

Resolution
Regarding the Addition of Shared Governance to SE Employee Handbook

Resolved by the Southeastern Staff Senate

As the official representative body of the staff of Southeastern Oklahoma State University, the Staff Senate is tasked with ensuring non-faculty employees are able to effectively participate in achieving the goals of the University, which includes meaningful and intentional staff participation in shared governance of the University. With the approval by the University President to add a third Shared Governance forum to each fall and spring semester to be led by the University staff, the Staff Senate must ensure that the purpose and responsibilities of shared governance are clearly outlined and communicated to the University staff. One step toward this goal is the inclusion of a Shared Governance Statement in the Southeastern Employee Handbook to mirror, as appropriate, the Shared Governance Policy for faculty in the Academic Policies and Procedures Manual (APPM). Thus, the following addition to the SE Employee Handbook is recommended:

4.19 Shared Governance

The administration, faculty, and staff at Southeastern Oklahoma State University 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.

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 entities, including staff, faculty, and students. (2) Differences in the weight of each group's voice should be determined by reference to the responsibility of each group for the particular matter at hand.

4.19.1 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 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 nonexempt staff;
 6. Selection 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 (for example, faculty senate, staff senate, and student government association) may be appointed, the substantial majority should be elected by their constituencies. Such bodies should elect their own presiding officers.

4.19.2 Staff Participation

Agencies (committees, teams, etc.) for staff participation in the government of the University should be established at each level where staff responsibility is present. An agency should also exist for the presentation of the views of the whole staff. The structure and procedures for staff participation should be designed, approved, and established by joint action of the components of the institution. Staff representatives should be selected by the staff according to procedures determined by the staff.

The agencies may consist of meetings of all staff members of a department, division, or University system, or may take the form of staff-elected executive committees in departments and schools and a staff-elected senate or council for larger divisions or the institution as a whole.

Among the means of communication among the faculty, administration, and governing board now in use are: (1) circulation of memoranda and reports by board committees, (2) joint ad hoc committees, (3) standing committees, and (4) membership of staff members on administrative bodies. Whatever the channels of communication, they should be clearly understood and observed.

4.19.3 Relationship of Staff Senate to the President

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

Executive Committee Meetings:

The Staff Senate Executive Committee shall meet periodically with the President and Vice President of Business Affairs to develop a line of communication between the Staff Senate and the President. The Chair of the Staff Senate and President will 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 Staff Senate will provide the President and Vice President of Business Affairs an agenda of 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. The Executive Committee will provide a report to the Staff Senate at the next Senate meeting.

Shared Governance Forums:

The purpose of these meetings is to establish lines of communication among the administration, faculty, and staff of the University and to share information about specific areas of concern in order to resolve specific issues. 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.

Three forums will be held each fall and spring semester. The President, the Faculty Senate Chair, and the Staff Senate will each determine the topic of one forum each semester. For the staff-led forum, the Staff Senate Chair will arrange the meeting details (date, time, place) and agenda with the President and the Staff Senate, and all staff as well as faculty will be notified and invited to attend the meetings.

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 feedback in a reasonable amount of time;
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 reasonable amount of time and have an opportunity to comment on the issues.
2. That administrators shall inform relevant constituencies in a reasonable amount of time 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 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 wellbeing of the University, the final responsibility for decision-making rests with the institutional President, the Regional University System of Oklahoma Board of Regents, and/or the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education who are ultimately held accountable by the public and its elected leaders.

(Adapted from the APPM, “3.7 Statement on Shared Governance” and “3.8 Relationship of Faculty Senate to the President”)

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