

SHARED GOVERNANCE FOR ACADEMIC UNITS

OFFICE OF THE PROVOST
COMMUNICATION NO. 27

Overview

The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign has a long and proud tradition of strong shared governance. Faculty members and faculty leaders in administrative roles are committed to ensuring that shared governance is practiced throughout academic programs, departments, schools, colleges, and the campus. In a shared governance system, decisions are made through a process that rests upon collegial and collaborative consultation. The University of Illinois *Statutes* express the centrality of the decision-making power of the faculty to the functioning of the University:

As the responsible body in the teaching, research, and scholarly activities of the University, the faculty has inherent interests and rights in academic policy and governance. Each college or other academic unit shall be governed in its internal administration by its faculty. . . Governance of each academic unit shall be based on unit bylaws established and amended by the faculty of that unit (University Statutes II.3.b).

For some key decisions, such as setting the unit budget or making recommendations regarding promotion or tenure, the unit Executive Officer (EO) is *required to engage in* faculty consultation according to campus and university governing documents. Furthermore, some policies dictate that particular processes be followed that include documentation of faculty advice. In most cases, the input of the faculty is advisory; it is the EO who ultimately is accountable for the consequences of decisions made by the unit. In general, however, decision-making processes that include constructive, open, and honest input from all involved will yield wiser decisions and, in turn, help build stronger academic units.

The goal of this Communication is to provide guidelines that will help EOs to lead their units effectively and harmoniously. EOs are encouraged to go beyond the practices outlined here and to deeply integrate the enactment of the principles of shared governance into their unit leadership.

This document was developed in partnership with the General University Policy Committee of the Academic Senate.

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Guidelines on Information Sharing and Transparency

The following practices regarding the sharing of policies and information should be followed in academic programs, departments, schools, and colleges.

- Unit bylaws are made readily available to everyone in the unit (e.g., posted on the website, distributed to new faculty) and are followed conscientiously.
- At a minimum, unit bylaws specify:
 - definition of unit faculty
 - rights and privileges of tenure-system faculty, with and without joint appointments
 - rights and privileges granted by the tenure-track faculty to unit specialized faculty, affiliate or zero-time faculty members, students, or staff
 - grievance procedures for faculty and students
 - procedures for amendments of the bylaws
- College, campus, and University governing documents are shared and are followed conscientiously.
- Lists of unit committee composition and charges are made readily available to unit faculty.
- The full unit faculty meet with the EO as necessary, at least once a year.
- Schedules of unit meetings are announced well in advance and items for meeting agendas are invited several days in advance.

Guidelines Involving Unit Faculty in Unit Decision Making

The following decision-making practices should be followed in academic programs, departments, schools, and colleges.

- The EO consults with the advisory/executive committee in preparing the unit budget, in accordance with the *University Statutes* (II.3.d.8; III.5.b.8; IV.2.d; IV.3.d7).
- Short-term and long-term hiring priorities are determined through discussion among appropriate faculty groups and the EO.
- Formal strategic planning exercises for the unit are carried out yearly or at appropriate intervals and centrally involve all unit faculty.
- Matters central to the academic mission of the unit, such as graduate admissions, curricula, and course assignments are discussed by duly constituted committees, whose recommendations are shared and discussed with the faculty.
- Sufficient time is allowed during faculty meetings for full discussion of agenda items; faculty meetings are not simply a series of announcements and presentations.
- The EO generally acts in accord with advice from the faculty; the EO may need, on occasion, to make a decision that contradicts advice from the faculty. When such a situation arises; the EO reports back about the reasons for such a decision.

Guidelines for Faculty Mentoring, Development, and Evaluation

The following practices and policies regarding faculty development should be followed in academic programs, departments, schools, and colleges (*see Provost Communication 21 for required elements of annual review*):

http://provost.illinois.edu/communication/21/2013/Communication_21.pdf).

- The EO ensures the wide availability of the unit's written procedures for yearly evaluation of faculty members, including a statement of the unit mission and expectations for faculty members' contribution to that mission.
- Each faculty member in the unit receives an oral or written evaluation of annual progress and is given an opportunity to respond.
- The EO ensures that a mentoring process is available for all pre-tenure and mid-career faculty in the unit.
- The EO regularly shares information about campus and unit resources potentially available for faculty development (travel funds, research funds, access to RA assistance, fellowship and teaching release opportunities, etc.) and how to apply for these resources.

Guidelines for Faculty Participation in Unit, Campus and University Shared Governance

The following practices should be followed to encourage faculty awareness of and involvement in shared governance across the campus.

- The EO shares information about the basic administrative and governance structures of the campus and the University.
- Unit faculty members are provided assistance in how to navigate campus administrative processes such as approvals of curricular proposals.
- The EO shares information about the role of the campus Senate and the Graduate College, and their basic committee structures.
- The EO ensures that timely elections are held for faculty representation to the campus Senate, in coordination with the Office of the Senate (www.senate.illinois.edu).
- The EO encourages all voting faculty members to nominate and elect qualified representatives to the campus Senate.
- The EO encourages departmental Senators to regularly report to the unit on the work of the Senate.
- Faculty members are encouraged to participate in shared governance committees within their unit, school, college and campus.
- The EO ensures that service and leadership activities on campus are recognized in the annual performance evaluation of faculty.

Practicing Shared Governance on Campus

The Provost's Office encourages widespread dissemination and incorporation of these guidelines. To ensure that these principles are woven into the fabric of academic decision making, all new faculty members should be made aware of this document. In addition, EOs (e.g., department chairs/heads, directors, deans) should be required to commit to the principles

when accepting new leadership positions and should incorporate the principles in their annual reviews of leadership activities.

Suggestions for implementing these practices for faculty include:

- Sharing this document with new faculty during the campus-wide orientation (Illinois New Faculty Orientation).
- Providing this document to newly tenured faculty in the letter from the Provost that confers tenure and promotion.

Suggestions for implementing these practices for EOs include:

- Providing this Communication in all offer letters made to new department chairs/heads, new directors, and new deans.
- Ensuring that all department heads/chairs, directors, and deans address how they have fostered shared governance in their annual reports of leadership activities in their units.

Additional Resources

Campus Administrative Manual: <http://cam.illinois.edu>

University of Illinois *Statutes*: <http://www.bot.uillinois.edu/statutes>

University of Illinois *General Rules*: <http://www.bot.uillinois.edu/general-rules>

AAUP Joint Statement on Governance of Colleges and Universities:
<http://www.aaup.org/report/1966-statement-government-colleges-and-universities>

AAUP Evaluation of Shared Governance:
<http://www.aaup.org/issues/governance-colleges-universities/evaluation>