

PREAMBLE: THE FACULTY'S ROLE IN INSTITUTIONAL SHARED GOVERNANCE

(Preamble passed by the [REDACTED]
Approved by the [REDACTED])

I. University Authority

As is articulated in Article IV of its Bylaws, [REDACTED] is a not-for-profit corporation of the State of [REDACTED], and the Board of Trustees is its governing body. In the Board resides the ultimate authority to make decisions affecting the University as a whole or any of its parts. The Board is responsible for the immediate and long-range welfare of the institution including, but not limited to, providing for its financial needs, its academic program and standards, and faculty and student status and governance. It encourages reasonable student and faculty voice in matters affecting their welfare and is the final arbiter of internal disputes involving the administration, the faculty, and the students.

II. The Faculty Handbook

As outlined in Article VI of the [REDACTED] Bylaws, the *Faculty Handbook* is a compilation of official policy for administrators and members of the faculty. Responsibilities of the faculty and administrative officers are set forth in the *Faculty Handbook*, including official actions of the faculty, administration, and Board of Trustees that have continuing significance. Should there appear to be a conflict between materials in the *Handbook* and the Bylaws of the University or resolutions of the Board of Trustees, the Bylaws and Board resolutions shall take precedence.

The policies contained in the [REDACTED] *Faculty Handbook* are a part of the contractual relationship between the faculty member and the University. In accepting a contract for employment with the University, a faculty member is responsible to be aware of this relationship and to be informed regarding the policies and procedures found in the document. The *Handbook* is published by the Office for Academic Affairs, under the authority of the Provost, and it is provided electronically on the University website. The University reserves the right to modify, to eliminate, or to add to the contents of the *Handbook* from year to year, pursuant to the guidelines outlined in Sections III and IV of this Preamble and/or the policies and procedures established in this *Handbook* or other institutional governing documents. Usually, any revisions to the *Handbook* will be made at or near the end of the contractual year, and these changes will be reported to the faculty prior to the deadline for submission of signed contracts-of-appointment for the upcoming year. In unusual circumstances requiring more immediate adjustments in policies and/or procedures, the University reserves the authority to make revisions at any time, pursuant to the guidelines outlined below or found elsewhere in this *Handbook* and/or other appropriate governing documents.¹ Such revisions will be reported to the faculty in a timely manner. Any recommendations for changes to the *Handbook* made as a result of faculty initiative, pursuant to the policies and with the agreement of the chain of appropriate authorities outlined in these guidelines or elsewhere in the *Handbook*, may be made immediately once all contributing parties have approved the changes.

¹ It may be necessary that institutional leaders, on infrequent occasions, must act in the best interests of the University on major issues without the full benefit of the shared governance process. In these cases, representative bodies will be informed in a timely manner and will have the opportunity to comment formally on the actions taken, if desired. This approach should be used rarely, however.

If a faculty-approved action for revision of the *Handbook* in an area in which it possesses some level of jurisdiction does not receive, after review, the necessary support from appropriate authorities, as outlined here or in other governing documents, the faculty will be notified of this decision in a timely manner, with rationale, by the appropriate University official.² If these situations occur, the faculty assembly will have the opportunity to respond to the decision formally to the appropriate governing authorities.

The most recently revised version of the *Handbook* takes priority over any earlier versions of the document and, unless previous policies or procedures are stipulated as special continuing conditions in the newer version, the new edition will supersede any past policies or procedures.

[REDACTED] welcomes feedback from faculty on the impact of policies or procedures articulated in the *Faculty Handbook*. Any questions or concerns should be referred to the Provost, to the Faculty Executive Committee, or to another academic/University administrator, as appropriate.

III. Rights and Responsibilities of the Faculty as a Collective Body

Faculty Participation in University Governance

[REDACTED] is an institution of learning. The contributions furnished by our faculty are a crucial foundation of our mission. Faculty members possess high levels of expertise in several critical areas of the educational mission of the University, and most effective practices require that they are key contributors in the development of institutional policies and procedures in these realms. Moreover, as faculty are affected by practically all institutional decisions, it is important that they remain informed of the actions of the University in other areas and, as is appropriate, have opportunities to share their perspectives and/or concerns.

All duly appointed and eligible [REDACTED] faculty members have both a right and a responsibility as part of their contractual obligations to contribute to University governance through active and responsible participation in the general faculty assembly, through involvement in the work of their various academic units, through contributions to the general campus dialogue, through leadership and participation on faculty committees, and through representation to other entities of the University as described in the *Faculty Handbook* or Faculty Constitution. All full-time faculty members are expected to attend all Faculty Assembly meetings and to contribute to the work of faculty committees and other task forces as a part of their general duties.

The faculty's contribution to [REDACTED]'s system of shared governance requires responsible and informed participation on the part of all full-time faculty, as individual colleagues, as members of the various academic units, and as a collective body through the Faculty Assembly. Shared governance is not about just a set of structure and procedures; in fact, it more importantly is concerned with promoting a culture of open dialogue that expects personal and collective responsibility and furnishes members of the community adequate opportunities to share their views and to be heard on matters for which they possess expertise and/or they are affected.

Shared governance is successful if

- It empowers members of the community through responsible participation in decision making;
- It cultivates collegial relationships among all parts of the campus, even when there are divergent points of view;

² Notification will be provided to the faculty through the appropriate venue: full assembly; committee with designated responsibilities; or designated representative of the assembly.

- It enhances communication, transparency, trust, and the understanding of issues that improve dialogue and decision making; and/or
- It fosters accountability and buy-in by all involved parties that promote more effective implementation of decisions.

Shared governance is unsuccessful if

- It is used as an instrument for self-serving agendas and/or political maneuvering and hampers informed, efficient, and/or timely decision making;
- It diminishes the quality of decisions by relying on feedback from parties who are not qualified to contribute or who are uninformed on the particular issue(s);
- It becomes so time-consuming as to draw persons away from their primary responsibilities; and/or
- It polarizes the community by cultivating adversarial relationships among faculty and/or between faculty and administrators.

Effective shared governance requires, among other matters:

- Defined areas of responsibility that outline the roles and accountability of each governing component;
- Recognition that many areas of governance are interrelated and that all components of the institution have roles in overall governance;
- Collegial and cooperative relationships in which each governing component operates in a responsible, respectful, and informed manner in its designated roles;
- Broad and, as is possible, transparent exchange of information and perspectives as the normal mode of communication; and
- Processes that provide affected constituencies sufficient opportunities to consider issues and provide appropriate feedback while still allowing timely institutional decision-making.

Faculty Responsibilities in University Governance

In understanding the roles outlined above, faculty's contributions to these governing responsibilities may be categorized conceptually into four levels: *primary jurisdiction*; *shared jurisdiction*; *consultancy*; and *communication*.

A. Faculty Primary Jurisdiction

The faculty, as a collective body, is conferred *primary jurisdiction* over matters concerning the establishment, revision, and enforcement of [REDACTED]'s standards for the academic evaluation, retention, and graduation of students, including, in certain cases, admission into specific academic majors. These responsibilities include the establishment and/or revision of course curriculum and the content of academic programs, including instructional methodology and course design. They also include other educational aspects of student life when these components are a part of academic requirements. Once an institutional strategic educational goal has been determined, the faculty possesses primary responsibility for establishing the appropriate curriculum and procedures of student instruction. In fulfilling these responsibilities, the faculty is expected to work collaboratively with their colleagues to:

- 1) contribute responsibly to the advancement of knowledge and understanding through free, open, and scholarly inquiry in and outside of the classroom;
- 2) organize and implement the courses and programs of instruction of the University; and
- 3) assess regularly the effectiveness of the academic programs and courses and implement enhancements and/or make recommendations to the appropriate University entity for their ongoing improvement or their elimination.

B. Faculty Shared Jurisdiction

The faculty possesses, in collaboration with other entities of the University, *shared jurisdiction* for certain other aspects of the life of the campus. In this role, the University faculty and the particular University entity or entities with which it participates, each in authorized sequence, has decision making roles and obligations. Recommendations for changes in policies or procedures related to these matters may be initiated by the faculty assembly, a specific academic unit, or another University entity possessing authority or responsibility in the area (most likely academic administration). In all cases, there must be a clear and open process for guaranteeing adequate time for consideration and ample opportunity for faculty feedback regarding any proposed revisions, directly through the Faculty Assembly (or its committee system therein), the specific academic unit, or by some other equally or more effective means. The primary ways by which the faculty contributes in these decisions is in the form of recommendations to another University entity for its consideration and action. As these areas are shared, these recommendations should receive always the most serious consideration. Areas falling in this arena of shared jurisdiction include processes regarding:

- 1) the hiring of faculty
- 2) the evaluation of faculty performance
- 3) faculty rank and status, including continuation, tenure, and promotion decisions
- 4) the provision of special academic leaves
- 5) faculty/student grievances
- 6) academic awards
- 7) academic scheduling
- 8) the Academic Integrity system
- 9) the establishment and deletion of academic programs
- 10) academic computing and technology

If there are areas of governance not enumerated here or if new issues emerge that clearly are faculty concerns but are unclear as to their category, they will be treated as shared areas until the matter can be resolved to the satisfaction of all parties.

C. Faculty Consultancy

In some instances, the University faculty will be expected to function in a *consultancy* role. Faculty members may be called upon to represent the faculty by serving as contributing members on University-wide committees and/or task groups. In this instance the primary input will be to give voice to faculty concerns and interests, when appropriate, in matters in which the power of decision rests primarily or entirely in a University entity other than the faculty. Major areas in which the faculty would have a primarily consultative role are:

- 1) University budget planning
- 2) personnel policies and benefits
- 3) institutional strategic planning and assessment
- 4) student life policies (that are not also academic requirements)
- 5) University calendar
- 6) facilities usage and events planning
- 7) planning for renovation and/or construction of academic buildings
- 8) athletic policies related to academic life
- 9) planning and promoting capital campaigns
- 10) philosophy of investment and use of endowment
- 11) admissions standards and awarding of scholarships

D. Faculty Communication

Other areas of institutional governance exist in which jurisdiction is entirely invested in an entity of the University other than the faculty; however, *communication* with the faculty regarding these matters would be expected, as appropriate. Every unit of the University should be diligent in communicating its decisions and concerns and in maintaining open dialogue across the campus. The following are representative of this category:

- 1) business and accounting standards and reporting
- 2) tuition decisions
- 3) policies and procedures regarding staff evaluation
- 4) fund raising and capital campaigns
- 5) planning for renovation and/or construction of non-academic facilities
- 6) student life decisions and actions
- 7) University marketing and communications
- 8) athletic programming
- 9) alumni relations
- 10) student financial aid