic theory. A collegial model of organizational theory emphasizes thoroughness and deliberation. Collegial models of organization value the participation of all members, the sharing of power, and a community of equals. The bureaucratic model of organization is based on hierarchy and efficient operation leaving little room for full deliberation. Bureaucratic or managerial organizations are more likely to focus on outcomes rather than on process and to value the division of responsibility and authority.19

Keep in mind that the challenge of aligning ideas about governance with the process is more complex than two competing theories of organizational behavior. Instead the challenge involves taking into account institutional changes as well as situational and cultural contexts. It is also important to note that the process of decision-making often changes as frequently as the decisions themselves. As a result, campus governance can become a nebulous concept and the terms of decision-making are often negotiated, renegotiated, or implied. In an effort to explain the confusion between the idea and actual process of governance, some scholars posit that current decision-making environments are significantly more complex today than to three decades ago, blurring the lines of responsibility and authority.20 Few institutional decisions are purely academic or administrative.

Many university decisions now hold consequences for multiple constituents. An issue such as technological change can have budgetary, instructional, and curriculum implications. Distance education, development, information technology, and admission standards are only a few other examples. As a result, many campus leaders find it difficult to rec-
oncile the traditions of shared governance with today’s decision-making environment. Still, one faculty senate president interviewed by telephone maintained, “there isn’t a decision this college makes, no matter how administrative, that doesn’t in some way affect teaching and learning on this campus.”

Unfortunately, the only point of agreement about senates is that they are challenged. Among each major governing constituent—governing boards, presidents, and faculty—faculty are most often accused of negatively impacting governance. Although governing boards and presidents play important roles, the contributions of faculty can be equally impactful and sustaining. The need to maintain fidelity to the intellectual enterprise is vitally important for institutions to achieve their mission. Consequently, it is important for faculty to maintain a place in decision-making in a way that allows campuses to move forward at a responsible pace. Outlining the four challenges presented in this article, I hope, provides an opportunity to reconsider the importance of faculty governance and the benefits that improvements might produce.

ENDNOTES


3 Birnbaum, How colleges work; Collie and Chronister, “In search of the next,” 22-23.

4 Boyer, Scholarship reconsidered; Burgan, “Academic citizenship,” 16-21; Gerber, “Inextricably linked,” 22-24; Ramo, Assessing the faculty’s role.

5 Kezar and Eckel, “Meeting today’s governance challenges.”


7 Tierney and Minor, Challenges for governance.

8 Dill and Helm, “Faculty participation,” 317-355; Schuster, Smith, Corak, and Yamada, Strategic academic governance.

9 Strauss and Corbin, Basics of Qualitative Research.


12 Gilmour, “Your faculty senate,” 16-19.


15 Tierney, Competing conceptions of academic governance.

16 Minor, “Assessing the senate,” 960-977.

18 Collie and Chronister, “In search of the next,” 22-23.

19 Birnbaum, How colleges work.


WORKS CITED


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Foreword

Many colleges and universities across the country are dealing with fiscal crises and other pressures by renewing their commitment to strategic planning, clarifying their institutional missions, and reexamining their governance structures. This report is designed to help policymakers, administrators, faculty, and researchers address the challenges of institutional governance by providing empirical data on the current role of faculty in institutional governance. In this monograph we describe the results of a survey of more than 2,000 faculty and provosts across the country that addressed the ways faculty participate in governance, the degree and effectiveness of that participation, and faculty attitudes toward it.

In the coming months we will be reporting on case studies we have conducted that have sought to flesh out the findings of the survey. We are also concerned with understanding how for-profit postsecondary institutions govern themselves using case studies, interviews and focus groups. Next year we will turn our attention to board and system level governance and report back our findings.

This research was conducted within the Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis at the University of Southern California and has been generously supported by Atlantic Philanthropies. As we continue in this effort, we hope to provide opportunities for meaningful dialogue and discussion. We would welcome hearing from you.

William G. Tierney
Wilbur-Kieffer Professor &
Director

James T. Minor
Research Associate &
Postdoctoral Scholar

April 2003
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Shared institutional governance has been a hallmark of American colleges and universities for over a generation. The tradition of shared governance rests on the assumption that faculty should hold a substantive role in decision-making, and the most visible vehicle for faculty involvement is typically a faculty senate or some similar body with a different name. Such senates currently exist on the campuses of more than 90 percent of America’s four-year colleges and universities. Over the past decade, however, several trends have placed unexpected pressures on institutions of higher learning. These include extreme fluctuations in state budgets, concerns about the rising costs of higher education, calls for greater accountability from all educational institutions, increasing competition from new postsecondary providers, including for-profit organizations, and the growth in distance learning. These trends have led to greater scrutiny of institutional decision-making and calls for a “restructuring” of academic governance that would improve productivity and control costs.

Such calls have spurred debate about the role of faculty in governance. Critics of existing arrangements often argue that faculty governance in general, and faculty senates in particular, inhibit responsive decision-making. These critics bemoan the lethargic pace of decision-making when faculty are involved and expect to reach consensus. Defenders of the faculty’s role in shared governance, on the other hand, contend that faculty involvement in decision-making has positive effects on academic freedom and educational quality. They maintain that the university is not a business; it is one of the world’s oldest organizations and has withstood various external pressures, including those of a changing marketplace, by a deliberative and consensual decision-making approach.

Unfortunately, there is little empirical or theoretical work on governance systems and the role of faculty within those systems. Since the 1970s, few national studies of governance have emerged, with Gabriel Kaplan’s recent study a notable exception (2003). Our purpose, therefore, was to gather data that would help clarify the state of campus governance today and inform the debate about governance reform. Before addressing the issue of whether faculty involvement in institutional governance is effective or ineffective, one needs to identify the nature of that involvement: the forms it takes, the issues that are most influenced by faculty, and the degree of faculty involvement in various forms of decision-making.
To gather our data, we sent a web-based survey to approximately 3,800 individuals in over 750 institutions of higher education; we received responses from more than half of these individuals. Each respondent was asked 35 questions pertaining to faculty participation in campus governance. In addition to the survey described here, we are currently undertaking site visits to 15 campuses to broaden our scope and further inform our research. Future articles, reports, and conference presentations will be used as venues to delineate and disseminate our findings.

This study focuses on four-year colleges and universities. We do not address important issues concerning the role of faculty in decision-making at two-year colleges. We also do not consider the role of other important constituents in governance. Academic staff, for example, are the fastest growing group in higher education and their roles in campus governance are virtually unexamined. There is also very little research on the role of graduate students in governance. This study is intended to lay the groundwork for further research in these areas.

We begin by describing the survey sample and response rate. We then present survey results on the venues for faculty participation, the areas in which faculty have the strongest influence, the nature of faculty authority, attitudes toward shared governance, and the effectiveness of specific venues for expressing faculty views. Finally, we summarize our main findings and discuss their implications for improving institutional governance.
Section II: Description

Institutions Surveyed

This report derives from a national survey of four-year baccalaureate, master’s, and doctoral institutions, as defined by the 2000 Carnegie Classification of Higher Education Institutions. We randomly selected a total of 763 institutions from these three institutional sectors, sampling approximately 50 percent of all schools in each sector. (For example, of the 611 existing master’s schools in the United States, 302 were sampled, a rate of 49 percent.)

Table 1 below presents the total number of schools in our sample by type of institution and indicates how many of these were public and how many were private. The ratio of private to public institutions shown in the table closely resembles the existing ratio in the total population of each institutional sector.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutional Type</th>
<th>Baccalaureate</th>
<th>Master’s</th>
<th>Doctoral</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number Invited</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>763</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>476</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Individuals Surveyed

To gain an understanding of cross-campus views at the selected schools, we sought information from diverse campus constituents knowledgeable about governance and decision-making processes at their institution. We sent electronic letters of invitation to the Academic Vice President (AVP) or Provost, a designated faculty leader (such as the President or Chair of the Senate), and three faculty who serve as department chairs. To the extent possible, we selected one individual from the humanities and social sciences, one from the natural sciences, and one from a professional school. We invited responses from 763 AVPs and 763 Senate leaders, and 2,289 faculty. Of 3,815 potential respondents, a small number declined to participate. In total, 3,761 persons received the survey. This is the denominator we used in calculating response rates.
Figure 1 illustrates the members of each group who completed and submitted surveys. Note that whenever we refer to “faculty” in our results, we mean department chairs. The term “senate leaders” refers to faculty members who have a campus-wide leadership role, and Academic VP (AVP) refers to the academic vice president or comparable role on campus, such as provost.

**Figure 1: Number of Respondants**

- **Faculty** - 1,199
- **Academic VP** - 411
- **Senate Leader** - 400
- **Total**: 2,010

**Response Rates**

Of the 3,761 individuals receiving the survey, 2,010 provided responses—an overall response rate of 53 percent. As a group, the faculty Senate leaders showed a response rate of 53 percent; the faculty responded at the rate of 53 percent, and academic vice presidents provided responses at 54 percent.

We also calculated an institutional response rate. Institutions that provided two or more respondents from different positions (e.g., a Provost and a senate leader) were included in the institutional response rate. If responses collected from an institution represented only one constituency group (e.g., two faculty members), the data were collected and analyzed but not included as an “institutional response.” The number of institutions with multiple respondents was high: the total institutional response rate was 77 percent. However, the data in the following sections of this document are based on the individual response rate (meaning all individuals who responded, not only those from the institutions included in the institutional response rate).
Venues for Faculty Participation Go Well Beyond Faculty Senates

Studies of academic decision-making frequently describe faculty governance in “either/or” terms: either an institution has an effective faculty senate or faculty governance is a sham. The actual picture, however, is much more complex. As one might expect, in a postsecondary universe made up of 4,000 institutions, governance structures vary by culture, size, history, and type.

According to our survey, governance bodies that we call “faculty senates” (also known as faculty councils or academic senates) exist in most of the surveyed institutions. A total 93 percent of doctoral institutions, 90 percent of master’s institutions, and 82 percent of baccalaureate institutions have such senates, while only 13 percent of surveyed schools do not. However, as Table 2 indicates, not all respondents believe that their Senate provides a significant means of faculty participation. At doctoral schools, for example, only 43 percent reported this to be the case. Three other venues were considered more important than Senates (or similar campus-wide bodies with different names) for shared decision-making: academic departments, standing committees and ad-hoc committees. Note that this is true across types of institutions, with all three reporting substantial opportunities for decision-making through academic departments, standing committees, and ad-hoc committees. Although we do not separate this data in Table 2, the results apply across positions, with administrators and faculty responding in almost identical ways.

**Table 2: Faculty Venues for Participation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Baccalaureate</th>
<th>Master’s</th>
<th>Doctoral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Department</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standing Faculty Committee</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ad-Hoc Committees</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Senate</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School/College Governance</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standing Administration-Faculty Committee</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System-Wide Senate</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective Bargaining/Labor Union</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Faculty Senates Differ in Many Ways

Discussions about faculty senates are complicated by the fact that not all senates are alike. Table 3 shows a number of other survey results that demonstrate how senates differ.

### Table 3: Characteristics of Faculty Senates

- An elected faculty member chairs 63% of senates in doctoral and master’s institutions; 85% of senates in doctoral and master’s institutions are chaired by elected faculty.
- 39% of baccalaureate senates reported receiving no institutional support (e.g., secretarial assistance, office space, or incentives for participation). 21% of master’s senates reported receiving no institutional support. 15% of doctoral institution senates reported receiving no institutional support.
- 86% of all senates meet six or more times per year. 10% of all senates reported meeting less than five times per year.
- 21% of baccalaureate senates are representational by school, college or department. 52% of master’s and 71% of doctoral senates are structured similarly.
- In 60% of baccalaureate colleges, all faculty serve as members of the senate; only 36% of master’s senates and 18% of doctoral senates include all faculty.
- 43% of baccalaureate institutions reported not having an executive committee, whereas only 25% of master’s and 13% of doctoral senates reported no executive committee.
- Of these existing executive committees, 25% of the senates reported that current senate members choose the members of their executive committee. (11% of baccalaureate, 25% of master’s, and 38% of doctoral).
- 53% of all senate leaders meet at least once per month with the president or academic vice president. 33% of all senate leaders never meet with governing boards.

There is Widespread Dissatisfaction with Faculty Senates

At those institutions that had faculty senates, 22 percent of respondents reported that the Senate was not an important governing body, 53 percent indicated a low level of interest in Senate activities, 43 percent stated that involvement in the Senate was not highly valued, and 31 percent felt the goals of the Senate were not clearly defined, even though there appeared to be clarity about the domains of faculty influence--that is, there was clarity about areas of decision-making where faculty have authority.

This dissatisfaction was particularly strong at doctoral universities, where only 19 percent of respondents agreed that faculty had high levels of interest in Senate activities. By contrast, 54 percent of respondents from baccalaureate institutions and 39 percent of respondents from master’s institutions reported high levels of interest in Senate activities.
Challenges to successful faculty participation were cultural and structural. In an open-ended response, participants noted that faculty workload and bureaucratic obstacles such as committee work or untimely processes dissuade faculty from participating in governance. Respondents also reported cultural obstacles to participation, including faculty apathy and cynicism about the process.

Faculty Have Strong Influence in Several Areas

Where faculty have decision-making authority—and where they do not—remains a point of contention on many campuses. Table 4 summarizes our results on this point. Faculty reported the most substantial influence in the development of undergraduate curriculum. Beyond that, a large majority of respondents felt faculty had a strong voice in determining tenure and promotional standards and standards for evaluating teaching. At graduate institutions, faculty also reported an important role in determining graduate educational policy. About half the respondents from all types of institutions claimed that faculty exercise substantial influence on forming standards for post-tenure review and undergraduate educational policy. The areas where they reported the least influence were evaluation of the President and AVP and the setting of budget priorities.

Table 4: Level of Influence in Different Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Influence</th>
<th>Baccalaureate</th>
<th>Master’s</th>
<th>Doctoral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate curriculum</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General standards of promotion and tenure</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards for evaluating teaching</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of the quality of academic programs</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards for post-tenure review</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate educational policy</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty-related personnel policies</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting strategic priorities</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of the President and AVP</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policies of intellectual property</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate educational policy</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of the President and AVP</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting budget priorities</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Colleges with Collective Bargaining Agreements and Those Without Show Little Difference in Faculty Influence Across Decision Types.

Our survey included results from institutions that have collective bargaining agreements as well as those that do not. Results show that faculty influence over personnel policy is comparatively equal. 36 percent of those in institutions with a collective bargaining agreement reported that faculty have substantial influence over personnel policies compared to 33 percent in institutions without collective bargaining. Those in institutions without collective bargaining reported slightly higher levels of influence over issues such as strategic planning, setting budget priorities, and selection of the President and Provost.
Perceptions of Faculty Influence

All respondents (Academic Vice Presidents, Senate leaders, and faculty) were asked to report the perceived level of faculty influence associated with the various domains of decision-making. Table 5 presents the results from all institutions by position. The data show that the level of faculty influence in decision-making was perceived as higher by Academic Vice Presidents than Senate leaders and faculty. There is a certain irony that senior academic administrators believe faculty have influence, and faculty think they do not. Such perceptions carried to extremes are recipes for stalled decision-making. The areas of decision-making where perceptions diverged most were undergraduate educational policy, standards for evaluating teaching, setting strategic priorities, and faculty-related personnel policies.

Table 5: Responses on Perceived Level of Faculty Influence Organized by Position

Percentage reporting substantial level of influence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>AVP</th>
<th>Chair</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate curriculum</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure and promotion standards</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards for evaluating teaching</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of the quality of academic programs</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate educational policy</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate educational policy</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards for post-tenure review</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting strategic priorities</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty-related personnel policies</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policies of intellectual property</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of the President and AVP</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting budget priorities</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of the President and AVP</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Faculty Have Informal Authority in Areas Where They Have Little Formal Authority

Respondents were asked to identify those areas where they feel they have formal authority, informal authority, and no authority. Formal authority means having decisive voting membership in a decision-making body. Informal authority, on the other hand, means the ability to make recommendations or provide consultative input that may be considered or ignored by administrators or decision-making bodies. Table 6 summarizes the key survey results on this topic. It shows the top three areas in which faculty reported considerable formal authority, the top three areas in which they reported significant informal authority, and the top three areas in which respondents reported having no influence whatsoever.

Table 6: Top Three Areas Cited for Different Types of Authority

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of Authority</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>% Claiming Types of Authority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formal Authority</td>
<td>Undergraduate curriculum</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tenure and promotion standards</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Standards for evaluating teaching</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal Authority</td>
<td>Selection of the President and AVP</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Setting strategic priorities</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Setting budget priorities</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Authority</td>
<td>Evaluation of president</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluation of AVP</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Setting budget priorities</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Concept of Shared Governance is Highly Valued

The notion of shared governance has widespread support at all three types of four-year colleges. At baccalaureate institutions, 86 percent confirmed that shared governance is an important part of the institution’s values and identity, a view shared by 82 percent of the respondents at master’s and 79 percent of respondents at doctoral institutions. While there are some differences by position, overwhelming support for shared governance can be found in all three constituent groups on campus: 96 percent of AVPs, 86 percent of Senate leaders, and 78 percent of faculty indicated their belief that shared governance is important. (There was also little difference between institutions with and without collective bargaining regarding the degree of importance placed on shared governance.)

But There is Disagreement About What Shared Governance Means

From open-ended questions, respondents offered definitions of “shared governance.” These responses were categorized in three different ways:

- **Fully collaborative decision-making.** This refers to a traditional approach that some might call a “collegial model” of governance. Here, the faculty and administration make decisions jointly and consensus is the goal.

- **Consultative decision-making.** This describes a more communicative model where the faculty’s opinion and advice is sought but where authority remains with the senior administration and the board of trustees. Although many individuals and groups are brought into the decision-making process, the model revolves around information sharing and discussion rather than joint decision-making.

- **Distributed decision-making.** In this model, decisions are made by discrete groups responsible for specific issues. The understanding is that faculty have a right to make decisions in certain areas, and the administration and board in others.

*Figure 2* shows the percentage of respondents that held these different views of shared governance.

**Figure 2 : Views of Shared Governance**

- Fully Collaborative - 47%
- Consultative - 27%
- Distributed - 26%

The presence of these various interpretations is important because strife and conflict are likely to appear when individuals on a campus have dissimilar views about shared governance. In such cases, the first step in approaching governance issues might be to create conditions where differences about the best approaches to decision-making can be worked out.
Most Respondents Felt There is a Sufficient Level of Trust Between Faculty and Administrators

Despite the challenge of sustaining a culture of trust in fluid governance settings such as colleges and universities, most survey respondents considered levels of campus trust to be sufficient. Table 7 and Table 8 show that a great majority of all respondents reported adequate levels of trust concerning action on governance issues. (Again, there was little difference on this issue between institutions with and without collective bargaining.)

It is important to note, however, that over 20 percent of all respondents indicated that there is not enough trust among faculty and administrators. Most of those reporting this view are Senate leaders and faculty.

### Table 7: Level of Trust Organized by Institutional Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Trust</th>
<th>Baccalaureate</th>
<th>Master’s</th>
<th>Doctoral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sufficient</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 8: Responses on Level of Trust Organized by Position

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Trust</th>
<th>AVP</th>
<th>Chair</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sufficient</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most Respondents Felt There is Sufficient Communication Between Faculty and Administrators

Many respondents indicated that besides trust, another important element for effective governance and decision-making is good communication. Table 9 and Table 10 show the results of survey questions that asked if the level of communication between governing groups was sufficient or insufficient on their campus. More than 70 percent of respondents at each institutional type reported that communication levels between the governing board members, the President, and the faculty were sufficient. Broken down by campus position, however, responses varied somewhat, with the highest percentage of “sufficient” responses coming from AVPs and the lowest from faculty members.

Again, while the majority of respondents indicated satisfaction with current communication levels, about 26 percent of respondents at each type of institution—and about 30 percent of all Senate leaders and faculty—reported communication levels to be inadequate.

### Table 9: Level of Communication Organized by Institutional Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Communication</th>
<th>Baccalaureate</th>
<th>Master’s</th>
<th>Doctoral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sufficient</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 10: Responses on Level of Communication Organized by Position

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Communication</th>
<th>AVP</th>
<th>Chair</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sufficient</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What might one make of these various findings? Of what use might they be to campus leaders facing the multiple challenges that currently exist? Here we summarize eight findings and delineate the implications.

**Faculty governance occurs in multiple venues.** Faculty involvement in governance occurs on many levels and in multiple forums.

**Confidence in institution-wide governing bodies is low.** Faculty have less understanding for, and less appreciation of, faculty senates than for more local governing mechanisms such as academic departments.

**Core academic areas are still viewed as primary arenas for formal faculty governance.** The respondents – regardless of position or institutional type – still believe that the faculty have authority over the undergraduate curriculum, promotion and tenure guidelines, and standards for evaluating teaching.

**Strategic planning benefits from structured, informal faculty input.** Although respondents did not report that the faculty had a formal say in the creation of a strategic plan, most believed that faculty had significant informal influence.

**Apathy and lack of trust are the most significant barriers to meaningful faculty participation.** Individuals related that meaningful involvement is difficult when the faculty voice is not respected and shared governance is not taken seriously.

**Respect trumps resources.** Although many respondents outlined the need for better staffed committees, senates, and task forces, individuals placed a higher value on genuine respect by the administration for creating effective faculty involvement in governance.

**Differential perceptions of shared governance leads to ineffective governance.** When constituencies have differing perceptions regarding what role the faculty have in governance, there is likely to be less trust.

**Collective bargaining neither inhibits nor enhances shared governance.** Institutions with collective bargaining did not report significant differences with regard to the importance placed on shared governance or levels of trust between the faculty and administration.
We have identified five strategies that those of us who work in academic organizations might consider to enhance governance:

**Delineate responsibilities:** Challenges associated with governance often stem from conflict about who decides what. Establishment of clear areas of responsibility can decrease confusion and provide opportunities for sustained involvement.

**Articulate the meaning of shared governance:** As illustrated here, campus constituents often employ multiple definitions of shared governance which create varied expectations about decision-making. Developing an institutional understanding of what shared governance means helps consolidate ideas and expectations.

**Utilize multiple decision-making venues:** Far too often individuals assume that for meaningful engagement to occur, all decisions must be processed through the same governance unit – such as an Academic Senate. Such a mindset creates the potential for a logjam. Instead, create systematic plans for multiple arenas of meaningful engagement.

**Communicate:** Colleges and universities exist in “loosely coupled” environments. A mistaken tendency is to try to tighten the loose coupling. Instead, accept that our institutions exist in decentralized organizations and that the faculty’s engagement with an issue may be sporadic. A key to effective governance is to communicate consistently with the faculty. Utilize the multiple media outlets that exist and follow the schemas that have been established.

**Create the conditions for trust:** Trust exists as a reciprocal relationship where both parties accept the importance of one another and have bonds of mutual obligation. Trust is not a “pie in the sky” value that is impossible to articulate. Trust is accomplished over time as a group or individual sees that what was said is done.
We have undertaken two tasks. First, we have reported the results of a survey administered to 763 institutions, hoping that our data will provide information useful to individuals at their own institutions in comparing and contrasting general findings to their specific situations.

We then offered our own broad deductions and strategies that derive from the data. To be sure, how one communicates and the venues for decision-making will vary from institution to institution. The point, of course, is not that this or any survey can provide faculty and administrators with the wherewithal to develop a cookbook for academic decision-making. Academic life is protean, contradictory and time-consuming. However, all too often we have seen campuses where responsibilities are ill-defined, definitions of shared governance are varied and competitive, and groups do not communicate with, or talk past, one another. What we have outlined is not a step-by-step guide to academic governance, but a delineation of what college and university governance looks like in the early 21st century and the scaffolding that might improve it.

This report comes at a time when campuses are increasingly challenged by fiscal crises and questions of strategic mission. For those interested in the study of campus governance, this study is intended to provide more light than heat; for those interested in benchmarks and reference points, the report hopefully presents helpful data. In addition, this report offers a foundation that will enhance and support further research.


The Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis is an interdisciplinary research center based at the University of Southern California. Our mission is to improve urban higher education, strengthen school-university relationships, and to focus on international higher education, emphasizing Latin America and the Pacific Rim. Our projects focus exclusively on policy oriented studies pertaining to the improvement of postsecondary education. In addition to the work that has been outlined here, we are currently involved in studies pertaining to college preparation, increasing the diversity of the faculty, and a research-based project that will provide ways to improve the transfer rates of urban community college students to four-year universities. In June 2001, we signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Center for the Study of Higher Education at the University of Melbourne in order to enhance our capability in conducting comparative higher education research. Over the last decade, we have received funding from, among others, the Ford Foundation, the Pew Charitable Trusts, Atlantic Philanthropies, the James Irvine Foundation, the U.S. Department of Education, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the J. Paul Getty Trust, and the Haynes Foundation.
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Assessing the Senate

Critical Issues Considered

JAMES T. MINOR
University of Southern California

Based on a national study of 750 4-year institutions, this study assesses the current state of senates and identifies factors that contribute to senate effectiveness. Findings show that although cultural elements of campus governance are positive, faculty are dissatisfied with the quality of their involvement in decision making. Regression analyses show that high levels of faculty involvement in the senate and influence in particular areas of decision making are significant predictors of senate effectiveness. Based on the findings, the study raises questions aimed at advancing the study and practice of institutional governance with particular attention to the role of faculty senates.

Keywords: governance; faculty senates; organization; higher education

Faculty senates remain the means by which most faculty participate in governance. More than 90% of 4-year colleges and universities have a faculty senate or some variation of a faculty governing body (Gilmour, 1991). Some critics argue that senates inhibit responsive decision making (Scott, 1996; Strohm, 1981). Other scholars argue that faculty involvement in governance is important for institutional effectiveness (Burgan, 1998; Gerber et al., 1997). If faculty involvement in decision making significantly affects governance, then an examination of faculty senates is warranted.

Utilizing a national data set with 763 institutions, I examine issues that affect senate involvement in institutional governance. The issue of how to involve faculty senates in governance more effectively is the intended goal. My objective for this study is to consider what cultural and functional elements most significantly affect the performance of faculty senates. Faculty senates are considered

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the wildcard in academic governance; they are varied, unpredictable, and can alter outcomes depending on the situation. The extent to which they become better understood and more effectively involved in governance will enable better decision making in universities. What follows is a brief review of the literature, a conceptual frame to view senates, and description of the study. Last, I discuss issues that appear important for enhancing the function of faculty senates and the practice of university decision making.

**RESEARCH ON FACULTY GOVERNANCE**

The research on faculty senates, in large part, exists within the context of studies on faculty involvement in governance. The majority of studies do not address faculty directly. In addition, limited empirical and theoretical work exists specifically on senates (Floyd, 1994; Kezar & Eckel, 2002; Lee, 1991). Consequently, few claims can be made concerning the state of faculty senates. Much of the work that discusses faculty involvement in governance and decision making represents a position either calling for more or less participation from faculty (Birnbaum, 1991; Dimond, 1991; Gerber, 2001; Jordan, 2001; Kissler, 1997; Ramo, 1997). There are virtually no studies that discern what factors most significantly affect the role of senates in governance. I utilize the literature to address two questions, which serve as a starting point for this inquiry:

- What are the existing concepts of effective faculty participation in governance?
- How does the literature define effective faculty senates?

**CONCEPTS OF FACULTY PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNANCE**

One difficulty in addressing the first question is the diversity of higher education institutions and the composition of senates. Another more critical obstacle to addressing concepts of effective faculty participation in governance is the disagreement about the role of faculty in governance (Hamilton, 1999). Two competing voices frame the concept of effective faculty participation in governance. Those who support traditional structures of governance assert that faculty participation is key to sustaining effective institutions. The argument is based on the notion that democratic processes are necessary, with every key constituency involved in campus decision making (Floyd, 1985). In fact, some scholars warn that failing to involve faculty in decision making leads to organizational discord and impairs the fundamental function of higher education (Birnbaum, 1988; Gerber, 2001).

The call for faculty involvement in decision making expanded in recent years to include issues outside the realm of traditional faculty participation. Decisions related to budget, strategic planning, external relations, and the hiring of senior administrators are only a few areas where influence is being renegotiated (Bila,
The concept of effective faculty participation from the traditional perspective suggests faculty inclusion in major university decision making as a way to protect faculty interest and ensure that institutions maintain fidelity to the academic mission (Gerber et al., 1997; Ramo, 1997).

Scholars who call for reform claim that governance structures are not suitable for the current decision-making environment. These critics suggest that effective faculty involvement in governance requires new structures that reduce extensive consultation and instead rely on information and an analysis of market forces to determine direction. They claim that for institutions to be effective they must be able to respond quickly to competition and to demands by making fast-paced decisions (Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges [AGB], 1996; Duderstadt, 2001). Some even view excessive faculty participation in governance and senates as dysfunctional, impairing institutional progress. Trow (1990) argues that “members of the senate are part-time amateurs, usually with minimal staff support and dependent on the administration for information necessary to make wise policy (or give advice) about the enterprise” (p. 26). Still, both those with a traditional view and the critics agree that extremes are dire; too little or too much faculty involvement in decision making is vaguely viewed as negative. However, evidence suggesting what effective faculty governance means for institutions in general, or for particular sectors of higher education, is indistinct.

In addition to the conventional debate, the technological, political, financial, and social changes experienced by higher education compel some to consider how such changes affect governance systems and the decision-making environment (Collis, 2001; Duderstadt, 2001; Gumport, 2000). Institutional change has thus become central to discussions on governance. Many recognize that shifts in the nature of faculty work, the responsibility of the university presidents, and the types of decisions institutions now face make governance and the involvement of faculty more complex (Benjamin & Carroll, 1999; Collis, 2001; Keller, 2001; Morphew, 1999).

Effective faculty involvement in governance has therefore been discussed in terms of how much influence particular constituency groups have in decision making, not in terms of decision outcomes. Much of the literature seems to focus on participation for the sake of participating, diverting attention from the issue of how involvement affects quality outcomes. More recently, scholars are considering the effects of institutional change on campus governance. In answering the first question, the literature on faculty involvement in governance generally represents three perspectives: (a) Faculty should be, to some degree, involved in nearly all campus decision making; (b) faculty should be involved in decision making, but their involvement ought to be limited principally to academic matters; and (c) higher education institutions have changed so dramatically that there is a need to reconsider how campuses are governed altogether.
DEFINING EFFECTIVE FACULTY GOVERNANCE

The second question of how effective faculty senates are defined poses more of a challenge than the first. Many scholars of governance avoid using the term *effective* altogether. Instead, the term *perceived* is more commonly used as a preface to avoid making definitive statements concerning senate effectiveness. Recognizing the difficulty and risk involved with defining an effective senate is important. What might represent effectiveness in one institution can lead to disaster in another, even on campuses with similar characteristics. Most would agree that providing a prescription for effective faculty governance is difficult, if not impossible. However, advancing empirically based concepts of effective senates can be helpful. For example, doing so may create an ability to test a particular model of effectiveness or invite the development of alternative models. Yet, there has not been a noticeable push from higher education scholars to make determinations about effective faculty senates.

Faculty senate effectiveness is difficult to define given the multiple interpretations of what constitutes sound governance practices (Hamilton, 1999). On many campuses, considerable disagreement exists among campus constituents about what shared governance means and who is to be granted decision-making authority (Drummond & Reitsch, 1995; Evans, 1999; Ramo, 1998; Williams, Gore, Broches, & Lostoski, 1987). Moreover, even if defining an effective senate began with determining the goals of senates and then seeking to measure their success, the diversity of senates relegates such measures to only small samples. Standards for measuring an effective senate have, in many cases, involved an intuitive process of knowing when it works.

The few studies that examine perceptions of effective senates show that senates dominated by faculty, versus those mixed with students and staff, are perceived to be more effective. Senates that are responsive to administrative initiatives are thought to be more effective because of their ability to act, not so much because of the quality of their action. Also, senates that report positive cultural aspects, meaning that campus constituents view them favorably, are also perceived as effective (Lee, 1991). However, senates are more commonly perceived as ineffective due to being unresponsive, having internal disagreement, being uninformed, and being organizationally dysfunctional (Birnbaum, 1989; Jordan, 2001; Scott, 1997; Trow, 1990). The handful of studies that exist on senates are limited due to the use of small case studies and anecdotal descriptions. Consequently, the question of how to define an effective senate remains inadequately addressed. Since the early 1970s, there have been no national studies of faculty senates (American Association of University Professors [AAUP], 1966). Perhaps needless to say, a significant need exists for more empirical and theoretical scholarship to address questions concerning the faculty senate.

Given that faculty are likely to continue playing a significant role in academic governance, determining what factors affect their involvement is important. Work that identifies differences across institutional types, as well as structural,
cultural, and functional qualities of senates, is needed. This study represents a step in that direction. Using a national data set, I identify factors that most significantly affect senate effectiveness (as defined herein). First, I offer a conceptual frame to view senates, and then, I describe the study and present the data on which I base my discussion.

A CONCEPTUAL FRAME FOR FACULTY SENATES

Faculty senates are disparate and perform a variety of functions. Therefore, understanding them collectively can be difficult, if not impossible, without a frame by which to view them. Based on recent research I conducted on faculty senates, four models were developed as a way to comprehend senates. I employ these models to establish a conceptual framework. The models (traditional, influential, dormant, and cultural) are briefly described below.

Traditional. Traditional faculty senates function primarily to preserve and represent the interest of the faculty during decision-making processes. They maintain control in areas that have traditionally been the domain of the faculty (i.e., curriculum, program requirements, and tenure and promotion). Their influence over nonacademic issues (i.e., budget, strategic planning, and external relations) is minimal due to limited legal authority. Traditional senates usually respond to administrative initiatives, and their input on most major decision making is in the form of recommendations that can be considered or rejected by the administration. Generally, these senates function as an association that represents the interest of the faculty during decision making rather than an integrated partner in campus governance.

Influential. Similar to traditional senates, influential senates exercise decision-making authority in areas of curriculum and instruction, but they also influence decision making on nonacademic matters such as budget, athletics, and development. Influential senates can benefit from extensive legal authority, but their influence also can result from being well organized and engaged in campus decision making. These senates are assertive and take the initiative on issues that extend beyond faculty matters to those that concern the entire institution. Other governing constituencies view influential senates as a legitimate integrated governing body of the campus and as having the ability to create change.

Dormant. Dormant faculty senates are usually marked by inactivity and exist largely as a ceremonial pastime for faculty. Although these senates may have structures similar to others, their function in campus decision making is minimal. Decision making that usually rests with faculty via the senate is conducted at the school or college level. Although these senates do not play a role in decision making, they may serve latent functions that are important to faculty or for
maintaining the existing power structure. Dormant senates are not considered a factor in major university decision making. As a result, faculty may participate in governance through alternative means.

Cultural. The role these senates play in campus decision making is influenced by cultural dynamics that continually change. Issues such as personnel, recent decision-making history, and social interaction manipulate the function of these senates more than structural characteristics. For example, informal processes such as the provost making a determination on an issue based on the advice of well-respected senior faculty members may weigh more heavily on decision outcomes than the formal proceedings of the senate. In many instances, structural ineffectiveness can lead to informal processes or “deal cutting” that circumvents formal processes of the senate. Other cultural dynamics such as distrust among constituents, composition and behavior of key personnel, and institutional history are just a few factors that can affect decision making more than formal processes. Consequently, the faculty’s role in campus governance is dictated by fluid cultural dynamics more than structural qualities. As the cultural dynamics of the senate change (e.g., turnover in a key position), so does the role it plays in decision making.

These models (traditional, influential, dormant, and cultural) represent a frame to collectively view faculty senates. I do not suggest that one model is usually more effective than another. Some senates may fall in between or across models depending on the decision type and their ability to shift from one model to another. I employ them as a way to understand the multiple functions of senates. I use them in this study to understand the sample.

A NATIONAL SURVEY

To establish an empirical base for scholarship, I conducted a national survey to gauge the state of faculty senates in 4-year colleges and universities. The intent was to survey campus constituents about various structural, cultural, and functional aspects of their faculty senate. To be clear, I use the term faculty senate to refer to numerous variations of faculty governing bodies, Faculty council, academic senate, or other terms may be alternatively employed. The survey was intended to provide a national description of faculty senate involvement in institutional governance across different institutional types and according to various campus constituents.

Based on the Carnegie Classification of Higher Education Institutions, the sample included 150 doctoral institutions, 302 master’s institutions, and 311 baccalaureate institutions. The sampled institutions represent approximately 55% of all institutions from the population of each sector. Among the doctoral universities, 79 were public and 71 were private. Among the master’s institutions, 140 were public and 162 were private. And among the liberal arts colleges, 68 institutions were public and 243 were private. These ratios also closely
resemble the ratio of public versus private institutions in the population of each institutional sector.

From each institution, five individuals were targeted: the chief academic officer, the faculty senate president, and three department chairs from various disciplines. More than 3,500 participants were targeted. Each was invited to complete the 35-item Web-based survey over a 4-week period. Institutional response rates are reported in Table 1.

The data from the Web-based survey were gathered and analyzed to determine descriptive statistics and categorical variance using ANOVA (an analysis of variance). Regression analyses were then used to determine what factors most significantly predict senate effectiveness. To determine effectiveness, three Likert-scaled items were combined to create a dependent variable ESENATE: (a) Faculty at my institution are satisfied with the structure and function of the senate; (b) during major college/university decision making, the senate is effective in helping reach resolutions to issues under consideration; and (c) others from the campus community (administrators, governing board, students) view the senate as powerful. A reliability analysis was run for the three variables yielding an alpha coefficient of .8042. A range of independent variables that represent cultural aspects of the senate, venue of faculty participation in campus decision making, and level of faculty influence in particular decision types were used as predictors of ESENATE. In addition, an ANOVA and cross-tab were run to determine variance on the dependent variable across institutional sectors (baccalaureate, master’s, and doctoral).

### CULTURAL AND FUNCTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SENATE

The findings are categorized in two sections. The first section shows descriptive statistics and percentages for cultural and functional characteristics of
senates. Institutional and constituency breakdowns are shown only where the variance between categories is statistically significant. In the second section, results of the regression analysis, ANOVA, and cross-tab are provided to show predictors of senate effectiveness and differences across institutional types.

The cultural elements of senates refer to beliefs, attitudes, and perceptual factors that can affect the role senates play in governance. Findings reveal that 83% of all respondents believe that shared governance is an important part of their institution’s value and identity. Among the vice presidents in the sample, 96% report this to be true, compared to 85% among senate presidents and 77% among faculty. Shared governance was shown to be a strong institutional value across all institutional types. In addition, the quality of communication that takes place between university constituents (governing board members, the president, and faculty) was reportedly high. Of vice presidents in the sample, 88% report that communication between constituents is sufficient to make progress or good, compared to 70% among senate presidents and 66% among faculty. Of all respondents, 77% report that a significant level of trust exists between the president and faculty; 89% of vice presidents in the sample report significant trust exists between the president and faculty, compared to 72% among senate presidents and 67% among faculty members. A summary of these findings is reported in Table 2.

In spite of reporting significant trust, sufficient communication, and the belief that shared governance is important as an institutional value, this sample reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 2: Response Percentages for Items Assessing Perceptions of Governance Culture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared governance is an important part of the institutions value and identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication between campus constituents is good or sufficient to make progress during decision making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a significant level of trust between the faculty and the president.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I agree that there is a high level of faculty interest in senate activity on my campus.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

senates. Institutional and constituency breakdowns are shown only where the variance between categories is statistically significant. In the second section, results of the regression analysis, ANOVA, and cross-tab are provided to show predictors of senate effectiveness and differences across institutional types.

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In spite of reporting significant trust, sufficient communication, and the belief that shared governance is important as an institutional value, this sample reports
that faculty are not meaningfully involved in decision making. Of respondents from all institutions, 56% identified the lack of active faculty involvement in campus decision making as a critical challenge to effective governance. Consonant with that, there is a reported lack of interest in senate activity. In response to a question assessing the level of interest faculty have in senate activity, just 41% of all institutions agreed that it was high. The level of faculty interest in senate activity is significantly higher in baccalaureate institutions than in master’s and doctoral institutions in the sample (see Table 2). Although the majority of respondents believe that shared governance is important and that sufficient trust and communication exists between constituents, there is significant dissatisfaction with how faculty are involved in decision making. Consequently, positive cultural aspects of governance are not closely related to satisfaction with the nature of senate involvement in campus decision making.

Faculty senates are involved in decision making to varying degrees depending on the issue, context, and the extent of their authority. The functional aspects of senates refer to areas in which senates have decision-making authority and the ways their influence is exercised. Findings show that faculty maintain significant influence over matters related to undergraduate curriculum. Of respondents, 92% from baccalaureate institutions report faculty have substantial influence over undergraduate curriculum compared to 85% of those in master’s institutions and 81% in doctoral institutions. Faculty report having the least amount of influence in areas of strategic planning and setting budget priorities. This is particularly important because more than 60% of respondents report that the most critical issues facing their institution in the upcoming year are related to budget shortfalls. Table 3 illustrates levels of faculty influence in several areas of decision making.

Table 3 also illustrates how faculty influence is expressed in the particular areas of decision making. For example, faculty influence over issues of curriculum is expressed through formal authority, whereas influence over issues concerning distance education and intellectual property is expressed informally. Formal influence refers to having legislative authority or substantial voting membership on a decision-making body. Informal influence refers to the formulation of reports, recommendations, taking a collective position on an issue, or other actions not based on a formal delegation of authority. Other means of expressing influence include having veto power or refusing to participate in decision making. These forms were expressed much less frequently. One example of how the two (influence and expression of influence) intersect is that only 12% of respondents report that faculty have substantial influence in setting strategic and budget priorities, yet 65% report that faculty exercise some form of informal influence in decision making on these matters. Overall, faculty maintain significant influence over areas of curriculum and policy related to promotion and tenure standards, and most exercise formal authority in these areas. Faculty have the least influence over evaluation of the president and provost and
setting strategic and budget priorities. Faculty influence over these matters is expressed informally.

The second part of this analysis involved running three regression models to determine which variables significantly predict what I defined here as “senate effectiveness” (ESENATE). Results from the regression analysis are shown in Table 4.

In the first model, cultural measures (level of trust, communication, interest in the senate, involvement in the senate, and the importance of shared governance on campus) were used as predictors of ESENATE. The degree to which shared governance is regarded as an important part of the institutional value and identity is a significant predictor of senate effectiveness ($p < .05$). Yet, levels of trust and communication were not significant predictors of an effective senate. Although levels of trust and communication are high across all institutions in

### TABLE 3: Decision Types and Percentages for Level of Influence and Expression of Influence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decision Type</th>
<th>Substantial Influence</th>
<th>Expression of Influence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate curriculum</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure and promotion standards</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of the president and provost</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of the president and provost</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting strategic and budget priorities</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policies pertaining to intellectual property and distance education</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 4: Predictors of (ESENATE) Senate Effectiveness (Standardized Beta Coefficients)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shared governance is an important part of the institution</td>
<td>.045*</td>
<td>.038*</td>
<td>.026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>.018</td>
<td>.028</td>
<td>.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty involvement in senate</td>
<td>.501***</td>
<td>.455***</td>
<td>.419***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty interest in senate</td>
<td>.209***</td>
<td>.194***</td>
<td>.177***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in department</td>
<td>.078***</td>
<td>.036</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in standing committee</td>
<td>.128***</td>
<td>.061**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in ad hoc committee</td>
<td>.047*</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational policy</td>
<td>.033</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td></td>
<td>.064**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure and promotion</td>
<td></td>
<td>.098***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of provost/provost</td>
<td>–.012</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of provost/provost</td>
<td></td>
<td>.073***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting strategic and budget priorities</td>
<td></td>
<td>.076**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td></td>
<td>.459***</td>
<td>.490***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. 

The second part of this analysis involved running three regression models to determine which variables significantly predict what I defined here as “senate effectiveness” (ESENATE). Results from the regression analysis are shown in Table 4.

In the first model, cultural measures (level of trust, communication, interest in the senate, involvement in the senate, and the importance of shared governance on campus) were used as predictors of ESENATE. The degree to which shared governance is regarded as an important part of the institutional value and identity is a significant predictor of senate effectiveness ($p < .05$). Yet, levels of trust and communication were not significant predictors of an effective senate. Although levels of trust and communication are high across all institutions in
In this sample, they are not statistically significant predictors of an effective senate. The level of faculty involvement in the senate and the level of faculty interest in senate activity were much stronger predictors of an effective senate ($p < .001$). High levels of faculty interest and involvement in senate activities are positively correlated with senate effectiveness.

In the second model, I measured venue of faculty participation in decision making. That is, how does faculty participation in departmental decision making, standing administrative/faculty committees, and ad hoc committees predict senate effectiveness? The results show that each—faculty participation in decision making at the departmental level ($p < .001$), in standing faculty/administrative committees ($p < .001$), and on ad hoc committees ($p < .05$)—is a significant predictor of an effective senate. Faculty participation in decision making in multiple, or alternative, venues is positively correlated with senate effectiveness. The cultural variables in Model 1 were virtually unaffected by the inclusion of the participation items.

The third model measures areas of faculty influence. Those variables include (a) faculty influence over educational policy (e.g., admission standards), (b) curriculum, (c) issues concerning promotion and tenure, (d) evaluation of the president and provost, (e) selection of the president and provost, and (f) setting strategic and budget priorities. Faculty influence over educational policy was not shown to be significant. In addition, evaluation of the president/provost was not shown to be a significant predictor of senate effectiveness. Furthermore, the coefficient for this variable was negative, which suggests that senates that do evaluate their president and provost are likely to score lower on the ESENATE variable. Faculty influence over undergraduate curriculum, issues related to promotion and tenure, selection of the president/provost, and setting strategic and budget priorities were all shown to be significant predictors. In the third model, the effects of faculty influence in decision making were shown to be stronger predictors, eliminating the effects of the variable measuring the importance of shared governance as an institutional value.

Using ANOVA and cross-tabs, the sample was divided by institutional sectors (baccalaureate, master’s, doctoral) and measured to determine where each sector scores on the variable ESENATE. The results show that baccalaureate institutions score higher than master’s and doctoral institutions in this sample. Doctoral institutions ranked the lowest. Table 5 shows the results from these analyses.

Collectively, these findings indicate that shared governance remains a strong institutional value among all campus constituents and across the three sectors of higher education in this sample. Faculty in this sample maintain significant control over curriculum and issues related to tenure and promotion and they usually have formal authority over such matters. Faculty in this sample have the least influence in areas of strategic planning and budgetary matters but report having informal authority in such areas. The majority of respondents also report that a sufficient amount of trust and communication exists between constituencies to
make progress in decision making. Yet, many faculty report not being meaningfully involved in decision making. Moreover, levels of trust and communication are not significant predictors of senate effectiveness. In addition, a significant lack of interest and involvement in senate activity exists among faculty. This is particularly evident in doctoral institutions.

Among the 14 variables used in the regression models to predict senate effectiveness, the five strongest predictors were (a) high levels of faculty involvement in the senate, (b) high levels of faculty interest in senate activity, (c) having significant influence over issues related to tenure and promotion, (d) having significant influence in the selection of the provost and president, and (e) having significant influence in setting strategic and budget priorities. In the following section, I briefly discuss the challenges of faculty involvement in the senate and the effects of trust versus authority on senate effectiveness. In doing so, I raise questions related to improving the role senates play in campus governance.

FACULTY INVOLVEMENT AND INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

Faculty in baccalaureate institutions are significantly more involved in senate activity and have more effective senates than those in master’s and doctoral institutions. Consequently, a potential lesson may be learned from this institutional sector. Why are faculty in baccalaureate institutions more interested and involved in the senate? Conventional wisdom suggests that greater institutional support leads to greater participation, but I argue that institutional support for senate operations does not necessarily increase faculty interest or participation. Based on the fact that baccalaureate institutions received the least amount of support for their senate operations, I view institutional support as a secondary incentive for faculty participation.

More important than institutional support such as release time or secretarial support is the impact of one’s involvement in the senate. Notwithstanding differences of institutional type, the issue may not be about how much is offered but what involvement means for faculty. The ability to influence decision outcomes is likely to outweigh release time, a stipend, or other incentives currently being offered to faculty for investing in senate activity. Presumably, ability to shape decision outcomes is more closely related to the concept of meaningful involvement. Certainly, institutional factors such as size affect the ability of senate

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TABLE 5: Cross-Tab of Senate Effectiveness (ESENATE) by Institutional Type (in percentages)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ESENATE</th>
<th>Baccalaureate</th>
<th>Master’s</th>
<th>Doctoral</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
participants to manipulate decisions. Individuals in smaller institutions are more likely to directly influence decision outcomes. Structurally, fewer organizational obstacles for participation are likely to exist in smaller institutions. Consequently, the impact of one’s labor may be more direct and yield much faster results, making participation more rewarding. Arguably, higher levels of interest and participation in the senate among faculty in baccalaureate institutions has less to do with institutional support than with the possibility of experiencing the results of their work and investment in the senate. Given this reason, are there ways larger institutions can assimilate the effects of meaningful faculty involvement?

Institutional culture and beliefs about participation and community also can influence how constituencies are involved in decision making. Scholars who study the nature of faculty work suggest that faculty are socialized differently across institutional types, which can affect their disposition on participation (Austin, Rice, & Splete, 1988). Moreover, the culture of baccalaureate institutions is often more communal than autonomous, creating environments where involvement and participation is customary. Given such differences, institutional factors and the nature of involvement are important when considering factors closely associated with faculty participation in senates.

The data from this sample show that institutional support and participation are inversely correlated. As a result, the importance and effects of institutional support must be questioned. Keep in mind that most forms of institutional support are offered only to the president or executive committee of the senate. Most at-large members are credited for service that is valued more or less depending on institutional type. How important is release time, secretarial support, or budgetary support to faculty participation? How might resources be redistributed to more positively encourage faculty involvement in the senate? Are some forms of institutional support more effective than others? The inverse relationship between institutional support and faculty involvement does not suggest support is irrelevant. Instead, it suggests that the support and rewards currently being provided (mainly at doctoral institutions) are ineffective. Existing concepts and practices of providing institutional support for senates deserve reconsideration.

TRUST VERSUS AUTHORITY

Trust and communication are concepts often associated with academic governance. It is generally assumed that institutions where considerable trust and communication exist between campus constituents are institutions where campus decision making is more functional. The fact that neither trust nor communication were significant predictors of senate effectiveness in this sample prompts an interesting question: Can effective senates exist on campuses where low levels of trust and communication exist between constituencies? As senate effectiveness is measured in this study, the answer seems to be yes. Still, most in higher education would argue that trust and communication are important for
shared governance on any campus. Before implying that trust and communication are unimportant, another way of addressing the question is to say that other factors influence effectiveness more. Can senates experiencing distrust and poor communication but high levels of influence in decision making be effective? While discussing campus governance, most would agree that adversarial relationships between senates and other campus governing bodies are bad for shared governance. However, when discussing senate effectiveness, how much authority faculty have determines effectiveness more than how well they get along with other campus governing bodies.

One common complaint among faculty is that they have limited authority. This is particularly true concerning nonacademic issues. Many faculty equate legal authority with legitimate authority. Without such authority, many senates view themselves as unable to significantly influence decision making on important issues beyond curriculum and tenure. The two areas of decision making that most strongly predict senate effectiveness (selection of the president/provost and setting strategic/budget priorities) are areas where faculty have the least amount of influence. Clearly, the issue of giving senates more formal authority can create challenges for presidents and governing boards. Advocates for stronger university presidents claim that increasing faculty authority weakens much-needed presidential leadership (AGB, 1996). Although both arguments have merit, for senates to gain more formal authority, the influence of other governing bodies is lessened, creating a complex decision-making environment with diffuse power and competing interests.

Structural and cultural changes experienced in higher education turns attention to the question of whether current governance structures are adequate for the decision-making environment (Baldwin & Leslie, 2001). Do current governance structures negatively affect senate effectiveness? Should faculty senates have more decision-making authority outside of their traditional domain? Although the results from this study suggest yes, others question the effectiveness of faculty being extensively involved in nonacademic decision making. Citing lack of information, lack of administrative infrastructure, and narrow focus, some question the ability of faculty to effectively deal with complex institutional issues (Trow, 1990).

In my estimation, the challenges of faculty involvement in decision making outside of their traditional domain are related to the consequences of their involvement, not so much the idea of sharing authority. Drawbacks often associated with faculty involvement in decision making include the lack of timeliness, faculty having a narrow view of the institution instead of one that is comprehensive, and the culture of us (faculty) against them (administration) that permeates many campuses. Although most campus constituents would agree that faculty involvement in decision making is valuable, the consequence of their involvement creates undesirable operational challenges. In some cases, accepting the results of simply not involving faculty in decision making is viewed as the lesser of two evils. Although this approach may represent one way of moving forward,
acceptance of a lesser evil does not necessarily imply sound governance systems. The data indicate faculty involvement in nonacademic decision making contributes significantly to senate effectiveness. Institutions must be creative in finding ways to grant greater formal influence to senates while, at the same time, maintaining functional governance structures. If failing to involve faculty in decision making leads to ineffective senates, facing the challenges of improving current governance structures may be the lesser evil.

Some in higher education hold that institutional responsiveness is overrated, noting the success some campuses experienced maintaining the status quo. However, the dissatisfaction among many faculty over the quality of involvement in decision making is worthy of concern. To some in higher education, it seems as if asking colleges and universities to be flexible is asking too much. Presumably, 10 years ago, asking institutions to raise $100 million of private revenue over a 3-year period might have seemed to ask a great deal. The point is that for institutions to survive, generating private revenue was a must. Employing effective governance strategies is becoming increasingly important for institutional success in the 21st century.

TRADITIONAL FACULTY SENATES

How suitable are governance structures for the current decision-making environment? Although the answer may not be apparent, it is evident that most institutions in this sample typify traditional senates. Using the models of faculty senates, the majority have influence over academic matters, limited influence over nonacademic matters, and express their influence informally. Given the discussion surrounding faculty involvement, it is clear that many senates play traditional roles in governance despite notable institutional change.

Although the consequences of having a traditional senate are unknown, two characteristics of traditional senates deserve mention. The first is that most traditional senates respond to administrative initiatives rarely advancing independent agendas. This can have two consequences. On one hand, senates that lack direction or initiative might be viewed as disengaged by the administration. On the other hand, being responsive to administrative initiatives due to the absence of an independent agenda can be viewed as cooperative. Seemingly, assertive senates with initiatives representative of institutional goals symbolize an ideal medium.

Second, traditional senates act as associations that represent the faculty rather than integrated partners in campus governance. As a result of having better knowledge about cultural and functional elements of the senate, administrative disposition and faculty activism become key areas of future investigation. Using these data helps better understand the gap between the idea and the actually process. Now the relationship between models of faculty senates and senate effectiveness needs to be explored. What kind of faculty make up traditional senates? What role does leadership play in how senates function? Presumably,
acting as an association rather than an integrated partner can contribute to exclusion in decision making or perpetuate adversarial relationships with administration. On other campuses, it can represent acceptable practice. The point is that combining new research with use of models can enhance understanding about faculty governance.

Using models creates a unit of analysis and a means to compare and contrast senate characteristics. While in search of ways to improve governance systems it is important to consider institutional contexts as well as senate types. No one solution is appropriate for all campuses that face challenges related to governance, which makes understanding differences more important.

CONCLUSION: ASSESSING THE SENATE

Governance structures and decision-making processes are of great importance because they are the means that determine institutional direction. In addition, faculty senates are likely to remain a critical component of campus governance in the coming years. Assessing what issues critically affect faculty senates is one way of prompting an examination of how to improve institutional governance. Given the institutional diversity that exists, the aim has not been to prescribe a particular plan of action. Rather, it has been to provide a better understanding about faculty senates and identify what issues most critically affect them. The importance of faculty involvement and issues of trust as related to senate effectiveness provide momentum for future discussion, action, and further study.

This study brings to light the importance of only a few issues that inform the higher education community about faculty senates. To a large extent, senates remain understudied. The need exists for additional work that determines how other factors, such as senate leadership, or particular institutional characteristics affect campus governance. Meanwhile, the focus for practice must be to address the known challenges that impede senate effectiveness. Creating alternative governance structures and improving faculty involvement in the senate represents a place to start.

Much has been said about the apparent changes higher education has undergone. The consequence of such invites a reevaluation of many aspects, including the purpose, mission, leadership, and financial structure of higher education. Governance structures are a necessary part of the discussion.

REFERENCES


JAMES T. MINOR is a research associate in the Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis at the University of Southern California. His research interests include higher education policy, governance, and presidential leadership.
Joint Task Force on Shared Governance

Working Documents

OSU Cascades Apportionment Unit
Becky Johnson's Rationale

Areas of Policy

Governance of Public Institutions of Higher Education in Oregon
Executive Summary

Initial Charge

In February 2009, Paul Doescher, then Faculty Senate President, and Sabah Randhawa, Provost and Executive Vice President, invited a group of faculty and administrators to participate on the Joint Task Force on Shared Governance (or SGTF, for Shared Governance Task Force). SGTF members include:

Lynda Ciuffetti, Professor, Botany and Plant Pathology, Past President, Faculty Senate (Chair)
Becky Warner, Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs (Co-chair)
Dan Arp, Dean, University Honors College
Roger Hammer, Associate Professor, Sociology
Goran Jovanovic, Professor, Chemical, Biological and Environmental Engineering
Michael Oriard, Associate Dean, College of Liberal Arts
Sheryl Thorburn, Associate Professor, Public Health
Meg Reeves, General Counsel, Ex-Officio

The fundamental charge of the Joint Task Force was to review and recommend policies and actions that will enhance the effectiveness of shared governance at all levels of the University. Specifically, while shared governance includes other groups such as students and staff, the Task Force was charged with examining shared governance between faculty and administrators. Among the items to be considered by the Task Force were:

- a value statement on shared governance that articulates the University’s commitment to shared governance,
- guiding policies and procedures that demonstrate commitment to shared governance,
- recommendations on improving shared governance practices at OSU,
- recommendations for a process to periodically assess and ensure the effectiveness of shared governance practice across the University.

SECTION 1: Guiding Policies and Procedures

The scope and content of shared-governance practices at OSU are constrained by Oregon Administrative Rules and OUS regulations. Most of the rules and regulations are embedded in the Faculty Senate and its bylaws.

SECTION 2: Faculty Input

To identify issues of concern to faculty, the Task Force solicited their input, through a secure webpage, for improving, enhancing, and/or expanding shared governance at all levels of the
university. The major areas of concern identified in the input received from faculty include (but were not limited to):

- the failure of shared governance, especially the failure of administrators, after receiving input from faculty, to communicate with the faculty their weighing of this faculty input and their reasons for the ultimate decision (“full-cycle governance”);
- the failure of many faculty to be involved in shared governance, due to perceived lack of impact and the absence of rewards for “service”;
- the failure of the Faculty Senate, in its composition by both professorial and professional faculty, to represent faculty views adequately;
- the lack of shared governance in particular areas, chiefly budgeting, structural change (reorganization/realignment), and administrative appointments (especially of department heads/chairs).

SECTION 3  Definition of Shared Governance

Shared governance is the process by which faculty and administrators share responsibility and accountability for reaching decisions on policy and procedure. These decisions include matters of institutional planning; academic programs; curriculum and academic regulations; faculty and administrative hiring; university, college, and unit spending priorities; faculty compensation and advancement; administrative appointments and reappointments; and others that affect the success of the institution in fulfilling its missions. As noted in the Faculty Senate Bylaws Article II, Section II, the Faculty Senate has “legislative responsibility with respect to academic policies, educational standards, curricula, and academic regulations.”

Shared governance requires that administrators seek faculty input in these matters, 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, reaching decision on the process in which faculty input will be made, reaching decision on the content and form of the input, communication of input through the channels made available, and attention to the communication from administrators regarding the final decision. The immediate goal of shared governance is to reach agreement on matters vital to the institution and its citizens, or, where disagreements remain, to assure those on the dissenting side that their views were heard and fully considered. The long-term goal 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 campus, reaching into all levels of decision-making.

Basic Principles of Shared Governance at Oregon State University

1. Administrators and faculty share responsibility and accountability in all steps of the process of reaching decisions on policy and procedure.
2. Shared governance requires broad 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 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.

4. Shared governance should be practiced wherever possible in institutional decision-making, including, but not limited to:
   i. Planning and organization;
   ii. Academic programs, curriculum, and academic regulations;
   iii. Spending priorities;
   iv. Faculty compensation and advancement;
   v. Administrative appointments and faculty hiring.

5. Shared governance in all of these areas should inform decision-making at all levels: the institutional, college, and unit levels.

SECTION 4 Current practices and procedures for decision-making at OSU, with recommendations for improvement

Weighing these and concerns of its own members in a series of meetings, the Task Force identified a set of the most important areas of decision-making that require the input of faculty and administration. The Task Force offers the following recommendations.

A. Institutional Planning

   Recommendation: Any committee/task force formed by the president and/or provost to help guide institutional planning should have at least 20% of its membership appointed by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee.

   Recommendation: The recommendations of these groups’ work should be presented to the Faculty Senate for discussion, input, and endorsement prior to final decisions.

B. Faculty Senate Governance

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

   Recommendations: For more effective input from the Faculty Senate in institutional decision-making:

   i. Reports to the Faculty Senate, including those by the Faculty Senate committees, should be substantive (i.e. specific actions and/or recommendations), and these items should be brought to discussion and vote on the floor of the Senate.

   ii. Faculty, through the Senate, should provide more collective feedback to the President/Provost/Deans after discussion of items on the Faculty Senate Agenda. Mechanisms should be developed that will provide more meaningful input such that “the sense of the Senate” is obtained and shared with the administration.

   Recommendations: Increased participation of academic faculty in the Faculty Senate and its committees is recommended. Mechanisms for doing so include increasing the importance and value of service in P&T policies, periodic reviews, administrative (re)appointments, and merit-based salary increases.
i. The University must value participation in the workings of the Faculty Senate. All administrative position descriptions should include a statement related to the value of and requirement to foster faculty participation in Faculty Senate and university committees.

ii. Due to the importance and value of service in Faculty Senate and university committees, administrators should review and enforce the requirements of such service in the current promotion and tenure policies.

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.

Recommendation: The Faculty Senate Executive Committee and the Administration should have discussions to determine if 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. A separate task force and/or ad hoc committee to review the current structure should be appointed.

C. University, College, and Unit Spending Priorities

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

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

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

D. Faculty Compensation and Advancement

Recommendation: The president and provost should bring to the Faculty Senate, for discussion and input, any plans for salary/benefit adjustments.

Recommendation: Each college and unit should have a transparent process for salary adjustments developed through consultation by the dean/department chair or head with the faculty.

E. Administrative Appointments

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

Recommendation: All units and colleges should have written policies, agreed upon by faculty and administrators, that define 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. Faculty representatives should be included on all search committees for administrative appointments. Faculty should have meaningful input into decisions about the appointment and reappointment of academic
administrators, and their input should be listened to and valued. The policies should specify direct or indirect, individual or collective, input as appropriate.

**Recommendation:** Units should have written policies, agreed upon by faculty, that describe processes for including faculty at all stages of the hiring process, including the identification of hiring priorities, the development of position descriptions, the selection of search committee members, and the evaluation of candidates. The majority of search committee members should be faculty from the academic unit(s) for which the position is affiliated. In units where faculty do not vote on hiring decisions, search committees should make recommendations for hiring, in addition to evaluating candidates’ strengths and weaknesses. Policies should specify direct or indirect, individual or collective, input as appropriate.

**SECTION 5 ** **Review and Assessment**

Shared governance is the process by which faculty and administrators share responsibility and accountability for reaching decisions on policy and procedure. A basic principle of shared governance is that it requires a “full-cycle” approach to assess its effectiveness in reaching such decisions.

**Recommendation:** The Faculty Senate should assess changes made as a result of this report in the next 2-3 years. Periodic climate surveys of faculty, conducted through Institutional Research, should be part of this assessment.
INTRODUCTION

Initial Charge

In late February 2009, Paul Doescher, then Faculty Senate President, and Sabah Randhawa, Provost and Executive Vice President, invited a group of faculty and administrators to participate on the Joint Task Force on Shared Governance. The fundamental charge of the Joint Task Force was:

*To review and recommend policies and actions that will enhance the effectiveness of shared governance at all levels of the University.*

Among the items to be considered by the Task Force were:

- A value statement on shared governance that articulates the University’s commitment to shared governance.
- Guiding policies and procedures that demonstrate commitment to shared governance.
- Examples of best practices of shared governance.
- Recommendations on improving shared governance practices at OSU.
- Process to periodically assess and insure the effectiveness of shared governance practice across the University.

As part of the charge, Doescher and Randhawa stated:

Shared governance is a principle that is valued as critical to the mission and operation of Oregon State University. Currently, the Faculty Senate at OSU interacts closely with upper levels of University administration in institutional matters, such as academic planning and budget and policy review, and on matters that more directly impact faculty responsibilities and development, including curriculum development and promotion and tenure policies and practice.

The implementation of shared governance, however, is a “process” that must encompass all levels of the organization. Like any distributed process, the practice of shared governance can lack consistency across the University and every effort should be made to promote its effectiveness and consistency. The principle of shared governance is important to promoting wise and careful decision making. The need to strengthen shared governance at OSU is heightened by an uncertain future where issues surrounding budget reductions and changing societal needs may require significant changes to the direction and structure of the institution.

The basic goals of the Joint Task Force on Shared Governance are to further the principles of shared governance and promote the involvement of faculty in institutional decision making.

Note of clarification: Although the committee’s original impression was that the charge of the group centered on faculty involvement in shared governance, it was not explicitly stated in the original charge. The SGTF requested clarification from the Provost, President and Past-President of the Faculty Senate, and they agreed the intent was that this group focus on faculty involvement.
Task force members included:

Lynda Ciuffetti, Professor, Botany and Plant Pathology, Past President, Faculty Senate (Chair)
Becky Warner, Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs (Co-chair)
Dan Arp, Dean, University Honors College
Roger Hammer, Associate Professor, Sociology
Goran Jovanovic, Professor, Chemical, Biological and Environmental Engineering
Michael Oriard, Associate Dean, College of Liberal Arts
Sheryl Thorburn, Associate Professor, Public Health
Meg Reeves, General Counsel, Ex-Officio

The SGTF had its first meetings in Spring 2009. Because issues regarding the university budget were demanding the attention and time of several SGTF members, the decision was made to postpone further SGTF activities until the following academic year. The SGTF was reconvened in January 2010 and met regularly from that point until May 2011.

In the following sections of this report, we summarize the steps the SGTF took to perform its charge of reviewing and recommending policies and actions that will enhance the effectiveness of shared governance at all levels of the University. We also define principles of shared governance, identify best practices and procedures, present a definition of shared governance, and make recommendations. More specifically, Section 1 presents information regarding the guiding policies and procedures. Section 2 describes how the SGTF solicited input from faculty, summarizes that input, and presents the major questions that guided the SGTF’s work. Section 3 presents the SGTF’s definition and principles of Shared Governance. Section 4 summarizes current practices and procedures for decision-making related to five areas (institutional planning, faculty senate governance, spending priorities, faculty compensation and advancement, and administrative appointments and faculty hiring). When available, best practices related to each area are noted. Recommendations are also offered for improving shared governance in each area. Finally a recommendation for periodic review and assessment of shared governance at OSU is presented in Section 5.
SECTION 1   **Guiding Policies and Procedures**

Prior to looking at the policies and procedures, the SGTF determined the existing framework of authority for governance of the institution, manifested through state laws (statutes and administrative rules), policies of the Oregon State Board of Higher Education (OSBHE), policies of the University, and bylaws of the Faculty Senate. Under this framework the legislature, Board, University administration and faculty all play a role in the governance of the institution.

The legislature has given the OSBHE comprehensive authority with respect to the institutions of the state system of higher education. Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) Chapter 351, at [http://www.leg.state.or.us/ors/351.html](http://www.leg.state.or.us/ors/351.html); and ORS Chapter 352, at [http://www.leg.state.or.us/ors/352.html](http://www.leg.state.or.us/ors/352.html). Summarized broadly, the Board’s authority includes controlling virtually all aspects of real and personal property purchased, sold or used by the institution; establishing and managing a personnel system for the institutions; prescribing tuition and fees; supervising the general course of instruction and the research, extension, educational and other activities of the institutions; and adopting rules and bylaws for the government of the institutions, including the faculty, teachers, students and employees therein. The Board is authorized to, and does, delegate some of these responsibilities to institution presidents ORS 351.060.

Institutional presidents are also conferred authority by the legislature. Under state law the president is the president of the faculty, as well as the executive and governing officer of the institution. Subject to the Board’s authority, the President may “control and give general directions to the practical affairs of the institution.” ORS 352.004.

The legislature has also established authority in the faculty of the institutions. The president and professors constitute the faculty of the institution and “as such have the immediate government and discipline of it and the students therein” ORS 352.004. In addition, “[t]he faculty may, subject to the supervision of the OSBHE under ORS 351.070, prescribe the course of study to be pursued in the institution and the textbooks to be used.” ORS 352.010.

The Board and OSU have each adopted administrative rules to implement authority conferred by the legislature and, in the case of OSU, delegated by the Board. The rules adopted by the Board are in Oregon Administrative Rules (OAR) Chapter 580. The rules adopted by OSU are in OAR Chapter 576. OAR Chapter 580 is at [http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/rules/OARS_500/OAR_580/580_tofc.html](http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/rules/OARS_500/OAR_580/580_tofc.html); OAR Chapter 576 is at [http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/rules/OARS_500/OAR_576/576_tofc.html](http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/rules/OARS_500/OAR_576/576_tofc.html). Both sets of rules apply to OSU. The administrative rules, which have the force of law, cover a wide range of topics governing life at OSU for employees and students. But much of the Board’s internal operating guidance for the system institutions is located in the Board’s Internal Management Directives (IMD’s), at [http://www.ous.edu/sites/default/files/about/polipro/files/IMDdoc2011_0.pdf](http://www.ous.edu/sites/default/files/about/polipro/files/IMDdoc2011_0.pdf), and its policies, at [http://www.ous.edu/sites/default/files/about/polipro/files/BdPol110325_0.pdf](http://www.ous.edu/sites/default/files/about/polipro/files/BdPol110325_0.pdf). OSU also has in place policies that order its internal affairs. Many of those policies are crafted and recommended for adoption by the Faculty Senate. Some of those policies are crafted by the University administration and reviewed by the Faculty Senate. Other policies, primarily related to curriculum, are crafted and adopted by the Faculty Senate independently of the University administration.
The Oregon State University Bylaws of the Faculty Senate state:

ARTICLE II: OBJECT

Sec. 1. Within the framework of legislation providing for Land-Grant Institutions and the Oregon State System of Higher Education, the Faculty Senate of Oregon State University, on behalf of the Faculty of the University, shall: (a) determine and establish the purposes of Oregon State University, formulate and evaluate policies and activities in harmony with these purposes; (b) assume responsibility for the creation, maintenance, and protection of a University environment conducive to the full and free development and preservation of scholarly learning, teaching, and research; (c) provide the means by which the administration may be apprised of representative opinion of the entire Faculty.

Sec. 2. To accomplish the Objects stated in Section 1. above, the Faculty Senate shall: (a) have legislative responsibility with respect to academic policies, educational standards, curricula, and academic regulations; (b) study and prepare recommendations to the President of Oregon State University concerning the welfare of the Faculty; (c) provide the means through which any matter of general interest to the Faculty or pertaining to the institution and its purpose may be brought to the Faculty Senate for discussion and appropriate action.

ARTICLE III: AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

Sec. 1. The Faculty Senate shall be representative of the entire Faculty of Oregon State University and shall have both the authority and responsibility to act for and on behalf of the Faculty in all matters encompassed within the stated Objects of the Faculty Senate. The Faculty is defined as members of the Unclassified Academic Staff who: (1) are Professional Faculty, or (2) hold one of these academic ranks: Instructor, Senior Instructor, Faculty Research Assistant, Senior Faculty Research Assistant, Research Associate, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, or Professor (as defined in Section 580-20-005 of the OSSHE Administrative Rules). Faculty in administrative or support units with joint appointments in academic units shall be included in their academic unit for the purposes of apportionment.

Sec. 2. Apportionment units represented in the Senate must comply with the Board’s Administrative Rule (OAR 580-15-005), banning discrimination on the basis of age, disability, national origin, race, marital status, religion, sex, or sexual orientation.

Sec. 3. Members of the Faculty Senate are the uninstructed representatives of their constituents. It shall be the responsibility of the members of the Faculty Senate to seek for the opinions of their constituencies. Having exercised such responsibility, the members of the Faculty Senate shall feel free to make decisions and vote on matters according to their own reasoned judgments.

SECTION 2    Soliciting Input to Guide the Work of the Task Force

In February 2010 the Task Force emailed all faculty, requesting, through a secure webpage, suggestions for improving, enhancing, and/or expanding shared governance at all levels of the University. Faculty were asked to be as specific as possible in terms of policy and procedure and level of the University (unit, college, or university) where it should be applied. As stated on the webpage, a form was used to collect suggestions anonymously; the SGTF committed to keep individual comments confidential. The SGTF assembled the submitted suggestions/concerns under broad categories described below, and used these categories to initiate discussions amongst the SGTF and to develop the comments and recommendations provided in this document.
Analysis of Input

A total of 77 comments were submitted to the Task Force. Because the input was anonymous it could not be determined if these were independent submissions. The following classifications of comments were identified (number of times mentioned):

- Examples of Lack of or Failure of Shared Governance (23 comments)
- Preponderance of Professional Faculty in Shared Governance (8 comments)
- Support for Unionization/Collective Bargaining (7 Comments)
- Inclusion of Underrepresented Groups in Shared Governance (6 Comments)
- Lack of Shared Governance in Reorganization (5 Comments)
- Importance of Shared Governance in Curriculum, Academic Integrity and Academic Freedom (5 Comments)
- Shared Governance in Selection of Department Chairs and other Service Positions (3 Comments)
- Expansion of Contingent Faculty Undermines Shared Governance (3 Comments)
- Failure to Value Service Undermines Shared Governance (3 Comments)
- Lack Shared Governance in Budgeting (2 Comments)
- Promotion and Tenure (2 Comments)
- Faculty should not be Involved in Furlough Decision (2 Comments)
- Unclassified (8 Comments)
- Comment from the President of AAUP (not included for analysis)

After reviewing the substance of the comments received, the task force reflected upon the following four major themes as it moved forward with its work (Appendix A contains excerpts from faculty input that relate to these themes):

1. the failure of “full-cycle governance”;
2. the lack of broad faculty involvement in shared governance, due to perceived lack of impact and the absence of rewards for “service”;
3. the failure of the Faculty Senate, in its composition by both ranked and unranked faculty (see Faculty Senate Bylaws Article III, Sec. 1), to represent faculty views adequately; and
4. the lack of shared governance in particular areas, chiefly budgeting, structural change, and administrative appointments.

SECTION 3   Definition of Shared Governance

The SGTF developed a “definition” of Shared Governance to be considered for adoption by the Administration and the Faculty Senate and the task force used this definition as a basis for discussion of the four overarching questions stated above and for the recommendations provided in this document. Shared governance, more broadly, involves the entire university community, but the focus of this report and the charge to the task force, were limited to the relations between the Faculty and the Administration.
Definition:

*Shared governance is the process by which faculty and administrators share responsibility for reaching decisions on policy and procedure. These decisions include matters of institutional planning; academic programs, curriculum and academic regulations; university, college, and unit spending priorities; faculty compensation and advancement; administrative appointments and reappointments; and others that affect the success of the institution in fulfilling its missions. As noted in the Faculty Senate Bylaws Article II, Section II, the Faculty Senate has “legislative responsibility with respect to academic policies, educational standards, curricula, and academic regulations.”*

Shared governance requires that administrators seek faculty input in these matters, 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, reaching decision on the process in which faculty input will be made, reaching decision on the content and form of the input, communication of input through the channels made available, and attention to the communication from administrators regarding the final decision. The immediate goal of shared governance is to reach agreement on matters vital to the institution and its citizens, or, where disagreements remain, to assure those on the dissenting side that their views were heard and fully considered. The long-term goal 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 campus, reaching into all levels of decision-making.

**Basic Principles of Shared Governance at Oregon State University**

From this definition, and from analysis of current practices of shared governance at OSU, input collected from faculty, and consideration of the guiding policies and procedures that identify or constrain areas for shared governance, the SGTF defined five principles that could be implemented across university, college, and unit levels:

1. Administrators and faculty share responsibility and accountability in all steps of the process related to decisions on policy and procedure.
2. Shared governance is a privilege, responsibility, and duty of all faculty and administrators and requires broad participation.
3. Shared governance requires a “full-cycle” approach in 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 final decisions), a “full-cycle” approach requires involvement in the process, form, and content for providing faculty input. For both administrators and faculty, effective communication is essential.
4. Shared governance should be practiced wherever possible in institutional decision-making at all levels. The SGTF recognized the following priority areas in which shared governance needs to be fully implemented: i) planning and organization; ii) academic programs, curriculum, and academic regulations; iii) spending priorities; iv) faculty compensation and advancement; and v) administrative appointments and faculty hiring.
5. Shared governance in all areas should inform decision-making at institutional, college, and unit levels.
SECTION 4  Current Practices and Procedures for Decision-making at OSU, with Recommendations for Improvement

In the definition of shared governance proposed by this task force, a set of the most important areas of decisions were identified that require the input of faculty and administration. These are:

A. institutional planning
B. faculty senate governance
C. university, college, and unit spending priorities
D. faculty compensation and advancement
E. administrative appointments and faculty hiring

Below we summarize current practices/procedures for decision-making in each area.

A. Institutional Planning

OSU administration is committed to institutional planning and decision-making processes that honor shared governance, and intentionally involves faculty, staff and student participation. The current institutional planning processes were instituted when Ed Ray became OSU President in June 2003. The 2004 Strategic Plan was built upon outcomes from the “OSU-2007 planning process” that involved hundreds of individuals since January 2002 (http://oregonstate.edu/osu2007/). The adoption of the 2004 Strategic Plan was followed by an annual process of assessment at the university level as well as in the colleges and other divisions. In addition to the annual review process, OSU is committed to a review of its strategic plan every five years. This process was last completed in 2009, resulting in the Strategic Plan Phase II (2009-2013) (http://oregonstate.edu/leadership/strategicplan/). In addition to discussion with, and input from, the Faculty Senate and its committees, the university administration also regularly involves a variety of appointed committees to participate in conversations on institutional planning. The following committees, appointed by the Provost, are chaired or co-chaired by professorial faculty:

- University Budget Committee (http://oregonstate.edu/leadership/sites/default/files/provost-documents/2010-2011-UBC.pdf)
- University Space Committee (http://oregonstate.edu/osusc/university-space-committee-members)
- University Council on Student Engagement and Experience (http://oregonstate.edu/leadership/sites/default/files/provost-documents/2010-2011-UCSEE.pdf)

Input received from faculty revealed significant concerns about the flow of communication on important decisions for our university (see Appendix A). As stated the Faculty Senate bylaws, the Faculty Senate is to “provide the means by which the administration may be apprised of representative opinion of the entire Faculty” (Article II, Sec 1, c) and is to “provide the means through which any matter of general interest to the Faculty or pertaining to the institution and its purpose may be brought to the Faculty Senate for discussion and appropriate action” (Article II, Sec 2, c). Since OSU values shared governance, we must ensure that decisions made by administration reflect a genuine conversation between administration and faculty. Two topics in particular were raised by some faculty as examples of “failures” of shared governance: furloughs and academic realignment. In these incidences, as well as in others, there was a sense that decisions were made prior to coming to the Senate. The SGTF agrees that “full-cycle” communication is critical for successful institutional planning, and that this includes two
essential components. First, when administration sets up committees/task forces to explore and advise on issues, faculty must be part of that conversation. Second, the work of these groups must be vetted by broader administrative and faculty groups before decisions are made.

**Recommendation:** Any committee/task force formed by the president and/or provost to help guide institutional planning should have at least 20% of its membership appointed by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee.

**Recommendation:** The recommendations of these groups’ work should be presented to the Faculty Senate for discussion, input and endorsement prior to final decisions.

### B. Faculty Senate Governance

The Faculty Senate is committed to decision-making processes that honor shared governance amongst the faculty and between the faculty and the administration. Within the framework of the bylaws of the Faculty Senate (Article II and Article III), the Faculty Senate is composed of the Executive Committee, Interinstitutional Faculty Senate representation, 27 standing committees, special committees and councils, and various ad hoc committees and task forces as needed ([http://oregonstate.edu/senate/committees/](http://oregonstate.edu/senate/committees/)). Each year the Faculty Senate sends out a form to the faculty-at-large requesting volunteers to serve on these committees and councils. The Executive Committee, elected by the Faculty Senate, meets annually and uses responses to this request in the appointment of members to these committees and councils. The Bylaws and Nominations Committee is responsible for preparation of the slate of nominees for President-Elect, Executive Committee, and Interinstitutional Faculty Senator. Through the Faculty Senate, the faculty-at-large are also requested to provide nominations for these elected positions.

The Bylaws of the Faculty Senate provide that “The Committee on Committees shall propose Standing Rules, subject to the approval of the Faculty Senate, for each of the Senate’s standing committees and councils, and cause those Rules, thus approved, to be published annually in the Faculty Senate Handbook, and in each issue of the Faculty Handbook” (see Article IX, Sec. 4 of the Bylaws). It is the responsibility of the Committee on Committees to review each committee and council every five years to determine whether their activities have enhanced the functions and objectives of the Senate. The President-Elect meets with the Chair of each committee annually to review accomplishments of the past year and to target actions items for the upcoming year. Members of each committee suggest items in need of attention and faculty-at-large have the right and responsibility to bring issues of concern to the Faculty Senate for consideration of discussion or action.

It was the opinion of the SGTF that, for the most part, the committee structure of the Faculty Senate worked well and covered areas of responsibility and concern of the faculty-at-large as it refers to academic programs, curriculum, and academic regulations. However, there were examples of committees where the Standing Rules were not currently being applied and need improvement and this will be addressed in Section 4.E. of this document.

The SGTF discussed procedures of the Faculty Senate and ways that these could be improved. It was noted by the SGTF that Faculty Senators should consider being more proactive in Senate meetings. Also noted by the SGTF was that the Faculty Senate has, over recent years, realized the need for and implemented procedures to enhance communication with and among the faculty-at-large to ensure maximum effectiveness and to strengthen shared governance. Some of these activities include:
• All proposed and/or revised academic regulations are sent to all Faculty Senate committees/councils for feedback prior to Senate approval to engage faculty perspectives outside of the Academic Regulations Committee.

• Faculty Senate created mailing lists both for Senators by apportionment unit and for constituents by apportionment unit to enable Senators to caucus among themselves and to provide a method of communicating with and determining feedback from their constituents.

• Efforts to improve off-campus participation in the Faculty Senate committee structure through the ability to interact face-to-face through teleconferencing capability.

• Yearly visits to OSU-Cascades by the Faculty Senate leadership to discuss issues (e.g., curriculum) unique to the branch campus.

• Periodically, and for various issues, the Faculty Senate requests electronic input from the faculty-at large via an anonymous, open response method (comments box).

• Beginning in April 2011, Faculty Senate meetings are now webcast, which will allow off-campus Senators to remotely participate in meetings.

• Small group faculty sessions (professorial, research, professional) with the OSU President were initiated by the Faculty Senate and welcomed by administration to provide direct input to the president regarding matters of importance to the faculty.

These activities and changes have certainly improved the quality of the work by the Senate and increased effectiveness. Still, after considering many aspects related to Faculty Senate governance the SGTF maintains that a more explicitly delineated approach to different categories of issues taken up by the Senate would greatly improve ownership of decisions. In this respect clearly communicated procedures should guide the consideration and disposition of any topic brought to the Senate floor. Disciplined observance of the major principles of shared governance (appropriate application of a “full-cycle” approach, application of direct and indirect representation, and application of individual and collective expression of counsel and decision) would further improve the role of the Senate in the shared governance process.

Faculty and administrators share responsibility for decisions about curriculum. Faculty has primary responsibility for both determining and delivering the curriculum. The administration provides budgetary support. Because the curriculum is “owned” by the Faculty Senate, it is critical that teaching faculty participate in curricular decisions.

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

**Recommendations:** For more effective input from the Faculty Senate in institutional decision-making:

i. Reports to the Faculty Senate, including those by the Faculty Senate committees, should be substantive (i.e. specific actions and/or recommendations) and these items should be brought to discussion and vote on the floor of the Senate.

ii. Faculty, through the Senate, should provide more collective feedback to the President/Provost/ Deans after discussion of items on the Faculty Senate Agenda. Mechanisms should be developed that will provide more meaningful input such that “the sense of the Senate” is obtained and shared with the administration.
**Recommendations:** Increased participation of academic faculty in the Faculty Senate and its committees is recommended. Mechanisms for doing so include increasing the importance and value of service in P&T policies, periodic reviews, administrative (re)appointments, and merit-based salary increases.

i. The University must value participation in the workings of the Faculty Senate. All administrative position descriptions should include a statement related to the value of and requirement to foster faculty participation in Faculty Senate and university committees.

ii. Due to the importance and value of service in Faculty Senate and university committees, administrators should review and enforce the requirements of such service in the current promotion and tenure policies.

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.

**Recommendation:** The Faculty Senate Executive Committee and the Administration should have discussions to determine if the current structure of the Faculty Senate serves adequately and equally well the interests of both ranked and unranked faculty. A separate task force or ad hoc committee to review the current structure should be appointed.

C. University, College, and Unit Spending Priorities

*The State Board of Higher Education*

The budget process for the executive branch begins at the agency level. For the Oregon University System, the budget is first developed by the State Board of Higher Education, which includes two faculty members and two students appointed by the Governor. The budget is based on recommendations from the campuses and the Chancellor’s Office. The Board then submits a recommended budget to the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) for review and modification. DAS submits the Board’s proposed budget to the Governor who then ultimately proposes agency budgets to the Legislature.

As the budget is considered by the Legislature, each executive branch agency, including the Board and the administration of OSU, is expected to fully support the Governor’s proposed budget. Individual faculty members and the Faculty Senate are not covered by this expectation of support.

The Legislature ultimately approves the budget for the Oregon University System. The Board then allocates funds from the legislatively approved budget to individual institutions, based on budget notes included by the legislature and Board approved allocation formulas, included in the “Resource Allocation Model”.

The process for the 2013-15 biennium will likely be affected by two bills passed during the 2011 legislative session. SB 909 creates the Oregon Education Investment Board (OEIB), chaired by the Governor, which is charged with developing a comprehensive budget along the entire education continuum, from early childhood through postgraduate programs. The legislature also passed SB 242 which established greater autonomy for OUS and eliminated many of the specific budget lines associated with the OUS budget. Over the next six months the OEIB process will become more defined as will the changes in the OUS governance.
During the 2004-2005 academic year the University initiated an analysis of the way Education and General (E&G) funds are allocated to academic and support units. The budget review process sought to establish base budgets and then have productivity-driven allocations of budget increases or decreases from the base budget. Two groups played an important role in the budget restructuring deliberations. The University Budget Committee led the overall analysis process, including developing and refining the methodology, developing strategies for allocating overhead costs to academic units, and helping in the refinement of data and assessing its accuracy. The Provost’s Council critiqued and provided input during the development phase of the project and then provided input to university leadership relative to outcomes and their impact. The outcome of the rebasing process resulted in the university redirecting $7.5 million in recurring funds to four colleges. (http://oregonstate.edu/budget/rebasinginitiative.htm) The university is now in the process of recalibrating base budgets for units for future years.

Managing budget reductions can be a challenge in a relatively decentralized environment and requires the involvement of faculty, staff, and students. An example of how the university approaches budget reductions can be seen in the process used to prepare for a possible 20% cut in Education & General funding. In early 2009, the President established an Advisory Council for Budget and Strategic Priorities, which was chaired by the Provost and included the Vice President for Finance and Administration, President and President-Elect of the Faculty Senate, ASOSU President, Budget Director, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and International Programs and Vice Provost for Student Affairs. Over the course of a 9-month period the President, Provost, and Vice President for Finance and Administration engaged in continuous conversation through Faculty Senate meetings, special forums, and electronic communication. The entire process is detailed on the web at: http://oregonstate.edu/leadership/budget/.

The outcome of this process was a proposal for academic and system guidelines that were intended to better position the university strategically. The President approved these guidelines in 2009. A follow-up committee, the Strategic Alignment and Budget Reduction Review Committee, was formed to review proposals from units about how to adhere to the next guidelines (all work posted at the link above). The realignment process also was used to allocate incremental revenue from enrollment growth. For example, the President announced that the university will add 60-75 faculty over the next two years, with hiring focused on the signature areas within the new divisions.

The composition of the various committees deliberating the budget decisions allowed for little faculty representation.

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

**Recommendation:** The president and provost should bring to the Faculty Senate, for discussion and input, budget priorities for the University prior to implementation.

**College and Department Budgets**

At the same time as the President called for a look at university budget rebasing, he also called on colleges to pay attention to their budgets. In the 2004 Presidential address, he commented:
“It is now time for the University and the colleges (and the faculty, staff, and students) to ask whether or not the current budget process is serving the purposes of the strategic plan effectively. My own preference, based on my experience, is for us to seriously consider re-basing budgets. Similarly, we must develop a process to review central expenses and to determine if they are cost effective. Finally, I believe that each college should have an explicit budget allocation model of its own that is developed through a consultative process led by the Dean. The budget process should be open, and the resulting budgets should be transparent. The budget process is not an end in itself; it is a tool for implementing institutional decisions and strategies. Now that we have well defined University and unit strategic plans we can carefully assess changing current budget practices.” ([http://oregonstate.edu/leadership/president/university-day-2004](http://oregonstate.edu/leadership/president/university-day-2004)).

Current processes applied in the structuring and dissemination of College and Department budgets are quite varied in implementation of shared governance principles. In some cases, faculty are informed about the size of the operating budget without opportunity to provide input for spending priorities. Financial resources such as Foundation funds, which are outside of usual budgetary procedure, can be particularly mysterious to faculty. Where budgets have been reduced to absolutely basic operating minimum, there is little opportunity for meaningful input from most shared governance stakeholders. But wherever there are discretionary funds, which may have long lasting effects on the financial health and academic development of the college and its units, principles of shared governance should operate.

**Recommendation**: Each college and unit should have a transparent budget allocation process that is developed through consultation by the dean/department chair or head with the faculty.

D. Faculty compensation and advancement

Two committees of the Faculty Senate address faculty compensation and advancement. These are the Faculty Economic Welfare and Retirement Committee ([http://oregonstate.edu/senate/committees/fewrc/index.html](http://oregonstate.edu/senate/committees/fewrc/index.html)) and the Promotion and Tenure Committee ([http://oregonstate.edu/senate/committees/ptc/index.html](http://oregonstate.edu/senate/committees/ptc/index.html)), respectively.

In 2000, the Faculty Economic Welfare and Retirement Committee presented a “Report of the Issue Group on Faculty Compensation” that was accepted by the Faculty Senate and the Administration. This report was reviewed, updated and accepted in 2005, and again in 2008. It is the understanding of the SGTF that the recommendations in this report on merit, equity, and compression had direct impact on how the last salary increases for faculty were applied, and it endorses the notion that faculty compensation should be governed by principles of shared governance.

**Recommendation**: The president and provost should bring to the Faculty Senate, for discussion and input, any plans for salary/benefit adjustments.

**Recommendation**: Each college and unit should have a transparent process for salary adjustments developed through consultation by the dean/department chair or head with the faculty.

Regarding faculty advancement, in recent years the Promotion and Tenure Committee has played an active role to ensure fair and uniform evaluation of faculty going through the promotion and tenure process. Recent changes include:
• Standardization of Student Committees in the evaluation process,
• Standardization of the documentation of peer evaluation of teaching in the dossier,
• Requirement that the unit committee be elected rather than appointed, or that the process for constituting the committee in some other way be approved by the faculty in the unit,
• Requirement that the college-level committee include faculty representation,
• Requirement of peer evaluation of all parts of the candidate’s position, not just teaching and research.

Given the structures and processes, including processes for continuous revision, that are already in place, the Task Force offers no recommendation on this issue. (A recommendation on the weighing of service in evaluations for promotion and tenure appears in Section 4B.)

E. Administrative appointments and faculty hiring:

Hiring university and college level administrators: The Faculty Senate Administrative Appointments Committee (AAC) is charged with participating in the search process for the following administrative positions:

• All positions at the Provost, Vice President, Vice Provost and Associate Provost level
• All positions at the Dean level
• Other positions of academic significance, including, but not limited to, Undergraduate Academic Programs Director, Admission and Orientation Director, and Registrar.

The Standing Rules for the AAC state that “whenever there is an impending vacancy, or an actual vacancy occurs, in any of the above listed positions, or when a new administrative position is created, the Administrative Appointments Committee shall confer with the President (or his/her designated representative), review the requirements of the position, and provide advisement concerning composition of a Search Committee and the range and timing of its search.” In addition, the AAC “recommends three faculty members who shall serve on each Search Committee for appointments to vacant or newly created administrative positions.”

Input from faculty who have served on the AAC indicated that these standing rules are not being followed. The date on the website shows the last time these rules were reviewed was May 1998, and it would be worthwhile having the Faculty Senate review them, consider the current set of appointments that should have AAC input, and suggest an effective structure and process for this committee.

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

Hiring chairs/heads/directors: All faculty associated with a unit or college should have the opportunity to provide input regarding the evaluation of the candidates for chair, head, and director appointments, as well as for reappointment of individuals serving in those positions. It is not clear if faculty participation in providing input for administrative appointments and reappointments is fully implemented. There is anecdotal evidence that current practices are substantially different among colleges and units, and often not in line with expectations and shared governance principles.
**Recommendation:** All units and colleges should have written policies, agreed upon by faculty and administrators, that define 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. Faculty representatives should be included on all search committees for administrative appointments. Faculty should have meaningful input into decisions about the appointment and reappointment of academic administrators, and their input should be listened to and valued. The policies should specify direct or indirect, individual or collective, input as appropriate.

**Hiring faculty:** Faculty and administrators at OSU most often (but not always) share responsibility for hiring academic faculty. The faculty are in the best position to judge the qualifications of candidates for academic faculty positions. Faculty participation in identifying hiring priorities and allocating positions at college and unit levels is often inadequate. Faculty involvement in the development of position descriptions varies. The SGTF does not have objective indicators to determine if current practices at all colleges and units meet basic principles of shared governance (most search committee members from the unit and the academic area with representation from other units as appropriate).

**Recommendation:** Units should have written policies, agreed upon by faculty, that describe processes for including faculty at all stages of the hiring process, including the identification of hiring priorities, the development of position descriptions, the selection of search committee members, and the evaluation of candidates. The majority of search committee members should be faculty from the academic unit(s) for which the position is affiliated. In units where faculty do not vote on hiring decisions, search committees should make recommendations for hiring, in addition to evaluating candidates’ strengths and weaknesses. Policies should specify direct or indirect, individual or collective, input as appropriate.

**SECTION 5  Review and Assessment**

Shared governance is the process by which faculty and administrators share responsibility and accountability for reaching decisions on policy and procedure. A basic principle of shared governance is that it requires a “full-cycle” approach to assess its effectiveness in reaching such decisions.

**Recommendation:** The Faculty Senate should assess changes made as a result of this report in the next 2-3 years. Periodic climate surveys of faculty, conducted through Institutional Research, should be part of this assessment.
Appendix A

Input to Guide the Work of the Task Force:

Excerpts from faculty input that relate to the four major themes

[Minor edits have been made to protect the identity of the writer. Extremely disparaging remarks about individuals or groups of individuals have also been removed.]

1. The failure of shared governance, especially the failure of administrators, after receiving input from faculty, to communicate with the faculty their weighing of this faculty input and their reasons for the ultimate decision (“full-cycle governance”).

[Shared governance is] entirely inconsistent with my experience here and the observations of most of my colleagues. From the perspective of a faculty member with >20 years of experience, here is what I see: OSU operates as a top down central administration model with powerful deans and weak department chairs that faculty have virtually no input on regarding their hiring or evaluation. Soliciting feedback through open forums and websites is one thing. Actually listening to the faculty, truly respecting them, and allowing them real and meaningful input regarding university processes and decisions is another. I don’t believe faculty at OSU have a very strong voice at the university. Collectively, we are a weak faculty when it comes to university governance.

It was too convenient for the president to ask the faculty senate to debate and approve furloughs and promise to abide by their decision. Notice that he didn’t ask the FS to vote on the creation of divisions, the creation of business centers, or the consolidation of departments, or budget cuts. The administration uses the FS when it is convenient for the administration to do so and otherwise treats it as question and answer forum. The FS should vote on every important matter at the university, like the budget, even if those votes are only advisory.

I have four points to make, a couple of them suggestions. One is that the committee review AAUP guidelines for shared governance and make sure that OSU follows them -- much of this material is available on the national AAUP web site.

Often faculty/student committees are created for input into decisions and that input is then ignored when it goes contrary to the desires of the administration. When the conclusion of such committee deliberations concurs with administration plans, then all is well and good. This looks much more like an appearance of shared governance than the real thing.

Rarely if ever have I seen administration plans opposed by the faculty senate much less stopped.

When I have attended faculty senate meetings over the past years, what strikes me is that the Faculty Senate President and the members of the Executive Committee who present, almost always are there representing the point of view of the central administration, i.e., the President and Provost. If there is ever going to be actual shared governance, the Fac Sen Pres and Executive Committee will instead have to represent the faculty point of view to the Administration. Anything else cannot be shared governance. Given who nominates the people for Fac Sen Presidency are former Presidents themselves, then this orientation ends up being perpetuated.
**Shared governance at OSU** means that the administration seeks input from faculty including the faculty senate and its committees and then the administration makes the decision. Usually even the claim of seeking input is not realized but instead the administrator just answers questions that faculty raise. It can rarely be determined how the faculty input affected the decision, partly because the faculty senate rarely takes an "up or down" vote on any of the administration’s proposals.

Shared governance should be about meaningful input regarding significant decisions affecting OSU. This is exactly what is NOT happening here. The administration makes decisions and then approaches the faculty for comment.... Of course, they will tell whoever will listen (or through their carefully controlled market outlets) how they held numerous forums, etc. to gain input. ...Any input the faculty may have now will be minor. We should have been having meaningful (shared) discussions from the beginning. The manner in which the administration seeks input (when it is politically strategic) has eroded any sense of shared anything on this campus. The faculty, especially those who have been here a long time are the ones who are in the best position to offer institutional memory and history. Yet, we are also the ones who have become the most disillusioned by the lack of shared governance. I am not sure what recommendations to make to this Task Force, as it is hard not to believe that this is yet another waste of time to appease the university leadership. I imagine your report will be given a cursory examination and then placed on the shelf along with so many others. I do not doubt the commitment of the members of this committee to find ways to improve faculty involvement and shared governance. I do doubt the ability of our administrations' willingness to give up any of their power or to share in significant decision-making.

Although the antagonistic relationship between the faculty and the administration at UO may not be ideal it seems to have protected the interests of faculty there to a greater extent than at OSU. OSU faculty salaries are lower than our comparison group and are lower than UO too. In recent years salaries at UO have increased to a greater extent than at OSU and so we are falling further behind. UO didn’t even consider furloughs.

2. The failure of many faculty to be involved in shared governance due to a perceived lack of impact and the absence of rewards for “service”.

The OSU institutional reward structure does not properly support service work, as well as it does scholarship and teaching. Senate committees charged with academic oversight eventually become committees of primarily non-tenured faculty or professional faculty members. ... Non-tenured faculty members and professional faculty do not often challenge powerful administrators about matters of academic standards and curriculum. Their hesitancy to do so further deprives faculty Senate's power over these curricula, tenure, and academic standards.

Shared governance cannot be achieved at this university when service to the university is not valued. If I am to be rewarded (e.g., promotion and/or merit) it has been made more than clear to me that I had better minimize my service. Even when elected to faculty senate, show up a few times and sign in, and then my service obligations are complete and I can go back to my research (which is where the administrators would rather see me). It makes me look good and the administrators can proclaim faculty input (despite not having real debates, discussions, or faculty involvement). I have met my minimal service obligations to achieve Full Professor, the administration is going to do whatever it wants anyway, now I can go back to my research. This is a common sentiment of seasoned faculty members on this campus. The point is that shared governance cannot take place when service is a token part of our position descriptions and there is no sense of anything shared or meaningful input.
3. The failure of the Faculty Senate, in its composition by both professorial and professional faculty, to represent faculty views adequately.

I am all for shared governance, but the current classification of numerous administrative workers as "professional faculty" is inappropriate. Such administrators do not share either common job descriptions or common goals with traditional faculty; both voices need to be heard, but separately. I am particularly dismayed to see the existing structure abused by higher level administrators, who refer to "faculty support" for measures which are in fact strongly opposed by traditional faculty, but supported by professional faculty. Traditional faculty need a voice, which they no longer have.

It also seems that the faculty senate is dominated by professional faculty that are mostly administrators, including at least one assistant dean. These professional faculty are on one year contracts so their participation in faculty senate needs to please their supervisors their contracts might not be renewed. The Executive Committee seems to be particularly dominated either by professional faculty or by faculty that are, were, or want to be administrators, at least department chairs. As a result, faculty senate is not representative of the faculty but just another quasi-administration entity. Administrators, including those in academic and student affairs, should not be considered faculty.

There are professional faculty that do not even have bachelor's degrees. ... These members of the professional faculty have the same voting rights for faculty senate and therefore the same input into matters of curriculum and P&T as tenured faculty. This has decreased the effectiveness of shared governance at OSU.

Third, I note that the proportion of professional faculty in the faculty senate has been steadily increasing. As these folks are much more beholden for their jobs to their bosses, this means that the administration is more likely to be in charge of the faculty senate than the faculty.

Put in bold the word 'Faculty' in "Faculty Senate." Stipulate that by faculty it is meant here the tenured and tenure track academic faculty doing teaching and research. It does not include the so called "professional faculty." This exclusion is not meant to be a sign of elitism but a realization that the roles, interests and commitments of the academic faculty are drastically different from those of the professional employees.

4. The lack of shared governance in particular areas, chiefly: budgeting, structural change (reorganization/realignment), and administrative appointments (especially of department heads/chairs).

Make budgets more transparent. I was very shocked to find out that deans often do not give department chairs their budgets. This, along with not allowing carry over, makes it very difficult to plan for growth or any sort of future expenses.

Allow chairs to share budget issues with faculty. At my previous institution, faculty were apprised of general budget details and we decided as a faculty how much to set aside for future hires & emergencies (generally 10% of the budget), and how we should utilize any surplus (within reasonable guidelines).
The "open budget process" is really NOT, because the numbers can be presented in any way to support administration assertions, and the average person can't make sense of it unless they want to devote their life to getting to the bottom of it....and not spending any time doing their job!

The "centralize more" concept (e.g., business centers, divisions, etc.) repeats mistakes we learned from a decade ago at OSU. The lesson we learned then was "decentralize, i.e., put the people in the trenches with the people they serve". Centralizing removes contact from the trenches and also adds more meetings.

The only justification for centralizing more would seem to be cutting positions, but that has not happened. So, I suggest go back to decentralizing.

I believe we need to bring a "faculty vote" into major departmental/college decisions associated with activities such as (for example) Divisional plans. For instance, reorganization of departments within Colleges should include a faculty vote of acceptance/rejection of the plan. A vote would foster collaboration between faculty and administrators to insure that plans have had appropriate vetting and discussion. Currently, some colleges have as part of their culture fairly good academic democracy processes; others do not.

I am unhappy with the way the divisional realignment has been handled. Here are two things that trouble me: The upper administration made this decision, but the people accountable at the forums are the deans and not the individuals who made the decision. Attending these forums is not a good use of faculty time since nothing said has a chance of making a difference. It is a charade.

Two years ago, faculty senate leaders praised the administration for changing their mind after receiving solid faculty input against merging Arts and Sciences.
This was given as an example of how the administration listens to us.

It would be nice if there was some clarity and consistency in what the Business Centers are expected to accomplish! Initially, we were told they would save $10M and processes would improve. At this time we have seen no process improvements, peoples' lives are being disrupted and the implementation costs are soaring...

Department chairs and school directors should be elected by the faculty members. More and more colleges are even moving away from faculty having any meaningful input into the selection of their leadership but instead those positions are just appointed by the deans following a cursory request for input from faculty. The notion that faculty have input but that the appointment is the dean's decision is farcical. At OSU the best situation that faculty can hope for is that they will have input as long they support a leadership candidate that the dean likes. It is impossible to have a department chair or school director that will stand up to the dean or the administration in general, because they are beholden to the dean.

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OSU Shared Governance Task Force, 2009 - 2011

In February 2009, Sabah Randhawa, Provost and Executive Vice President, and Paul Doescher, then Faculty Senate President, invited a group of faculty and administrators to participate on a Joint Task Force on Shared Governance (SGTF).

SGTF members included:
- Lynda Cluffetti, Professor, Botany and Plant Pathology, Past President, Faculty Senate (Co-Chair)
- Becky Warner, Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs (Co-chair)
- Dan Arp, Dean, University Honors College
- Roger Hammer, Associate Professor, Sociology
- Goran Jovanovic, Professor, Chemical, Biological and Environmental Engineering
- Michael Oriard, Associate Dean, College of Liberal Arts
- Sheryl Thorburn, Associate Professor, Public Health
- Meg Reeves, General Counsel, Ex-Officio

The fundamental charge of the Joint Task Force was to review and recommend policies and actions that will enhance the effectiveness of shared governance at all levels of the University. Specifically, while shared governance includes other groups such as students and staff, the Task Force was charged with examining shared governance between faculty and administrators.

The SGTF presented their final report to the Faculty Senate and University administration on May 27, 2011, followed by a revised final report on August 31, 2011. On October 13, 2011, the Faculty Senate endorsed the report and its recommendations, as did University administration.

The report, located at http://oregonstate.edu/admin/aa/apaa/sites/default/files/Assessment/Bacc-Core/shared_gove_taskforce_final110831.pdf, describes the collaborative spirit of shared governance at Oregon State University, and provides guidance as OSU faculty and administration continue to work together.

Sabah Randhawa  
Provost and Executive Vice President

Kevin Gable  
Faculty Senate President
January 1 – December 31, 2013
Joint Task Force on Shared Governance

10:00-11:00 AM ~ 109 Gilkey Hall
February 18, 2010
Agenda

1. Frame of reference for the rights of the Faculty Senate (ORS) - M. Reeves

2. Faculty Input - Review Hammer's draft statement for the input box (written as an email to faculty)

Suggestions for Enhancing Shared Governance

Last spring, a Joint Task Force on Shared Governance was organized to further the principle of shared governance and promote the involvement of faculty in institutional decision making. The task force is co-chaired by Lynda Ciuflatti and Becky Warner and the members have been jointly selected by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee and by the President and the Provost. The fundamental charge of the Joint Task Force is: To review and recommend policies and actions that will enhance the effectiveness of shared governance at all levels of the University.

At this time, the Task Force is seeking suggestions for improving, enhancing, and/or expanding shared governance at all levels of the university. A webpage (http://oregonstate.edu/senate/committees/other/jtfsg/suggestions.html) has been set up to collect your suggestions anonymously. You can think of it as a virtual suggestion box. Please make your suggestion as specific as possible in terms of the policy or procedure that you are suggesting and the units or levels of the university where it should be applied. Also please be as specific as possible about the issue or problem that your suggestion would address including the units and levels where you think this issue/problem has arisen.

The Task Force will use your suggestions to develop recommendations to the Faculty Senate and the University President. Suggestions from faculty and staff from across the units and levels of the university will be an essential component of the recommendations.

If you have any questions about this request, please contact Vickie Nunnemaker in the Faculty Senate Office. Thank you for your suggestions.* *

3. Distribute accreditation standards

4. Meeting frequency

5. Information Items - January 20 and February 3 recaps

Scheduled meetings
March 8 - 2:00-3:00
March 29 - 2:00-3:00
Joint Task Force on Shared Governance


**Faculty Input** - Discussed methods to receive input from faculty re: what is done well and what can be improved related to shared governance.

- Suggested creating a digital input box containing one question, such as - please enter a suggestion to improve/enhance shared governance at OSU and be as specific as possible to which level of the university this is aimed and what shortcoming you would be addressing
- Ask faculty to be as specific as possible when responding, both to concerns and college/unit.
- Clearly articulate how the input will be used.
- Concerns not relevant to the work of the SGTF could be summarized and forwarded to the Faculty Senate or administration for further consideration.
- Concern expressed about approach to proceed beyond compilation of concerns - where are we going with the information? How will it be used?

**Decision** - faculty will not indicate unit, but will be asked to provide specificity; it will not be a poll but will be a box for input with a header identifying what to address; comments will be reviewed by SGTF only; Hammer will draft a statement for the input box; ask for both areas that need improvement and what is being done well; and determine which comments need immediate attention and may forward for additional consideration at another level.

**Areas of Policy** - Ciuffetti asked the members to compile a list of who sets policy in what areas and whether it is effective or not and whether there is a role for shared governance.

- Arp suggested that the members review and understand the structure of shared governance at OSU - what is owned by Faculty Senate, what is owned by administration and what is shared between the two.

**Next steps** -
- Members will forward to Nunnemaker their input regarding who sets policy in what areas (above) for posting online.
- Nunnemaker will contact Reeves to determine whether she will be ready with the ORS information by the next meeting.
- Hammer will forward to Nunnemaker for posting online a draft of the request to faculty.
- Reeves will look through the statutes and determine the frame of reference for the rights of the Faculty Senate (from 1/20/10 meeting).
- An input box linked from the Faculty Senate website will be created.
- Nunnemaker will send a Doodle to schedule additional meetings.
Joint Task Force on Shared Governance

January 20, 2010
Recap

Present: L. Ciuffetti, R. Hammer, G. Jovanovic, M. Oriard, M. Reeves (ex-officio), Sheryl Thorburn, B. Warner
Absent: D. Arp

Documentation

- Warner will distribute the Governance and Administration section of the revised accreditation standards and the Shared Governance section from the last accreditation report.
- Ciuffetti distributed the document, Shared Governance in Colleges and Universities. A Resources site has been created within the task force website from which to post materials; send links for posting to Nunemaker.
- Hammer noted that AAUP has a shared governance assessment tool.
- Warner reported that Augustana College created a shared governance task force to deal with an issue where a faculty member was denied tenure -post link from Chronicle.

Ciuffetti noted the need to identify areas where OSU is good at shared governance and areas that need improvement. Thorburn requested a definition of what is done well - Warner felt that we need to determine who sets policy in what areas and whether it is effective or not. Hammer felt that the SGTF needs to request the university community to identify specific practices that OSU could adopt or enhance shared governance; publish the responses, the SGTF makes recommendations of what to focus on and then hold a public hearing, potentially at a Faculty Senate meeting. Goran felt that the SGTF should start with fundamentals and suggested looking at governance in terms of budget, funding and innovations.

Results of investigating shared governance at other institutions

- Thorburn reviewed UNC Chapel Hill and didn't see huge differences from OSU.
- Oriard also felt that the University of Washington was much different from OSU.
- Warner reviewed WSU which, online, appears structurally similar to OSU; however, she's aware that recent department closures were not made with faculty input.
- Hammer reviewed the University of Wisconsin and suggested that it may be an extreme model because they have faculty governance rather than shared governance. The Chancellor is the Faculty Senate President.

Ciuffetti felt that there are things that the faculty own (curriculum) and things that administration owns and hopes that most of the time there would be a balance.

Reeves will look through the statutes and determine the frame of reference for the rights of the Faculty Senate.

Jovanovic - academic democracy is important to consider, as well as what are the limits that should be considered.

Next steps:
- Look at decisions and what is done well.
- Each member was asked to list the important decisions of which they are aware that are made at the university.
• Read the Shared Governance in Colleges and Universities by AFT Higher Education
• Reeves will review the statutes.
• Determine how to poll faculty; Jovanovic suggested asking faculty to comment on specific levels of shared governance.
Hi Walt - Thanks for soliciting input.

I support the faculty's request, mostly because it seems to reflect two things:

1. They want to be involved in Faculty Senate, which I think is a very good thing.
2. They must not feel like they are currently well-represented in Faculty Senate.

I'm not sure it will make a substantive difference in our representation, since many of our faculty have run successfully through their home departments. In fact, we could probably get MORE faculty from OSU-Cascades on Faculty Senate using the current apportionment if they can run successfully through their departments, but symbolically this must be important to them. They've said that when they are elected through their departments they feel like they have to "represent" their departments and not OSU-Cascades. If they were elected through an OSU-Cascades apportionment unit, they could represent OSU-Cascades faculty. There are very, very few issues that are unique to OSU-Cascades, because we ARE OSU, but there have been a few. One example is the ability for an OSU-Cascades junior or senior to take lower division courses at COCC and have them count as "in residence." Obviously OSU-Corvallis students can take lower division courses and have them count, and OSU-Cascades students don't have any choice but to take those lower division courses at COCC. Despite taking this to the Academic Requirements Committee twice, we have not been able to get this changed. I'm not saying that having an OSU-Cascades apportionment unit will make a difference in what that particular committee does, but it's an example of the few things that might be different between the two campuses.

Hope this helps!

Becky
Joint Task Force on Shared Governance

Areas of Policy

Below are areas of policy and effectiveness identified by task force members:

From Michael Oriard:

- Curriculum: almost entirely (?) faculty-driven (through departmental, college, and Faculty Senate committees). Effective.
- Academic regulations: policy determined by Faculty Senate (but must be approved by Provost). Effective.
- P&T: shared between faculty and administration at unit and college levels, with ultimate decision by administration but overseen by Faculty Senate representative. Effective.
- Budget: driven by the central administration, with faculty input at various stages & levels (University Budget Committee, Faculty Senate EC, Faculty Senate committees such as Budgets & Fiscal Planning, Economic Welfare & Retirement), and Faculty Consultative Group). Effective??
- Administrative appointments: deans-level and above, driven by the higher administration with faculty input (on selection committees, responses from forums, etc.). Effective? I cannot conceive a better alternative. Below deans-level (associate deans, chairs/heads), there is likely some variation among units. (In CLA, associate deans are appointed by the dean, from applicants screened by a faculty committee; chairs are appointed by the dean after non-binding vote of departmental faculty and individual consultations with the candidates and dept. faculty. Effective? In my opinion, yes, though I’m guessing that there are disputes about this.)
- Salary increases: a messy arrangement. The size and distribution (across-the-board/merit) are determined by the central administration; in CLA, whether the allocation to individual faculty is decided by the chair or a faculty committee or both varies by department; the dean must then approve them. (Considerable variation across colleges is likely.) Also, in CLA only the dean has the prerogative to approve exceptional raises for performance or retention. Effective? Messy. Most faculty are unhappy with their salaries. But again, I’m skeptical that there is a better way that would diminish the unhappiness.

From Sheryl Thorburn:

- Tenure
- Hiring
- Curriculum
- Organizational structure (e.g., VPs or provosts, number of colleges/divisions/units and what they are)
- Strategic plans
- Administrative decisions
- Student issues
- Institutional policies
- Employment and benefits programs
Governance of public institutions of higher education in Oregon

Oregon Constitution Article XIF and XIG (finance of building projects): http://www.leg.state.or.us/ors/

Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS), Chapters 351 and 352: http://www.leg.state.or.us/ors/351.html; http://www.leg.state.or.us/ors/352.html

Oregon Administrative Rules (OAR) Chapter 580 (Board of Higher Education): http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/rules/OARS_500/OAR_580/580_tofc.html


Board of Higher Education Internal Management Directives: http://www.ous.edu/about/polipro/files/IMD%201-08.pdf


From: sgtf-bounces@lists.oregonstate.edu [mailto:sgtf-bounces@lists.oregonstate.edu] On Behalf Of Reeves, Meg
Sent: Friday, February 19, 2010 12:41 PM
To: sgtf@lists.oregonstate.edu
Subject: [Sgtf] Legislative/administrative governance structure

All,
I’m attaching a sort of bare-bones overview of the legislative and administrative governance structure currently in place for OSU. The constitutional provisions aren’t really material to the work the task force is doing (though they’re integral to the way OUS finances buildings on campus).

The basic structure is this:

A state agency (such as OSU) has only the authority given it either directly by the constitution or by the legislature. The Oregon Revised Statutes are the codification of the legislative authority of the State Board of Higher Education (and the Oregon University System) as well as the legislative authority of OSU. State agencies adopt administrative rules (OAR’s) to implement and administer their statutory (legislative) authority. Under Oregon law, administrative rules must be adopted using statutory processes that include notice to the public, opportunities for public comment, and public hearings. State agencies (including the State Board of Higher Education and OSU) also adopt internal operating standards and processes (variously referred to as internal management directives, policies, guidelines, etc) that generally have do not have external application but guide the internal work of the agency/institution. State law doesn’t prescribe particular processes for adoption of such internal operating standards and processes.

In the case of the State Board of Higher Education and OSU, the legislative authority is in ORS Chapters 351 and 352. The Board’s administrative rules are in OAR Chapter 580. OSU’s administrative rules are in OAR 576. Both sets of rules govern OSU. Most of the Board’s internal operating guidance for the system institutions is in the Board’s IMD’s and its policies. As we discussed at our last meeting, OSU’s internal operating standards and processes are not assembled in one spot that would be easily identified and linked.

I hope this is helpful, and am open to revising or supplementing as needed to support the committee’s work.