

Academe Online

Standards of Shared Governance

The following document was adopted by the Faculty Assembly of the University of North Carolina in April 2005. It applies to the sixteen campuses in the university system.

Preamble

A strong tradition of shared governance is essential to the excellence of any institution of higher learning. This principle is embodied in Section 502D(2) of the Code of the Board of Governors, which makes it the responsibility of the chancellor of each constituent institution of the University of North Carolina to ensure that the institution's faculty has the means to give effective advice with respect to questions of academic policy and institutional governance, with particular emphasis upon matters of curriculum, degree requirements, instructional standards, and grading criteria, and that the appropriate means of giving such advice is through an elected faculty senate or council and an elected chair of the faculty. To the end that chancellors may more effectively carry out this responsibility, the Faculty Assembly commends the following statement of essential standards of governance.

Definitions

As used in this document, the following terms have the meanings indicated.

1. "Faculty" includes all persons holding full-time tenure-track appointments in the institution and such other faculty members and librarians as may have been accorded voting privileges in faculty elections.
2. "Faculty senate" means the elective body, by whatever nomenclature, empowered by the faculty to exercise its legislative powers.
3. "Chair of the faculty" means the faculty member, by whatever nomenclature, elected by the faculty at large or by the faculty senate as the chief faculty officer and spokesperson.

The Faculty Senate

1. The faculty senate must hold regularly scheduled meetings throughout the academic year.
2. With few exceptions, voting membership of the senate must be limited to elected faculty representatives.
3. Members of the senate must represent the academic units of the institution and must be elected directly by the faculty of those units.
4. While it is the chancellor's prerogative to preside over the senate, it is preferable and customary for the chancellor to delegate this privilege to the chair of the faculty, especially for those portions of meetings during which the senate is deliberating on questions of academic policy and institutional governance.
5. The officers of the senate must be elected by the membership of that body or by the faculty at large.
6. The structure, method of election, and powers of the senate must be specified in a document approved by and amendable by the faculty at large or its designated representatives.
7. Procedures for the operation of the senate must be established by reference to recognized authorities such as Roberts' Rules of Order or in published bylaws adopted by the senate.
8. The senate must be given adequate resources to ensure effective governance, including (a) an adequate budget; (b) reasonable authority over its budget; (c) adequate office space; and (d) adequate secretarial support.

The Chair of the Faculty

1. There must be a chair of the faculty who is elected either by the faculty at large or by the faculty senate. The chair of the faculty shall be the chief spokesperson for the faculty.

2. The chair of the faculty must be allowed reassigned time commensurate with the duties of the office.

Faculty Governance Responsibilities

1. The legislative and consultative powers of the faculty must be codified in a published governance document approved by and amendable by the faculty or [its] elected representatives.

2. The university's curriculum is the responsibility of the faculty. The faculty, acting as a committee of the whole or through representatives elected by the faculty or designated pursuant to procedures established by faculty legislation, must give approval to academic policies prior to their implementation, including but not limited to the following: (a) graduation requirements; (b) the undergraduate curriculum; (c) the establishment, merger, or discontinuation of departments, schools, and colleges; (d) the establishment of new degree programs (including online programs); (e) the establishment of or substantive changes to majors; (f) the elimination or consolidation of degree programs; (g) the establishment of individual new courses; (h) admissions policies; (i) attendance and grading policies; (j) grade-appeal procedures; (k) drop-add policies; (l) course-repeat policies; (m) policies for honors programs; and (n) honor-code policies.

3. The curriculum leading to and policies with respect to the award of graduate and professional degrees must be established by the faculties of the schools or colleges that admit and certify candidates for those degrees.

4. The faculty, through its designated representatives, must be consulted on any proposal to adopt or amend campus policies of reappointment, tenure, and promotion, and of post-tenure review. It is expected that any such proposals will be initiated by the faculty, and that full opportunity for faculty analysis and discussion will be allowed before any modifications in such proposals are adopted.

5. The faculty, through its designated representatives, must be afforded full opportunity to review and approve faculty handbooks, academic policy manuals, and any institutional policy statements that affect the faculty's teaching, research, or conditions of employment.

6. For joint committees on which the faculty is represented: (a) faculty representation must appropriately reflect the degree of the faculty's stake in the issue or area the committee is charged with addressing; and (b) the faculty members of joint committees must be selected in consultation with the elected faculty leadership or by processes approved by the senate.

7. The granting of honorary degrees is a prerogative of the faculty. All nominees for honorary degrees must be approved by the faculty or its designated representatives before final approval by the board of trustees.

Administration-Faculty Collegiality

1. A collegial, candid, and cooperative relationship should exist between the administration and the faculty. When requested, administrators should appear before the senate and respond to questions.

2. It is expected that senior administrators will uphold the decisions of the senate in areas in which the faculty has primary responsibility, such as curriculum and tenure and promotion policies.

3. The chancellor and other senior administrators should consult in a timely way and seek meaningful faculty input on issues in which the faculty has an appropriate interest but not primary responsibility, including but not limited to the following: (a) the university mission, emphases, and goals; (b) budget; (c) campus master plan or strategic plan; (d) building construction; (e) enrollment growth; (f) tuition policy; (g) student discipline; (h) intercollegiate athletics; (i) faculty and staff benefits; (j) and libraries and other research facilities.

4. The chancellor should effectively advocate the principles of shared governance to the board of trustees.

5. The chancellor should typically sustain the recommendations of faculty tenure, hearings, and grievance committees. When the chancellor acts against the recommendations of such committees, the chancellor should meet with the committee or otherwise adequately communicate the reasons for not sustaining its recommendations.

6. The board of trustees should exercise due respect for the governance prerogatives of the faculty.

7. The faculty should participate meaningfully in the selection of academic administrators through membership on search or hiring committees and the opportunity to meet and comment on "short listed" candidates before hiring decisions are made.

8. The faculty of each college, school, or department should be consulted in the appointment or reappointment of the dean or department chair either through majority membership on the search or evaluation committee or by direct consultation with the appointing administrator either in person or by other means approved by the faculty senate.

9. The term of appointment of academic deans and department chairs should not exceed five years. If appointed for an indefinite term, an academic dean or department chair should be formally evaluated for continuation in office not less frequently than every five years.

10. The chancellor or provost, in consultation with the faculty senate, should establish effective procedures that enable members of the faculty having voting privileges to regularly evaluate the performance of senior administrators. This evaluation should be in addition to and independent of the mandated periodic evaluation of administrators by the chancellor or the board of trustees.

Compliance

It is the responsibility of the faculty of each campus to advocate, seek, and monitor the campus's adherence to the Standards of Shared Governance. When a campus is not in compliance with one or more standards, faculty should seek resolution through processes at the campus level. However, when the faculty's sustained efforts to secure compliance have not been successful, the faculty, through its senate or the chair of the faculty, is encouraged to consult with the officers of the Faculty Assembly, who will bring the matter to the attention of the president and work with all parties to achieve a resolution.

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