

Yavapai College Statement of Understandings on Shared Governance

Preamble

A strong tradition of collegial interaction and shared governance is essential to tap into the human and institutional potential that exist in an institution of higher learning. At Yavapai College we believe the view that emphasizes interdependence is better than the one that emphasizes independence, collective intelligence of the college community is better than intelligence of a few, an involved and empowered community is better than a detached and disinterested community, the principle of inclusion is better than exclusion. Such a belief is embodied in Section 3.1 of Yavapai College Policy Manual as adopted by the District Governing Board which indicates that decisions regarding the creation of or changes in institutional programs must involve a broad range of participation by affected groups. This statement of shared governance represents the mutual desire of all constituents to work together in harmony, to further codify the institutional understandings regarding the meaning and principles of Shared Governance at Yavapai College, and the commitment on the part of all constituents to adhere to principles and responsibilities contained herein.

Definition

Shared Governance at Yavapai College is a deliberate process which will seek out the creative and constructive ideas and perspectives of this community of learners and which will enable active, responsible participation of affected parties (which could be functional units and/or employee groups defined as faculty, staff and administration) in the decision-making process by providing meaningful opportunities to introduce, analyze, discuss and provide input or recommend courses of action before a final decision is made.

Principles Embodied in Shared Governance at Yavapai College

1. Shared Governance recognizes and accepts the authority vested in the Board and the Administration. It also recognizes that such authority will be exercised after due consideration of the wisdom emanating from the shared governance process.
2. Shared Governance is most effective when individuals and groups can express their opinions and engage in discourse freely and without fear of retaliation. Thus, it is the responsibility of all parties to conduct themselves and act in a manner that is consistent with this principle.
3. Shared Governance is a process that allows for many divergent views, opinions and perspectives to be brought forward and discussed. However, Shared Governance will be effective only if all parties agree to respect and do their part in implementing the final decision, though they may disagree with the decision itself.

4. Shared Governance recognizes that the participation of affected constituent groups should be real and meaningful and that this participation should be based on the principle that each group has the largest influence in matters that concern it most. As an example, according to this principle, faculty will have the largest influence when it is a matter of curriculum while student services staff will have the largest influence when it a matter of enrollment management. Committees and task forces will accordingly be consciously structured to reflect this principle with input from the representative bodies (broadly classified as Faculty Senate, Staff Association and functional units) when appropriate.
5. Shared Governance recognizes that governance involves implementation of a combination of policies, procedures, guidelines and practices. It is recognized that the deliberate and formal process of shared governance is appropriate for the first two while informal consultation is appropriate for the later two.
6. Shared Governance recognizes that in addition to the involvement of members of affected groups or functional units on an ad hoc basis, the need for establishing regular communication of the representative bodies and seeking their participation as appropriate.
7. Shared Governance recognizes the necessity and importance of participation of involved parties in the initial selection of supervisors and administrators and subsequently in providing feedback in the evaluation process of supervisors and administrators.
8. Shared Governance recognizes that it may become necessary to take action affecting institutional constituencies without the full benefit from the shared governance process. In such cases, the representative bodies will be informed as soon as possible and will be provided an opportunity to provide feedback. It also recognizes that while there is the presumption that the administration will abide by the advice and recommendation of the constituents there will be instances where it may choose to disregard such advice or recommendation. In such cases it is incumbent upon the administration to provide a rationale for the decision.
9. Shared Governance requires periodic assessment of the process itself. It is expected that the process will be evaluated at least once a year with the express objective of making it better.
10. Shared Governance recognizes that there are many administrative decisions made in Yavapai College that does not fall under the purview of this process-- for example, approval of a course curriculum is a matter of shared governance; when the course will be offered is not.

Faculty Roles & Responsibilities

The faculty is at the core of what Yavapai College does. It delivers instruction and facilitates student learning, engages in scholarly inquiry and professional development, and performs service for its professions and the community. The faculty participates in the management of the institution through the shared governance process. The primary vehicle by which faculty will exercise its role in shared governance is by service in the Faculty Senate though participation in shared governance includes service in committees and task forces.

The shared governance process recognizes that in the areas of academic programs and instruction the interests of the faculty will be primary. Thus, the faculty's involvement in the shared governance process will specifically include, but is not limited to, all areas involving curriculum, standards of instruction, **scheduling** and delivery, academic policies, granting of degrees (including honorary degrees), those aspects of student life which relate to the educational process and matters relating to faculty employment and welfare. It is expected that the faculty governance policies and procedures will be structured in such a way that allow for broad based faculty participation in a timely manner to initiate, review, amend and endorse any and all proposals in areas where the role of faculty is primary.

According to the principles of shared governance, in joint committees on which the faculty is represented, faculty representation will appropriately reflect the degree of the faculty's stake in the issue with input from the faculty senate.

Staff Roles & Responsibilities

The purpose and role of the staff is to provide effective support structures and services for the institution, coordinate educational support services and complement educational programs. The role of the staff in shared governance is to ensure cross departmental collaboration and communication as appropriate and participate on behalf of their areas of responsibility and expertise in shared governance by serving in the **Yavapai College Staff Association**, committees and task forces. It is expected that staff supervisors will adopt practices which will incorporate consideration of cross departmental impacts of decisions made within a department.

The staff's involvement in shared governance specifically includes, but is not limited to, academic support, administrative support and student support activities and matters relating to staff employment and welfare.

According to the principles of shared governance, in joint committees on which the staff is represented, staff representation will appropriately reflect the degree of the staff's stake in the issue with input from appropriate supervisors.

Administration Roles & Responsibilities

The role of the administration is to utilize directives from the board in formulating and articulating a vision for the institution, provide strategic and operational leadership, and manage its resources and operations in a reasonable and prudent manner.

The administration participates in the shared governance structure by creating an inclusive environment in which key constituents are consulted and involved in the decision-making process while effectively discharging its assigned responsibilities. It is expected that the administration will implement practices that **ensure** inclusive participation of its constituents in a timely and meaningful way.

Expected Outcomes

1. A collegial, candid, and cooperative relationship will exist between the faculty, staff and administration.
2. The institution will make decisions after consideration of creative and constructive ideas and perspectives of its diverse constituents. As such decisions will receive widest possible support and encounter least amount of friction in implementation.
3. The institution will benefit from better decision making due to conscious consideration of cross departmental impacts and operational practices.
4. The institution will benefit from the synergy arising out of constructive collaboration between its constituents. The institution will also empower its constituents at all levels by the presumption that the President and senior administrators will uphold recommendations arising out of the shared governance process. When an administrator takes actions contrary to committee recommendations, the administrator will meet with the committee or otherwise adequately communicate the reasons for not sustaining its recommendations.
5. The President and other senior administrators will consult in a timely way and seek meaningful input on issues in which the faculty or staff has an appropriate interest but not primary responsibility, such as, but is not limited to the college mission and goals, strategic planning, facilities master planning, intercollegiate athletics.
6. The faculty and staff will participate meaningfully in the selection of administrators and supervisors through membership on search and/or hiring committees.
7. Faculty, staff and administration will participate jointly in an annual assessment of the shared governance process and work jointly on improving the process.

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