

BEST PRACTICES IN SHARED GOVERNANCE OF UNIVERSITIES

GLEANINGS FROM THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS
AND THE ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNING BOARDS



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (AAUP)

- Created in 1915 to protect the academic freedom of faculty members
- Mission spread later to advance shared governance, define fundamental professional values for higher education, and develop standards and procedures that maintain quality in education and academic freedom in U.S. colleges and universities
- Statement on Government of College and Universities considered the gold standard

ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNING BOARDS (AGB)

- Founded in 1921 to promote higher education mission and effective college and university governance
- Represents trustees, regents, presidents, and senior-level administrators at nearly 2,000 public and private colleges and universities

HOW TO MAKE SHARED GOVERNANCE WORK: SOME BEST PRACTICES (AGB, 2014)

I. Actively engage board members, administrators, and faculty leaders in a serious discussion of what shared governance is (and isn't)

- How does each constituency define shared governance?
- All leaders should publicly state their support for meaningful shared governance
- Not a “sword for gaining the upper hand” in policy debates, but rather a system for building communication, respect, and trust

HOW TO MAKE SHARED GOVERNANCE WORK: SOME BEST PRACTICES (AGB, 2014)

2. Periodically assess the state of shared governance and develop an action plan to pursue it

- Do faculty members believe that the board and administration are transparent with them?
- Do board members believe that administration and faculty are transparent with them?
- Do faculty and the board believe they receive sufficient information from the administration to participate in making good decisions?

HOW TO MAKE SHARED GOVERNANCE WORK: SOME BEST PRACTICES (AGB, 2014)

2. Periodically assess the state of shared governance and develop an action plan to pursue it

- Do faculty members believe that the structure of faculty governance will facilitate shared governance?
- Does the board believe that its own structure encourages shared governance with faculty?
- Is it clear who makes the decisions, who is to be consulted, and who must approve?

HOW TO MAKE SHARED GOVERNANCE WORK: SOME BEST PRACTICES (AGB, 2014)

3. Expressly support strong faculty governance of the academic program
 - Board chairs should do so at normal board meetings and administrators at faculty meetings and general “state of the institution” events
 - Boards should give legitimacy to faculty leaders by inviting them to the table at crucial junctures in a decision-making process
 - Board leaders, the president, and the chief academic officer should meet annually with faculty leaders aside from normal meetings. Doing so allows a full and open exchange of ideas

HOW TO MAKE SHARED GOVERNANCE WORK: SOME BEST PRACTICES (AGB, 2014)

4. Maintain a steadfast commitment to three-way transparency and frequent communication

- Prepare and distribute a simple one-page chart describing who makes what decisions, with designations for who else should be involved in consultation, recommendation, revision, approval, etc.
- Share board and committee agendas, minutes, and summaries of actions taken across constituencies

HOW TO MAKE SHARED GOVERNANCE WORK: SOME BEST PRACTICES (AGB, 2014)

4. Maintain a steadfast commitment to three-way transparency and frequent communication

- Clearly communicate decisions being considered by the board and administration, with summary of timetable and extent of the faculty's opportunity to participate in the decision-making process
- Invite and encourage members of other constituencies to attend meetings, when appropriate

HOW TO MAKE SHARED GOVERNANCE WORK: SOME BEST PRACTICES (AGB, 2014)

5. Develop deliberate ways to increase social capital between board members, administrators, and members of the faculty

- Faculty should periodically invite board members to faculty meetings, followed by a reception
- Create opportunities for mutual attendance/seating at athletic events, concerts, special occasions, meetings, and dinners