

---

# Developing Shared Governance: Increasing the Faculty's Role in Academic Decision Making

Hans-Joerg Tiede

Senior Program Officer

Department of Academic Freedom, Tenure, and Governance

---

From the 1915 *Declaration of Principles*:

“A university is a great and indispensable organ of the higher life of a civilized community, in the work of which the trustees hold an essential and highly honorable place, but in which the faculties hold an independent place, with quite equal responsibilities – and in relation to purely scientific and educational questions, the primary responsibility.”

---

# Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities

- Is “intended to foster constructive joint thought and action”
- Is not intended “as a blueprint for governance”
- Is not intended as a manual to regulate controversy
- Contains *principles* that can “lead to the correction of existing weaknesses and assist in the establishment of sound structures and procedures.”

---

# Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities

- Is recognized as authoritative
- Informs most academic discourse on governance
- Remains the Association's central policy document relating to academic governance.
- Has been supplemented over the years by a series of derivative policy statements.

---

# Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities

Calls for **shared responsibility** among the different components of institutional government and **specifies areas of primary responsibility** for governing boards, administrations, and faculties.

---

# Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities

Recommends “shared” or “joint” governance because: “[t]he variety and complexity of the tasks performed by institutions of higher education produce an inescapable interdependence among governing board, administration, faculty, students, and others. The relationship calls for **adequate communication** among these components, and **full opportunity for appropriate joint planning and effort.**”

---

# Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities

Joint planning and effort means **all** components get to participate:

“...important areas of action involve at one time or another the initiating capacity and decision-making participation of all the institutional components...”

---

# Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities

Appropriate joint planning and effort requires participation **depending on the degree of responsibility:**

“...differences in the weight of each voice, from one point to the next, should be determined by reference to the responsibility of each component for the particular matter at hand...”



---

# Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities

The statement articulates the roles of three components:

- Governing Board
- Administration
- Faculty

---

## On the role of the Governing Board

- Ensures that the institution stays true to its mission
- Plays a major role in ensuring that the institution has the financial resources it needs to operate successfully
- Ensures the publication of codified statements that define the overall policies and procedures of the institution under its jurisdiction.

---

## On the role of the Governing Board

- Possesses final decision-making authority
- “The board should undertake appropriate self-limitation.”
- Entrusts the conduct of administration to the administrative officers
- Entrusts the conduct of teaching and research to the faculty

---

## On the role of the President

- Is the chief executive officer of the institution
- Ensures that the operation of the institution conforms to the policies set forth by the governing board and to sound academic practice
- Provides institutional leadership
- Makes sure there is effective communication between components of the institution
- Represents the institution to its many publics

---

# On the role of the Faculty

Essentially, the faculty has responsibility (voice and decision-making authority) for matters in proportion to the degree of their expert knowledge. Therefore...

---

## On the role of the Faculty

“The faculty has **primary responsibility** for such fundamental areas as curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction, research, faculty status, and those aspects of student life which relate to the educational process.”

---

## On the role of the Faculty

“Faculty status and related matters are **primarily a faculty responsibility**; this area includes appointments, reappointments, decisions not to reappoint, promotions, the granting of tenure, and dismissal.”

---

## What does “primary responsibility” really mean?

“On these matters the power of review or final decision lodged in the governing board or delegated by it to the president should **be exercised adversely only in exceptional circumstances**, and **for reasons communicated to the faculty**. It is desirable that the faculty should, following such communication, have opportunity for further consideration and further transmittal of its views to the president or board.”



---

What does “primary responsibility” really mean?

“In areas of faculty primacy, boards and presidents should concur with faculty judgment **except in rare instances** and for **compelling reasons** which should be **stated in detail.**”

---

## On the role of the Faculty

- ✓ Has oversight over admissions
- ✓ Sets requirements for degrees
- ✓ Determines when degree requirements have been met

---

# Why should the faculty voice be authoritative in the academic area?

- ✓ Faculty are distinctly qualified to exercise decision-making authority in their areas of expertise
- ✓ The faculty's "judgment is central to general educational policy"
- ✓ "[S]cholars in a particular field or activity have the chief competence for judging the work of their colleagues"

---

Why should the faculty voice be authoritative in the academic area?

- ✓ “We get the best results in education and research if we leave their management to people who know something about them” [R. M. Hutchins, *Higher Learning in America*, Yale, 1936, p. 21]

---

# Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities

In areas where the faculty doesn't have primary responsibility, the faculty still participate in decision-making. These areas include:

- ✓ Long range planning
- ✓ Hiring and evaluation of administrators
- ✓ Physical plant
- ✓ Budget

---

# Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities

On carrying out faculty responsibilities:

- ✓ “Agencies for faculty participation in the government of the college or university should be established at each level where faculty responsibility is present.”
- ✓ “An agency should exist for the presentation of the views of the whole faculty.”
- ✓ “Faculty representatives should be selected by the faculty according to procedures determined by the faculty.”

---

## On communication

Structures for communication among the faculty, administration, and governing board should exist and “be clearly understood and observed.” These could include:

- ✓ Circulation of memoranda and reports
- ✓ Joint and *ad hoc* committees
- ✓ Membership of faculty on administrative bodies
- ✓ Membership of faculty on governing boards

---

# Faculty-Board Communication

“... our American colleges are constructed upon the model of the hour-glass. All influences, ideas, suggestions, which are to pass from one end of the instrument to the other, must go through a contracted waist or middle, which is the presidential office.”

Arthur Lovejoy, 1914



---

## Faculty Communication with Governing Board

- Every standing committee of the governing board, including the executive committee, should include a faculty representative.
- Direct communication between the faculty and the governing board should occur through a liaison or conference committee consisting only of faculty members and trustees and meeting regularly to discuss topics of mutual interest.

---

## Conference Committee

“The essentials are that the faculty conference committee should be elected; that joint meetings should have an official and not merely a personal status; that all new measures under consideration by the governing board should be made known to the committee and discussed by its members before adoption; that no legislation of faculties should be vetoed without thorough discussion of the joint committee. In all important matters, the committee should report matters to the faculty by which it is elected, and receive instructions from it.”

– John Dewey, 1915

---

## Faculty Membership on Governing Boards

- Inherent tension: faculty representative vs. representative of the whole institution.
- Recent survey: faculty representative (41.7%), institution (10.2%), both (22%).
- Faculty members serving as board members always retain their academic freedom as faculty members, including the freedom of intramural utterances, in spite of this inherent conflict.

---

# Faculty Governance and Academic Freedom

- Faculty participation in governance is closely linked to academic freedom.
- Maintaining academic freedom requires faculty participation in governance.
- Faculty participation in governance is protected by academic freedom: intramural speech.
- The best protection of academic freedom, and thus of governance, is tenure.

---

# The Inclusion in Governance of Faculty Members Holding Contingent Appointments

Institutional policies should define as “faculty” and include in governance bodies at all levels individuals whose appointments consist primarily of teaching or research activities conducted at a professional level.

---

## Misconceptions about governance:

Shared Governance is **not** the idea that a lot of conversation ought to take place within and among various campus groups – board, administration, faculty, staff, students, etc. (i.e., the “stakeholders”) – before the people in power make the final decision.

Shared governance is **not** the idea that **all** important decisions are put to the entire faculty for a vote.

---

# Essence of the Classic Conception of Governance

1. All voices are *not* equal in institutional governance.
2. The faculty exercises “primary responsibility” in areas of expert knowledge

---

## Essence of the Classic Conception of Governance

3. Administration/board normally concur with faculty recommendations regarding areas where faculty have primary responsibility. That is, the administration/board concur “... except in rare instances and for compelling reasons which should be stated in detail.”



---

## Essence of the Classic Conception of Governance

- In other words, in academic matters, a faculty decision should normally be a final decision.
- In other words, administration/board should maintain a hands-off policy with regard to any academic matter: curriculum, academic policies, appointment, reappointment, non-reappointment, tenure, promotion.

---

## On Governance and Its Structures:

“Governance guidelines in themselves have no animating power. In its most authentic sense, governance is simply the process by which people pursue common ends and, in the process, breathe life into otherwise lifeless forms. The best measure of the health of the governance structure at a college is not how it looks on paper, but the climate in which it functions.”

Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, *The Control of the Campus*, 1982

---

# Thank You!

<https://www.aaup.org>

<https://twitter.com/aaup>

[https://www.facebook.com/  
AAUPNational](https://www.facebook.com/AAUPNational)

<https://academeblog.org/>