

Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Shared Governance At Oklahoma State University-Oklahoma City

Definition:

Shared Governance is the principle that all stakeholders in the institution—students, faculty, staff, and administration—should help shape the policies, procedures, and important decisions affecting them. It is recognized that Shared Governance is necessary to more effectively accomplish OSU-Oklahoma City’s core mission of delivering “collegiate-level career and transfer educational programs, professional development and support services which prepare individuals to work in an increasingly technological and global community.” The principle of Shared Governance is consistent with OSU-Oklahoma City’s vision to become a “preeminent educational resource” as well as its core values, such as intellectual freedom, diversity, and integrity.

Shared Governance requires agreement regarding the appropriate roles and responsibilities of students, faculty, staff, administrators, and governing boards. For example, Shared Governance recognizes the authority given to the president of the university and does not seek to undermine that authority. At the same time, it is recognized that input from all stakeholders is a valuable asset to the decision-making process even when the president of the university has the final authority to make a decision.

The most important tool in blending each stakeholder area into a coherent and purposeful organization is communication. Open, direct, continuous communication among all the stakeholders is the key to Shared Governance and to an effective campus. All stakeholders should have a place at the table and all parties within reason should be consulted. Differing perspectives must be considered and all members of the university community must treat one another with respect, honesty, and fairness.

Principles:

The principles listed below are critical to effective Shared Governance:

- *The more involved all segments of the academic community are in decision-making, the more likely decision outcomes will produce a more positive and acceptable result for everyone.*
- *The environment should encourage trust and accountability.*
- *There should be a willingness to consider differences of opinion and perspectives while maintaining an atmosphere of collegiality and professionalism.*
- *There should be open, direct, continuous communication among all of the university’s stakeholders before decisions are made.*
- *There should be informed collaboration and active participation by students, faculty, staff, administrators, and governing boards.*
- *There should be consultative and collaborative decision-making, especially involving those most directly affected when important decisions are made.*
- *There should be commitment to, and agreement regarding, the concepts and processes of Shared Governance.*

Roles and Responsibilities:

***Students** and their education must remain the primary goal and focus of the institution. Therefore, students should receive appropriate guidance and support in the pursuit of their academic goals. They should also be afforded regular opportunities to provide feedback about their educational and other experiences at the university. The Student Government Association represents all students at OSU-Oklahoma City. It provides an opportunity for all students to actively contribute to the academic and social climate on campus and enhance their success. The association encourages students to participate in the governance of the campus community through the election of student leaders. Student representation will include, but not be limited to, institutional and academic policy, academics, facility, budgeting, personnel, student services and infrastructure.*

***Faculty** must be the primary voice in matters of pedagogy and must be free to teach their subjects as they see fit, consistent with the best practices in their disciplines. Faculty responsibilities relate primarily to academic governance and involve all areas in which they and their students are significantly affected by decisions. These include, but are not limited to, (1) academic policies and procedures; (2) personnel policies and procedures regarding the appointment, review, and reappointment of faculty (both full-time and part-time), as well as academic administrators; (3) curriculum course and program development, maintenance, assessment, and review; and (4) planning and budgeting as it relates to academic departments and programs.*

Staff must be the primary voice in matters of support for students, faculty, and administrators. Staff members must be provided timely communication and given the support and resources necessary to function effectively. They must also be afforded a proportional voice in the decision-making processes of the university as a whole. Staff responsibilities relate to appropriate areas of expertise, including, but not limited to, policy, academics, facility, budgeting, personnel, student services, and infrastructure.

Administrators are primarily responsible for making decisions and recommendations that implement the policies, procedures, and practices of the university. Administrators should assure an environment conducive to open and continual communication with all of the stakeholders, including providing any non-confidential information sought by stakeholders in the performance of their responsibilities.

The President is the public face of the university and serves as the university's chief executive officer. As such, the president has overall responsibility for the strategic direction and general governance of the university. In carrying out this responsibility, the president provides overall leadership and vision for the institution and appoints and supervises other administrative officers.

Governing Boards serve as the connection between the public and the university. As such, they typically provide overall guidance for the campus. While they serve as the final institutional authority, they entrust the conduct of the administration of the university to the president.

Selection and Review of Campus Administrators and Vice Presidents:

Faculty, Staff, Administrators, and Students, as appropriate, will play a collaborative role in recruitment, selection, and retention decisions regarding Lead Instructors/Teachers, Department Heads, Associate Division Heads, Division Heads, and Vice Presidents.

Selection of Faculty, Staff, and Student Members on Institutional Committees and Task Forces:

Faculty, staff and students shall select their respective members to serve on Institutional Committees and Task Forces as follows. All faculty and staff will be polled to determine on which committee or task force they would like to serve. Student Members will be appointed by the student body through electing Student Government Associations Executive Officers as representatives. Faculty Senate and Staff Council shall select from among those who have volunteered for a particular duty and provide the President with a slate of names from which to select their representatives on the committees or task forces. The slate will include at least 2 names in excess of the number needed to fill the slots, or all names that have requested the assignment, whichever is less.

The President of OSU-OKC shall be invited to participate in the collaborative process described above in order that his/her opinion can be heard regarding any concern he/she might have about a specific person serving on a particular committee or task force.

When the collaborative work described above has been completed, the committee/task force lists will be given in full to the Faculty Senate, Staff Council, and the Student Government Association for their official endorsement of their respective representatives.

The principle of endorsement described in this section that relate to academic governance shall also be implemented for all institutional ad hoc committees and task forces as well.

Accountability Measures:

The President—It is expected that the OSU-OKC President will set the tone and exercise his/her authority to encourage and promote the principle of shared governance at every level of the university.

Department and Division Levels—Department and Division Heads are accountable for collaboratively developing with their faculty members, staff, and students a structure of governance at their level that promotes the principles of shared governance. It is expected that the Vice President for Academic Affairs will take effective steps to see that this process occurs.

Explanation of Decisions Contrary to Recommendations—In the event that a decision is made that is contrary to a recommendation from an advisory body, or that is typically made by an advisory body, the decision-maker shall provide a timely explanation to that same advisory body.

Representatives on Institutional Committees, Etc.—In the event that the Faculty Senate, Instructional Division Heads, Staff Council, or Student Government Association fails to approve its representatives to institutional committees, task forces, and similar advisory bodies by a reasonable, published deadline, those bodies forfeit their right to select their representative(s).

Faculty—The Faculty will act in a timely manner in order to avoid unnecessary delay. Faculty are expected to promote the principles of shared governance at every level of the university.

Staff—The Staff will act in a timely manner in order to avoid unnecessary delay. Staff are expected to promote the principles of shared governance at every level of the university.

Student Government Association- The Students will act in a timely manner in order to avoid unnecessary delay. Students are expected to promote the principles of shared governance at every level of the university.

We, the undersigned, on behalf of our respective areas, hereby enter into this Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Shared Governance at Oklahoma State University - Oklahoma City. Signed this _____ day of _____, 2014 at _____.

Natalie Shirley
President, OSU-OKC

Dr. Doug Baker
President, Faculty Senate

Kristy Voss
President, Staff Council

President, Student Government Assoc.

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