

Tenets of System Level Shared Governance in the California State University

The Academic Senate of the California State University (ASCSU) and the Chancellor affirm their commitment that joint decision making is the long-accepted manner of shared governance at the system level.ⁱ Shared governance refers to the appropriately shared authority, responsibility and cooperative action among governing boards, administration and faculty in the governance and accountability of an academic institution.ⁱⁱ

The Constitution of the ASCSU establishes the purpose of the systemwide senate, as well as the means of consultation and decision making by which the senate will act.ⁱⁱⁱ Both the ASCSU and the chancellor recognize there will be areas of consultation and decision making in which one party or the other will have primary responsibility.^{iv} In the case of the faculty, primacy includes academic programs, curricula, methods of instruction, and areas of student life that directly relate to the educational process.^v In these areas the ASCSU is the formal policy-recommending body on systemwide academic and curricular policy and matters that directly impact them; it is also the primary consultative body on the academic implications of systemwide fiscal decisions.^{vi} The authority of the faculty in these areas derives from its recognized expertise in academic matters. The chancellor maintains administrative responsibility for the institution. The chancellor shares responsibility for the defining and attaining of systemwide goals, which may include goals for the educational program, and the communication that links all components. In the case of academic policy, proposals for changes in policy or for new policy may arise from academic administrators.^{vii} Both parties accept the fiduciary and governing authority of the Board of Trustees of the California State University ultimately to set policy. For the CSU, consultation must take place with the ASCSU in areas of faculty primacy described above. This primacy means the faculty voice is given the greatest weight, although the authority for the final decision resides in the Office of the Chancellor. In areas of faculty primacy, recommendations of the faculty are normally accepted, except in rare instances and for compelling reasons.^{viii}

Consultation and mutual respect are key components of shared governance. Effective consultation and joint decision making result in decisions that better serve the CSU and its students. While discussions may take place in different forms with other constituencies, faculty

consultation means that there is an established process of deliberation that offers a means for the faculty—either as a whole or through authorized representatives—to develop and provide formal input in advance of decision making on the particular issue under consideration. System level policy affecting faculty primacy areas shall result from consultation between the chancellor and the ASCSU. Joint decision making in these areas results from effective consultation, as characterized below. While the ASCSU serves as the official voice of the faculty on systemwide issues, campus senates serve as the official voice of their respective faculty. Consistent with the precepts of this document, but not expressly addressed herein, campuses have their own relationships with the Office of the Chancellor. A normative culture of meaningful consultation must be characterized by:

- openness and transparency;
- commitment to civility, integrity, respect and open communication;
- mutual responsibility for decisions;
- trust, including trust of good intentions;
- a commitment to responsible participation on the part of all parties;
- a respect for evidence-based deliberation;
- a recognition of established best practices and promising new data-driven practices in the evaluation of subjects under consideration; and
- a recognition that consultation must allow both parties the time to consider, debate, develop their responses and work toward consensus while recognizing the need to proceed in a timely manner.

In accordance with the above described culture of consultation, any plan or policy that could affect faculty primacy areas and that may actually or potentially result in an executive order, shall be provided in draft form to the ASCSU body (or Executive Committee if during the summer), allowing for a reasonable review period (normally expected to approximate 75 days). If requested by the Executive Committee, additional extensions to obtain feedback may be authorized by mutual agreement. Each party recognizes that there will be occasional circumstances in which time constraints do not allow for normal systems of consultation to work effectively. The formal consultation process will therefore make provision to allow for an explicit agreement between the ASCSU and the chancellor to engage in a mutually agreed-upon process of expedited consultation in such cases, while still recognizing the formal role of the academic senates as the faculty voice on the matters under consideration. In the unlikely event that agreement cannot be reached, the chancellor will decide. Because an expedited process is

not the most optimal form of consultation and shortchanges a robust shared governance process, its use should be limited to those rare circumstances that justify departing from the more comprehensive process intended by this document.

Ultimately, genuine consultation based on sound reasoning occurs only in such a time and manner that each party has a reasonable opportunity to affect the decision being made.

ⁱ In California, the faculty role in shared governance and the centrality of joint decision making in that process is clarified in the Higher Education Employee Relations Act (HEERA); HEERA was to establish collective bargaining for faculty at CSU to insure that in doing so, traditional shared governance practices are not inhibited or undermined: “*The Legislature recognizes that joint decision making and consultation between administration and faculty or academic employees is the long-accepted manner of governing institutions of higher learning and is essential to the performance of the educational missions of these institutions, and declares that it is the purpose of this chapter to both preserve and encourage that process. Nothing contained in this chapter shall be construed to restrict, limit, or prohibit the full exercise of the functions of the faculty in any shared governance mechanisms or practices...*” <https://www.perb.ca.gov/laws/statutes.aspx#ST3560>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.aaup.org/report/statement-government-colleges-and-universities>.

ⁱⁱⁱ http://www.calstate.edu/acadsen/records/about_the_senate/documents/constitution_2013_revision.pdf

^{iv} <https://www.aaup.org/report/statement-government-colleges-and-universities>.

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^{vii} <https://www.aaup.org/report/statement-government-colleges-and-universities>.

^{viii} [*Report of the Board of Trustees' Ad Hoc Committee on Governance, Collegiality, and Responsibility in the California State University*](#). Adopted by the Board of Trustees of the California State University, September 1985.

Addendum

This document resulted from a series of meetings between members of the ASCSU Executive Committee (Christine Miller, Catherine Nelson, Simone Aloisio, Thomas Krabacher, and Robert Keith Collins) and members of the leadership team at the Office of the Chancellor (Timothy White, Loren Blanchard, Christine Mallon, James Minor and Leo Van Cleve). The meetings took place during the 2017-18 academic year, and culminated in mutual agreement on May 8, 2018.

The following definitions aided in the crafting of this document:

Chancellor: For the purpose of this document the Chancellor refers broadly to the functions assigned to the Chancellor and the staff who work in the Office of the Chancellor.

The following definitions are used by the American Association of University Professors and the American Conference of Academic Deans in surveys of higher education governance in 1970 and 2001. (1)

“Consultation: Consultation means that there is a formal procedure or established practice which provides a means for the faculty (as a whole or through authorized representatives) to present its judgment in the form of a recommendation, vote or other expression sufficiently explicit to record the position or positions taken by the faculty. This explicit expression of faculty judgment must take place prior to the actual making of the decision in question. Initiative for the expression of faculty judgment may come from the faculty, the administration, or the board.”

“Discussion: Discussion means that there is only an informal expression of opinion from the faculty or from individual faculty members; or that there is formally expressed opinion only from administratively selected committees.”

(1) <https://www.aaup.org/NR/rdonlyres/97F85F15-0C93-4F2D-8291-E0E3DAC00329/0/01surv.pdf>