November 27, 2012

TO: Presidents’ Council

FR: Joanne Truesdell, President

We have been reading articles, sending articles, discussion topics and book titles between each other regarding shared governance.

I read each of them, listened to our various conversations, read through emails that were shared with me and distilled thematically the information.

Where common themes emerged I took writer’s and president’s prerogative to craft the first draft of definition and roles inherent in shared governance.

I have also drafted our work and timeline through June with their respective outcomes.

The last page includes a bibliography.

I appreciate your review and our continued conversation.

***Shared Governance - Draft Definition***: Shared governance is the principled use of power and influence to achieve the mission of the college.

Shared Governance is implemented through formulating and implementing meaningful ways to engage large numbers of people in the sharing process.

“The result of shared governance is that there are no victories, only carefully derived solutions.” (Miller and Miles)

Shared Governance requires an understanding of:

Who should share in the governance?

Why they should share in the governance?

What should be shared in governing?

How fair “share” will be determined and disputes resolved when disagreements between groups or individuals arise?

Shared governance aspects include decision-making, decision-implementation, culture and communication.

If there are different perspectives on shared governance it will lead to ineffective governance.

***Role of decision-making and decision-implemenation***

Decision-making is the most often cited reason for shared governance. Hence there is a blurring between the definition of shared governance and this particular aspect of shared governance. Often the perception of the presence of shared governance is evaluated based on what an individual believes is the most appropriate decision-making model.

CHEPA’s *Challenges for Governance: a National Report*, included a summary of perceptions among 2,10 faculty, academic VP and senate leaders at 763 institutions. Of the total responses 50% were faculty, 25% vice presidents and 25% senate leaders. The resulting themes in decision-making were identified. The percent of responses indicating that type of theme is noted.

Fully Collaborative: Refers to a traditional approach that some might call a “collegial model” of governance. Here, the faculty and administration make decisions jointly and consensus is the goal. (47%)

Consultative: Describes a more communicative model where the faculty’s opinion and advice is sought but where authority remains with the senior administration and board of trustees. Many individuals are brought in the model revolves around information sharing and discussion rather than decision-making. (27%)

Distributed: Decisions are made by discrete groups responsible for specific issues. The understanding is that different groups have primary decision-making responsibilities in certain areas. (26%)

Essentially, the conclusion can be made that there does not exist a “one-way” approach for every decision to be made. Complex organizations in complex environments may require a fully collaborative, consultative or distributed process. An individual perception of shared governance from a decision-making perspective will depend upon the decision-making activity he/she is engaged in.

Responsibility and accountability accompanies shared governance. Responsibility and accountability are related to decision-implementation. While the focus of conversation is on the decision to be made there is a need to spend more time learning to master the craft of making things work. Good ideas about-making good ideas work is another matter altogether.

Shared Governance as an implementation activity requires interested parties to spend time understanding and embracing getting things done. Without attention to implementation, no one will “make” the decision-regardless of formal authority and responsibility- so it is important to define how such a system should work.

***A culture of shared governance:***

Culture includes the collective responsibility as well as an individual responsibility.

Collectively, leadership, trust and relationships supersede structures and processes in decision-making.

Advice from Mortimer and O'Brien Stathre describes attention, commitment and leadership among all group representatives and each of us individually. Summarized they include:

Group representative responsibility:

Serious attention must be given to the dynamics of building and sustaining high levels of trust and legitimacy among those who share in the governing process. It requires board, administration, faculty, classified and students to continually build social capital and trust within and across their members.

Commitment to the fair and open processes together with some of the decision-making and communication tactics needs to be internalized by those who participate in governance. Provide the opportunity to participate, consult early and often

Openness is required, but so is leadership and outstanding leadership creates a consensus and does not merely “hope to find it.”

Be selective in determining what needs to be processed by when, by when. Too many requests for quick advice or quick turnaround will kill trust.

Individual responsibility:

Each of us must take responsibility as a whole (together) for the governance of his/her institution as a whole (entirety). One’s responsibility is to adopt a broader perspective than one’s own interest.

Each of us must commit and be capable of sharing with others the complexity inherent in a complex world and in the event of forced choices.

Each of us must commit to attitudes that stops “shooting from the hip.” Bring an objective, learning and constructive approach and style to bear on the problems. There is a difference between being committed or investing in a proposal with one’s own ego.

Together we must work in understanding/deciding “how to do something” is essential in deciding “whether to do it.”

***Communication in shared governance***

Perfect communication rarely happens. What is required is continuing and effective communication, including information about constraints in the process or in the substance of the decision.

Timing is essential. Identify process and who needs to be involved, what type of participation is needed, how soon the decision needs to be made, what implementation of the decision looks like and how the decision will be communicated.

Access to decision makers and access to information necessary to participate, make information available and in a timely manner

Provide adequate feedback: When a decision is made, it is communicated to those who rendered advice and counsel and to the community at large.

Disagreements are discussed with the recommending body so all fully understand and the reasons for the disagreement are clear.

Listening is not the same as losing control. Openness means listening and considering advice seriously; it does not mean asking for a decision from a sole interest group.

Open communication of priorities is needed, but they will cause grief. Some will not like their programs articulated as not high priorities. Those associate with high priority programs will want to know where the money went! Example is when any funds spared are taken up with non-programmatic items like PERS, energy, debt service.

***The environment in which shared governance operates***

People agree more readily about the problem than solutions.

Good logic is often an insufficient argument

Progress may not be a straight line

Facing problems doesn’t always mean solving them positively. Sometimes what needs to be done, simply can’t be done

No single leadership style ensures success: different groups will require different styles.

Consistency within that “group” is the constant

A forced-choice decision-making environment puts great attention on the legitimacy and trust of decision-making processes, including the criteria used to arrive at judgments about appropriate course of action.

Professional judgments are subjective. It is the essence of an effective governance process to work hard on criteria and procedures that allow and encourage the exercise of genuine professional judgment

In a world of intruding policies at the state level, we want to keep resolutions at the college rather than delegating them up.

**Draft:  Our Work and Time Line Presidents’ Council**

**Fall Term**:

**Outcomes:**

Develop a common understanding of shared governance among Presidents’ Council

**Activities:**

Review Literature and Discuss Learning

Draft definition of shared governance

Draft component aspects of shared governance

Discuss with respective constituent groups

By December 14, 2012 PC will have a final draft of shared governance definition and shared understanding of the responsibilities incumbent upon an organization in decision-making, culture and communication.

**Winter Term:**

**Outcomes:**

Work with constituent groups and college council to broadly communicate final draft definitions and responsibilities.

Identify structures that support culture, communication, implementation of related decisions.

Identify processes that support constructive participation, decision quality, effective communication and shared culture.

Create measures of participation, quality of decisions, communications and culture.

**Spring Term:**

Outcomes:

Create administrative regulation that outlines the internal implementation of the Board’s Policy on Shared Governance

Implement at least one structural change that supports achieving the measures created.

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**Additional information is provided on the Presidents’ Council website link**

**Next Presidents’ Council Meeting December 4, 2012**