

Arkansas Tech University  
Professional Development Day

**Shared Governance:  
On rights, responsibilities and opportunities**

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**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.”

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**Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities**

- The authoritative formulation of principles of shared governance is set forth in the *Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities*.
- That statement was jointly formulated with the Association of Governing Boards and the American Council on Education.

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**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.”
- Has been supplemented over the years by a series of derivative policy statements.

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**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, 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.”

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**Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities**

- The relationship between institutional components calls for **adequate communication** among these components, and **full opportunity for appropriate joint planning and effort.**
- “Distinction should be observed between the institutional system of communication and the system of responsibility for the making of decisions.”

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**Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities**

Recommends “shared” or “joint” governance because: “a college or university in which all the components are aware of their **interdependence**, of the usefulness of **communication** among themselves, and of **the force of joint action** will enjoy increased capacity to **solve educational problems**.”

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**From the ATU Faculty Handbook:**

Shared Governance

Arkansas Tech University subscribes, in policy and practice, to high standards of shared governance. The **complex variety of tasks** performed by institutions of higher learning require **interdependence** amongst the Board of Trustees, the administration, the faculty and students. The faculty has **primary responsibility** for advice and recommendations in such fundamental areas as **curriculum, research, faculty status, and aspects of student life that relate to the educational process**. Responsibility for faculty status includes making recommendations for **appointments, promotions, tenure and termination**. Advice and recommendations in these matters is made by faculty action through established procedures outlined in this Faculty Handbook.

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**Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities**

Appropriate 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...”

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**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...”



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**Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities**

The statement articulates the roles of three components:

- Governing Board
- Administration
- Faculty



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**Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities**

On the role of students:

- When students want to participate in campus governance, an attempt should be made to create meaningful involvement.
- Obstacles to participate are significant: “inexperience untested capacity, transitory status,” and the fact that the board, administration and faculty “are in a position of judgment over the students.”



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**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.
- Possesses final decision-making authority.

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**On the role of the Governing Board**

- “The board should undertake appropriate self-limitation.”
- While “maintaining a general overview,” it
  - entrusts the conduct of administration to the administrative officers.
  - entrusts the conduct of teaching and research to the faculty.

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**On the role of the Governing Board**

“When ignorance or ill will threatens the institution or any part of it, the governing board must be available for support. In grave crises it will be expected to serve as a champion. Although the action to be taken by it will usually be on behalf of the president, the faculty, or the student body, the board should make clear that the protection it offers to an individual or a group is, in fact, a fundamental defense of the vested interests of society in the educational institution.”

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**On the role of the President**

- “The president’s work is to plan, to organize, to direct, and to represent.”
- Is the chief executive officer of the institution.
- Provides institutional leadership.
- Makes sure there is effective communication between components 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.

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**On the role of the President**

- Is largely responsible for the maintenance of existing institutional resources and the creation of new resources.
- Has ultimate managerial responsibility for a large area of nonacademic activities.
- Should be equally qualified to serve both as the executive officer of the governing board and as the chief academic officer of the institution and the faculty.
- Should have the confidence of the board and the faculty.

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**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...

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**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.”

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**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.”

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**From the ATU Faculty Handbook:**

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**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.”

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**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.**”

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**More on the role of the Faculty**

ATU FHB (*excellent language!*):

- curriculum, research, faculty status, and aspects of student life that relate to the educational process.
- Responsibility for faculty status includes making recommendations for appointments, promotions, tenure and termination.

So, faculty should have oversight over admissions, set requirements for degrees, determines when degree requirements have been met; recommendations on hiring, promotion, tenure, non-renewal, termination, etc.

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**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."

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**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

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**Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities**

- "Effective planning demands that the broadest possible exchange of information and opinion should be the rule for communication among the components of a college or university."
- "The role of the faculty in the selection of an administrator ... should reflect the **extent of legitimate faculty interest** in the position."
- "The board, president, and faculty should all seek agreement on basic decisions regarding buildings and other facilities to be used in the educational work of the institution."
- "Budgetary decisions directly affecting those areas for which, according to the Statement on Government, the faculty has **primary responsibility** ... should be made in concert with the faculty."

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**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.”

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**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

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**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.

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### 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.

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### Recommended *Handbook* language on academic freedom:

Academic freedom is the freedom to teach, both in and outside the classroom, to conduct research and to publish the results of those investigations, and to address any matter of institutional policy or action whether or not as a member of an agency of institutional governance. Professors should also have the freedom to address the larger community with regard to any matter of social, political, economic, or other interest, without institutional discipline or restraint, save in response to fundamental violations of professional ethics or statements that suggest disciplinary incompetence.

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### Essence of the Classic Conception of Governance

- All voices are **not** equal in institutional governance.
- The faculty exercises "primary responsibility" in areas of expert knowledge.
- 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."

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**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.

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**Steps Faculty Can Take to Develop Shared Governance:**

- Analyze the governance structure on your campus. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the current system?
- Compare your governance structure with the standards set by the Statement on Government and other AAUP statements.
- Compare your governance structure with those of universities known for good practices.

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**Steps Faculty Can Take to Develop Shared Governance:**

- Develop a plan. Decide whether to attempt an overall redoing of your governance system or to attack it piecemeal.
- Hold public forums on governance with both campus and outside speakers.
- Seek opportunities to discuss governance with your administration and governing board.
- Make sure standing faculty committees exist for all key areas that involve academic decisions.

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**Steps Faculty Can Take to Develop Shared Governance:**

- Question the advisability of mixed committees in areas of faculty primacy.
- Avoid the use of ad-hoc committees (“task forces”), especially those established unilaterally by the administration and/or the governing board.
- Make sure faculty appointments to all committees are made by faculty.
- Get involved in writing accreditation self-studies, especially the governance sections.

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**Steps Faculty Can Take to Develop Shared Governance:**

- Question the use of confidentiality agreements as a condition for participation in shared governance.
- Question the use of “closed searches” for administrators.
- Establish expectations for conduct of faculty representatives: at a minimum, faculty representatives need to inform their constituents, and seek input from their constituents.

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**Steps Faculty Can Take to Develop Shared Governance:**

- Establish shared governance at all levels of the university—department, college/school, and university.
- Seek the advice of the AAUP national staff and AAUP officers at both the national and state level.
- Work closely with the AAUP chapter and conference leadership.
- Encourage others—especially individuals from groups underrepresented in governance activities—to participate in governance.

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**Steps an AAUP Chapter Can Take to Develop Shared Governance:**

Promote AAUP governance standards by:

- Advocating for regular evaluation of administrators.
- Supporting and cooperating with faculty governance bodies.
- Holding faculty governance bodies accountable.
- Getting chapter members involved in faculty governance.



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**Thoughts I added *today* for ATU:**

1. A window of opportunity is open. Progress has been made. Additional progress is possible, but not guaranteed.
2. Emphasize the primacy of academics.
3. Faculty input must be *legitimate*; use FHB committees.
4. Search Committees for Academic Administrators should be majority faculty w/ legitimate faculty representation.
5. Consider creating FHB Faculty Liaison Committee to Board.
6. Executive Council is an advisory body to the President.



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**Points to Remember:**

- Governance reform is a slow process.
- A governance document is never perfect.
- Shared governance will work **only if *both* the faculty and the administration understand and respect the ideas behind genuine shared governance, and both are willing to devote the time and effort needed for good governance.**
- Good communication is essential.
- Effective shared governance requires mutual trust and respect.



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**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



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