

Principles and Practice of Shared Governance



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UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA AT MONROE

Principles and Practice Of Shared Governance

Shared Governance is the process by which the University community (i.e., faculty, staff, administrators, alumni, and students) has the opportunity to influence decisions on matters of policy and procedure, and/or an opportunity to present alternatives on such matters. The objective of shared governance is to foster mutually reinforcing relationships that expand the opportunities for cooperation and leadership while facilitating judicious, yet creative, university governance.

Shared Governance includes issues of values, culture, management, and administration, as well as operating frameworks, such as legislation, which are externally imposed. The intent of this process is to balance efficiency and effectiveness with equity and fairness.

Principles of Shared Governance

General:

- In an environment of shared governance, those who will be affected by a decision on policy or procedures should be informed and have the opportunity to influence governance decisions.
- A climate of shared governance relies upon consistent, trustworthy communication that is multidirectional and reciprocal.
- All participants in the shared governance process are accountable for the proper execution of their roles in a timely manner.
- Shared governance should permeate all levels of decision-making within the University community.
- Full and active participation at all levels of shared governance should be encouraged without fear of retribution.
- Shared governance reflects the need for separation of powers within the University's decentralized structure for better functional policy-making.
- Recommendations made through shared governance processes should be taken seriously and have actual influence in university decision making.

Representation:

- **Areas of Primary Concern:** While many governance issues will involve multiple constituencies, the process acknowledges that certain areas may be the primary concern of one group either because the matters considered have primary importance and concern to that group or because one group holds the expertise in those matters.
- **Proportional Representation:** Representation should be proportional to the level of impact on constituencies. However, efficiency and effectiveness should not be sacrificed for the sake of proportionality.
- **Diverse Representation:** Representation should reflect the diverse nature of the university community.

Procedural Integrity:

- **Authority:** The University's published policies and procedures and the state's rules and regulations are the authoritative frameworks within which shared governance operates. The spirit of shared governance requires all parties to seek mutually acceptable recommendations. When compromise and concurrence cannot be achieved, rationale for the administrative decision should be provided in written form to the involved parties who may present a written statement of their position and/or any objections to the decision as part of the institution's or unit's record on the issue. However, the spirit of shared governance requires that the administrative rejection of shared governance recommendations be rare and for compelling reasons. Once a decision is reached, all parties should be supportive of the implementation process.
- **Openness:** The process should be transparent and the status of any proposal should be available to all constituencies at any point in the approval process.
- **Notification:** The process should provide constituencies with sufficient opportunities for discussion of policy and procedural issues prior to making final recommendations.
- **Timeliness:** Recommendations and decisions on proposals need to be made in a manner that is timely and appropriate to the issue, yet does not overlook the governance process for the sake of expediency. It may, on occasion, be necessary to use vehicles of collaboration that can be effectively carried out in accelerated periods of time. Responsiveness is the key to the credibility of the process.

- **Oversight:** Review and evaluation of the shared governance process is essential to ensure the functioning of the process as intended and adherence to the spirit of shared governance at all levels of the University.

Practice of Shared Governance

- A. The University should have written procedures and formal structures that provide for appropriate collaboration and communication between and among administration, faculty, staff, and students. The structures and procedures shall be developed cooperatively, disseminated widely prior to adoption, and reviewed periodically according to procedures and timelines established in the documents governing institutional practice.
- B. Identification of subject matter appropriate for administration, alumni, faculty, staff, and student's participation in the shared governance process shall recognize:
 1. The responsibility of administrators for forming and articulating a vision for the institution, providing strategic leadership, and managing its human resources, finances, and operations;
 2. The central role of the faculty in the institution's teaching, research, and service, including the assessment of the quality of these activities through peer review;
 3. The essential support provided by staff in facilitating the institution's operations and the legitimate interest of the staff in participating in the development of policies and procedures;
 4. The institution's main educational focus on its students and their legitimate interest in matters pertaining to student life and the academic environment; and
 5. The role of each constituency in the search for selection of key institutional administrators.
- C. Institutional structures and procedures for shared governance shall address the role of non-tenured and non-tenure track, part-time, adjunct, and other faculty positions as established by governing board policy, as well as other employees on long-term contracts.
- D. Given the dynamic nature of institutional governance, it is understood that there may be infrequent occasions when institutional leaders must act in the best interest of the institution on major issues affecting the institutional

constituencies without full benefit of the shared governance process. In such cases, the representative bodies shall be informed in a timely manner and have an opportunity to comment on the actions taken.

- E. Shared governance requires a commitment of resources and time from the institution. The University must provide an appropriate level of resources to faculty, staff, and students to allow them to carry out their shared governance responsibilities effectively.
- F. While participation in governance by faculty, staff, and students is necessary and important for the well-being of the University, the final responsibility for decision-making rests with the President and the Board of Supervisors, who are ultimately held accountable by the public and its elected leaders.