

3.7 STATEMENT ON SHARED GOVERNANCE

The administration, faculty, and staff at SOSU embrace the principle of shared governance. Due to the complexity of institutions of higher education, there is an inescapable interdependence among the governing board, administration, faculty, students, and others. The relationship among these entities requires that there be adequate communication among the entities/components in order to provide full opportunity for appropriate joint planning and effort.

Joint effort in an academic institution takes a variety of forms, appropriate to the different kinds of situations being encountered. —In some instances, an initial recommendation will be made by the President, with consideration by the faculty at a later stage. In other instances, an initial recommendation will be made by the faculty, subject to the endorsement of the President and governing board. In other instances, substantive contributions can be made when student leaders are responsibly involved in the process.

Two general conclusions regarding joint effort are warranted: (1) Important areas of action involve, at one time or another, the initiating capacity and decision-making participation of all the institutional components. (2) 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.

3.7.1 INTRODUCTION

While the University and other academic institutions are less autonomous than in the past, and are now supported by funds from sources over which the university exercises diminishing control. If the voices of all parties at the university are to be successfully heard, this institution must be in a position to speak from a generally unified view. When all components at the university recognize their interdependence, and are aware of the usefulness of communication, the result is that the force of joint action increases the universities capacity to solve broad educational problems.

3.7.2 PRINCIPLES

A. Final authority and responsibility for the welfare of Southeastern Oklahoma State University rests with Regional University System of Oklahoma Board of Regents and the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. The Boards may delegate to the President portions of that authority for the purpose of assuring the effective management of the university.

B. Shared governance procedures and principles apply at all levels within the university

C. Shared governance requires informed participation and collaboration by faculty, students, staff, and administrators.

D. Faculty, staff, and students shall have opportunities to participate, appropriate to their special knowledge and expertise, in decisions that relate to:

1. Mission and budget priorities for the university
2. Curriculum, course content, and instruction;
3. Research;

4. Appointment, promotion, and tenure of all faculty members and the development of policies that affect faculty welfare generally;
5. Development of human resources policies and procedures for exempt and non-exempt staff;
6. Election and appointment of administrators;
7. Issues that affect the ability of students to complete their education; and
8. Other issues that arise from time to time that affect the overall welfare of the university.

E. While some members of shared governance bodies may be appointed, the substantial majority should be elected by their constituencies. Such bodies should elect their own presiding officers.

3.7.3 PRACTICE

Two forms of communication between the President and the faculty will be utilized in order to further the issue of shared governance:

1. Executive Committee Meetings:

This meeting is to take place and continue as developed during the Spring (2011) semester by Dr. Chinn and President Mink's. The purpose of the meetings is to develop a line of communication between the Faculty Senate and the President. The format of the meetings shall continue as previously developed in that the Chair of the Faculty Senate and President establish a time and place for the meeting (approximately once a month) to discuss concerns of the Senate directly with the President. The Chair of the Faculty Senate will provide the President an agenda of three items to be discussed and delivered to the President one week in advance of the scheduled meeting to provide the President sufficient time to prepare for the meeting. Following the meeting the members of the executive committee will hold a roundtable discussion in order to document the events and discussion from the meeting. The document developed by the executive committee will be reported to the Faculty Senate at the next Senate meeting and a copy sent to the President.

2. Shared Governance Forum:

This meeting is a meeting with the President of the University (or his/her designee) with the general faculty through the Faculty Senate. The purpose of the meetings is to establish lines of communication between the administration and the faculty of the University. Further, the purpose is to share information about specific areas of concern of both the faculty and the administration of the university. The purpose of the meeting will be to resolve specific issues of both the Administration and the Faculty. While concrete solutions may not be possible in the

forum, solutions to the issues should be sought and action (where and when possible) be implemented at the earliest possible time. The President and the Chair of the Faculty Senate executive committee will each identify one topic for each meeting. The Faculty Senate chair will then arrange (date, time, place) the meeting and agenda between the President and the Faculty Senate (all faculty will be notified and invited to attend the meetings). Faculty will be informed of the topics for the meeting at least one month prior to the meeting. While members of the faculty are encouraged to actively participate at the meeting, it is recognized that not all faculty may be able to attend. In such circumstance, the faculty senators may act as proxies for members of the faculty. The agenda sequence will alternate between the President's topic and the Faculty Senate's topic at the initial meeting and then alternate in subsequent meeting (for instance at the second meeting the Faculty Senate topic will go first). The minutes of this meeting will be part of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee report to the Faculty Senate.

The goal of these forums is to ensure that all parties are:

1. Being informed on issues that confront higher education and the institution;
2. Acting within time constraints that are imposed by external agencies and influences, sometimes with little or no notice;
3. Sharing appropriate information and providing timely feedback;
4. Recognizing the specific goals and needs of the institution, and being accountable to the constituencies represented; and
5. Aware of the roles played by various units and individuals in decision making and administration.

Given the dynamic nature of institutional governance, it is understood

1. That there may be occasions when institutional leaders must act in the best interest of the institution on major issues affecting the institutional constituencies without full benefit of the shared governance process. In such cases the representative bodies shall be informed in a timely manner and have an opportunity to comment on the issues.
2. That administrators shall inform important constituencies in a timely manner if they choose to disregard, in whole or in part, the advice and recommendation of constituencies, and they should provide the reasons for their decision. In these cases, the shared governance body may, if it so chooses, present a written statement of its position and/or any objections to the decision as part of the institution's or unit's record on the issue.
3. Faculty and staff who do not hold administrative appointments, and all students, may express their opinions freely on all shared governance matters without retaliation. Administrators, including faculty holding administrative appointments, may also express their opinions freely during policy discussions, without retaliation, but once a decision is determined all stakeholders are expected to support and implement policy as determined by the institutional leadership.

Shared governance requires a commitment of resources and time from the university. The university shall provide a proper level of resources, as determined by the President, to faculty, staff, and students to allow them to carry out their shared governance responsibilities effectively.

While participation in governance by faculty, staff, and students is necessary and important for the well-being of the university, the final responsibility for decision-making rests with institutional President, Regional University System of Oklahoma Board of Regents, or the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education who are ultimately held accountable by the public and its elected leaders.

3.7.2 Examples of Joint Effort Activities

The following excerpts identify areas of joint effort (shared governance) and briefly outline some of the responsibilities of the President and the Faculty.