

### **What do faculty mean by Shared Governance when they talk to the Board?**

Faculty are “stakeholders” in the university, but just as different classes of shareholders, boards, and officers all participate as stakeholders in a corporation, their roles and the manner in which they participate in decision making is different from other groups of shareholders such as students and facilities workers. The Faculty have a unique leadership role in the university as the teachers and researchers gathered together to make a university. We are the university’s long-term stewards. Our work and views are distinct from those of administrators, who exist to foster and protect the university.

### **How does the Faculty Handbook define Shared Governance?**

Section 1.7 of the Faculty Handbook states:

The Faculty Senate is authorized, subject to the approval of the chancellors of UTK and UTIA, the president, and the Board of Trustees, **to formulate policies and regulations regarding the general educational objectives of the university, including those policies and regulations related to the overall general requirements for admission, readmission, retention, graduation, and honors for the degree programs and certificate programs of The University of Tennessee.** The faculty role in campus-wide governance is through the senate, the representative body specifically charged by the board (a) to formulate the university’s educational standards and degree requirements, including approval of academic programs and their curricula; and (b) to consider, advise, and recommend to the administration policies about a wide range of issues affecting the general welfare of the faculty. Among these issues are:

1. criteria for faculty appointment, dismissal, evaluation, promotion, tenure, and retirement
2. criteria for the selection of the chancellor, the chief academic officer, and other campus administrative officers
3. criteria for the selection of the president and other statewide executive officers of UT (in conjunction with other faculty senates or corresponding bodies of the other entities within the UT system)
4. priorities for the university development plan
5. changes in physical facilities
6. policies regarding student life, rights, and responsibilities
7. coordination with the faculty senate president to nominate faculty members for service on university committees

The senate is authorized to review curriculum, including admission and graduation requirements for programs of all academic units. The review process takes place through designated committees at the college and university level, proceeding to the senate through the Undergraduate and/or Graduate Councils. Departmental proposals for the curriculum are transmitted by a departmental representative (or head) for review by divisional, college, and university committees. The head does not have veto power in curricular recommendations approved by departmental faculty, although it is important for college and university committees to have full benefit of the head’s advice

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and judgment about such recommendations. Each academic unit is represented on the senate by an equitable number of senators as stated in the *Faculty Senate Bylaws*. Other faculty members may serve on faculty senate committees and task forces to assist in this process.

### **How can we think about practices for collaboration through Shared Governance?**

One of the clearest short descriptions from the AGB is that shared governance is a “system for aligning priorities.” The AAUP Statement on Shared Governance (1966) emphasizes integrating viewpoints and acknowledging the interdependence of faculty and administrators. In the interest of beginning to align our priorities in a meaningful vision and set of practices, we affirm that shared governance should be a dynamic system of engagement that promotes:

1. Collaboration between elected faculty representatives and administrative leaders in order to engage meaningfully on the health, direction, and future of the Campus.
2. Shared stewardship of the Campus’s goals and mission.
3. A transparent system of accountability that helps us see faculty and administrative contributions, and the distribution of resources that supports their efforts.

### **Our ask of ourselves**

- We want to help our colleagues prioritize student success without adding yet another unrewarded demand onto a strained faculty working beyond capacity. As Bok observes, “As more and more colleges and universities insist that their professors publish, and as the rapid growth of adjunct instructors reduces the number of tenured faculty charged with carrying out the same array of administrative chores, the average work-week of professors has grown longer and more crowded.” We want to help administrators find ways to reward excellent teaching and mentoring beyond the handful of current awards.
- As we see these practices materialize, we will recommit to helping reverse negative narratives about university administration that is tied to its growth and expansion.

### **Our ask of you**

- Help us improve student success by actively building a teaching faculty rather than “beggar adjuncts” (Bok’s term). One way to do this is to lower the teaching loads of adjunct faculty, who often teach first year courses. This honors their advising and gives them more time for their students.
- (Bok): Shift the campus rhetoric that normalizes reduced student hours on studying for class. While statistically true, according to Bok, we do a disservice to our students when we implicitly endorse declining study hours, the single most important thing they can do to ensure academic success. When administrative leaders repeat the claim that students only spend 15% of their time in class or refer to academic coursework as one of many student activities they devalue the core purpose of a college education and the non-negotiable dimension of graduation for degree attainment.

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- Transparency (with appropriate sensitivity to private information) in the review of administrators and staff units.
- End the third-level PPPR, which duplicates
- Support the restoration of a faculty trustee on the Board of Trustees (see attached white paper and resolution).