

State of Shared Governance Report
in the University System of Maryland (USM)

to

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by

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State of Shared Governance Report in the University System of Maryland (USM) Executive Summary

Faculty senate chairs at all 12 of the USM institutions submitted the results of their campuses' surveys of shared governance. The shared governance surveys were submitted to the Vice Chair of the Council of University System Faculty (CUSF) in mid-March 2019 and the resulting report by the CUSF Chair was completed by the end of March, to be submitted to Chancellor Caret by April 1. This report will be used by the Chancellor as part of his evaluation of the presidents.

The shared governance surveys were most often completed by senate chairs in cooperation with their executive committees and/or fellow senators. The surveys, which encompassed perceptions about activities that occurred during the 2018 calendar year, cover numerous important areas, including shared governance per se as well as functioning of presidents, provosts, deans, department chairs, and faculty on academic and administrative matters. Overall, the state of shared governance was reportedly good, but there was some variation across institutions and within institutions with regard to areas in which faculty either do or do not perceive that their voices are being heard. In general, however, senate chairs were satisfied with the shared governance activities of the presidents.

Three very common, and often very strong concerns reported in the surveys relate to perceptions on many of the campuses that (1) many academic deans and some department chairs appeared to exclude faculty input from their (i.e., the deans' and chairs') decision making processes, (2) one-way communication rather than consultation often occurred at numerous levels, and, most notably, (3) faculty had little to no input into budget and resource allocation decisions. This latter concern was the one that received most written support, with comments noting that the very heavy faculty workload that is experienced by many faculty is exacerbated by administrative bloat. When administrators are perceived to be more interested in creating more and more positions that support their own work while failing to create or procure and fund faculty positions, this has a strong, negative effect on faculty morale and it affects the quality of teaching and learning. This bloat also contributes significantly to the increasing costs of higher education, which are problematic for many reasons. A related issue expressed by several senate chairs was that high-level hiring decisions were commonly perceived to have been made without adequate faculty input, in violation of the USM shared governance policy.

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State of Shared Governance Report in the USM Summary Report

The objective of this summary report, based upon senate chairs' responses on a survey distributed to them by the Council of University System Faculty (CUSF) Vice Chair, is to provide to the USM Board of Regents (BOR), the USM Chancellor, and other interested parties substantive data and commentary feedback reflecting perceptions of faculty leadership about existing shared governance practices at the 12 University System of Maryland (USM) institutions of higher education. A longer-term objective is to assist the Chancellor and his USM leadership team and staff in identifying ways to improve shared governance practices within the individual institutions in the University System of Maryland (USM). A second confidential document - the summary report along with the raw completed surveys- is provided only to the Chancellor and his senior leadership team. The survey results are considered confidential and they are not to be disseminated beyond these persons.

Procedures

This survey was developed by CUSF in 2014, based upon concepts explained in a monograph by Keetje Ramo entitled *Assessing the Faculty's Role in Shared Governance: Implications of AAUP Standards* (1998). The survey instrument is reviewed every spring by senate chairs, in an effort to make improvements as necessary. Currently, each question asks senate chairs to answer by selecting a response on a five-point Likert scale from *Strongly Agree* to *Strongly Disagree*. Respondents are also provided a section for comments after each question or each related series of questions. As a result, the completed survey yields both quantitative and qualitative responses. The survey is explained to and distributed to senate chairs each October, with instructions to work with their executive committees, their senators, or their faculty as a whole, to complete it and submit it to the CUSF Vice Chair by mid-March. The survey responses cover the previous calendar year, in this case 2018. The CUSF Chair completes the analysis of the completed surveys, writes a report, and submits all materials to the Chancellor by April 1, so that he may use the results as part of his evaluation of institutional presidents.

Sampling – At the October senate chairs' meeting convened by CUSF, the CUSF Vice Chair explains the purposes of the shared governance survey to the senate chairs and provides the survey to them along with the timeline for its completion. The Vice Chair also explains that the best practices with regard to surveys of this type would encourage inclusion of input from persons beyond the senate chair alone. Whereas the senate chair is usually the faculty leader who has the most direct contact with the president and senior leadership of the university, the survey tends to be more accurate when it contains also the input of other faculty who are leaders in the shared governance structures of the universities. Figure 1 captures the sampling options used by the senate chairs in completing this year's surveys.

Figure 1: Check the option which most closely represents the option you used. (Check One)	
<i>Number of institutions using each option:</i>	<i>Option by which senate chair gathers information to complete the survey:</i>
--	Option #1: Senate Chair Completes the Survey Alone
3	Option #2: Senate Chair Completes the Survey in Conjunction with Their ExCom
2	Option #3: Senate Chair Shares with Senate and Compiles Results with ExCom
7	Option #4: Senate Chair Surveys Senate Members
--	Option #5: Senate Completes a Survey of the Faculty
--	Option #6: Other – Please explain below
Note: These options appear on the survey. The option employed by the senate chair is indicated in the completed survey. In situations in which it is not reported, or in which the response is unclear, the CUSF Chair reached out to the senate chair for clarification.	

Results

The survey has been subdivided into seven areas covering different aspects of the role of shared governance within the institution. These categories are used as the main headings within the survey and they provide the structure for this report.

Figure 2: Climate for Governance:

	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Neither Agree or Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Not Applicable</u>
1. Shared governance on our campus is alive and healthy.	1	8	2	1	--	--

Climate for Shared Governance – Question one serves as a general measure of the state of shared governance on the campus (see Figure 2). Last year, none of the campuses disagreed with the statement that shared governance was alive and healthy on their campus. This year, one senate chair disagreed whereas eight senate chairs agreed with the statement. Still, the finding that nine of the 12 senate chairs either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement indicates that shared governance, as a whole, appears to be functioning quite well on the campuses.

Figure 3: Internal Communications:

	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Neither Agree nor Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Not Applicable</u>
2. There are excellent communications and consultation between the administration and the faculty and senate leadership.	2	5	3	2	--	--

Internal Communications – The second question focuses on communications between the administration on the one hand and the senate and senate leadership on the other. Communication is a necessary, though not sufficient, component in shared governance. Seven senate chairs either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement on communications. Two senate chairs disagreed with the statement.

According to an analysis of the comment section of this question, numerous respondents who were dissatisfied with the level or type of communication wrote that communication was perceived to be a one-way street, that is, from administration to faculty. Other respondents noted that communication was often not done in a timely manner or that it was engaged in after decision making had occurred, thus precluding the faculty voice from being considered. The most common theme within this section, however, was that communication was used instead of consultation, which is unacceptable to faculty. The USM shared governance policy requires consultation with faculty, especially in areas in which faculty have special expertise.

On a positive note, many comments spoke of consistent and meaningful interaction and engagement between high-level administrators and faculty governance groups on academic matters, including curricular decisions. Communications from and with the deans, however, was reportedly more problematic.

Figure 4: Senate’s Role:

	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Neither Agree nor Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Not Applicable</u>
3. The faculty senate plays an important role in providing academic and administrative functions at the university.	3	5	4	--	--	--

Senate’s Role – This question asks whether the faculty senate plays an important role in providing academic and administrative functions at the university. Eight senate chairs agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that the faculty senate plays an important role in providing academic and administrative functions. Four senate chairs neither agreed or disagreed with the statement, probably because this is a double-barreled question, i.e., one that captures perceptions about both the administrative and academic functions. These functions are rated separately in succeeding questions. In general, comments indicated that faculty perceive themselves to have valued opinions on academic matters.

Figure 5: The President’s Role:

	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Neither Agree nor Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Not Applicable</u>
4. Other than on rare occasions, the president seldom overturns faculty decisions and recommendations in areas in which the faculty has primary responsibility (e.g., curriculum, tenure and promotion, etc.).	4	7	1	--	--	--

5.	The president seeks meaningful faculty input on those issues (such as budgeting) in which the faculty has an appropriate interest but not primary responsibility.	--	5	3	4	--	--
6.	The president supports and advocates the principles of shared governance?	3	7	2	--	--	--
7.	The president supports and advocates the principles of shared governance at the sub-unit level also (e.g. college, department).	1	5	5	1	--	--

President’s Role – This section of the survey focuses on the president’s role in shared governance. Responses to questions four and six indicate agreement that most presidents are perceived as engaging in good faith with faculty shared governance leaders. On items five and seven, however, some concerns are revealed.

Responses to item five make it clear that faculty would like to be engaged more formatively in budget processes at many of the USM universities. A review of the comments accompanying this item demonstrate that the area of resource allocation is one in which faculty perceive the communication to be a one-way street. CUSF asserts that institutions would benefit from faculty involvement in linking strategic plans, assessment outcomes, and budgeting priorities such that decisions about data-informed resource allocation may truly become the standard at all of the USM campuses. Basing decisions on planning documents that have arisen via shared governance practices and findings arrived at by way of accepted data analytic approaches will provide the institutions with cohesive, evidence-based planning and budgeting processes that should improve teaching and learning by addressing agreed-upon institutional priorities.

Responses to item seven on this survey, which addresses sub-unit shared governance, are quite consistent with responses to this item over the last several years. Senate chairs have reported that this is an area of concern, yet there has been no noticeable response by institutional presidents. CUSF recommends that the Chancellor and the USM senior administration consider how this perceived problem might best be addressed. CUSF would be happy to provide a venue at one of its Senate Chairs’ meetings to discuss these concerns and to try to develop solutions.

Figure 6: The Faculty’s Role:

	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Neither Agree nor Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Not Applicable</u>	
8.	The administration is supportive of faculty involvement in shared governance.	2	6	3	1	--	--

Faculty’s Role – Four of the 12 responses to question eight, which addresses perceived levels of support for faculty involvement in shared governance, indicate a general lack of agreement with the statement. According to the responses to this item both this year and last year, there appears

to be some erosion in faculty satisfaction that their voices are valued. In some ways, this statement could be seen as a better measure of overall shared governance satisfaction than item one, which is considered the overarching summary statement of senate chairs on shared governance. As such, the results are somewhat troubling.

When reading comments provided under this question as well as some others, it becomes apparent that many faculty do not believe that their opinions and ideas, even when based upon evidence and data, are respected.

Figure 7: Joint Decision-Making:

	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Neither Agree nor Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Not Applicable</u>
9. The administration utilizes faculty involvement in the area of planning and strategic planning .	4	6	1	1	--	--
10. The administration recognizes faculty involvement in budgeting and fiscal resource planning.	1	3	2	4	1	1
11. The administration recognizes faculty involvement in academic affairs and program development.	5	7	--	--	--	--
12. The administration recognizes faculty involvement in staff selection and hiring .	2	9	1	--	--	--
13. Structures and processes that allow for shared governance are clearly defined in the governance documents (e.g. faculty handbook).	3	7	--	2	--	--
14. Shared governance between the administration and faculty functions in an effective manner.	2	5	3	2	--	--
15. Joint decision-making and shared governance discussed in questions 9-14 are practiced at the sub-unit levels also (e.g. college, department).	--	5	4	2	1	--

Joint Decision Making – Questions nine through 15 ask senate chairs to give their perceptions as to whether their and other faculty leaders’ views are included in decisions made by administrators. There is some good news and some bad news to report here. Senate chairs, by and large, report agreement with statements relating to inclusion of faculty shared governance bodies’ recommendations on curricular matters (item 11), as is just, according to principles established by the AAUP and others. According to such standards, curriculum and appointment, rank, and tenure are areas in which faculty, because of their special expertise, should be given great authority, and it appears that this is, in fact, occurring on the campuses.

Faculty also feel very included in planning processes (item nine) and in most hiring decisions (item 12). It was troubling, however, that several comments by senate chairs and others indicate the failure of their presidents and/or provosts to include the faculty voice in high-level academic affairs selections and appointments. This indicates an abrogation of the USM shared governance policy, which requires faculty consultation on these matters.

Regarding item 13, most senate chairs agreed that shared governance information is “clearly defined in the governance documents (e.g., faculty handbook).” This indicates that the faculty regard their constitutions and bylaws as well as their faculty handbooks to be fairly consistent with processes and structures on their campuses. Unfortunately, however, some faculty reported that their faculty constitutions and bylaws were violated by their presidents and, when asked by faculty leaders to understand their serious concerns, that their presidents chose to make decisions based upon something other than these documents. It appeared to these faculty that their foundational documents were in place only to be used at the whim of presidents, deans, and others, rather than to serve as the basis for decision making.

Faculty recognize that presidents have greater authority than the faculty over administrative areas such as budgeting. Consultation with faculty and others, however, should take place with regard to this very important matter. Senate chairs report a one-way communication system on this issue (item 10), and they are not satisfied that this is the best way for decisions about resource allocation to be made.

Item 14 (administration and faculty shared governance functions effectively) responses should be consistent with responses to item eight (administration supports faculty involvement in shared governance) above, and they are. There is some agreement that this is the case at most USM institutions, but this score should be higher, and CUSF pledges to work with the Chancellor and the USM leadership to help identify solutions here.

Item 15 (shared governance within sub-units) responses would be expected to be consistent with responses to item seven (president’s support for shared governance at sub-unit levels) above. In fact, these responses are quite consistent with each other, indicating that there is more work to be done in establishing and sustaining shared governance practices within many colleges and departments.

Figure 8: Structural Arrangement for Shared Governance:

	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Neither Agree nor Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Not Applicable</u>
16. The faculty senate and/or other institution-wide governance bodies meet on a regular basis.	10	2	--	--	--	--
17. Faculty determine how their own representatives are selected.	10	1	1	--	--	--

18. The administration provides adequate institutional support for shared governance to function.	4	4	1	3	--		--
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Structural Arrangements – On the final three questions, senate chairs are given the opportunity to note their agreement or disagreement with statements relating to faculty and faculty senate actions as well as institutional support for shared governance structures. On the first two items, which relate primarily to perceptions of whether or not faculty per se and faculty senate involve themselves in shared governance effectively and with agency, there is broad agreement that they do.

On the third question, there is quite a bit of disagreement that enough support is provided in order to permit faculty involvement in shared governance activities to continue without severe strain on faculty senate leaders. Many senate chairs advocated for increased support, in the form of course release or stipends, for themselves and their executive committee members. It is important to note that several university presidents provide substantial clerical, administrative, monetary, and other types of support to faculty leaders. CUSF would recommend that those presidents who do not offer such support or whose senate leadership has been reluctant to ask for such support consider doing so going forward. Several approaches would be helpful, including the remedies noted above as well as providing a graduate assistant to support meetings, document collection and posting, etc.

Figure 10: Historical Analysis of Climate for Governance Question:
 “Shared governance on our campus is alive and healthy”

Climate for Governance	2016	2017	2018
Strongly agree	4	0	1
Agree	3	9.5	8
Neither agree nor disagree	3	2.5	2
Disagree	2	0	1
Strongly disagree	0	0	0
N/A	0	0	0

Historical Analysis of Climate for Governance Question – In keeping with the tradition of prior shared governance reports, the historical analysis of the first question of the survey, considered to be the summary statement, is provided in figure 10. It is not in the interest of CUSF or the Chancellor that this particular analysis receive more attention than necessary, however, as it provides only a single snapshot of senate chairs’ perceptions. The trend that was apparent last year, i.e., that there was improvement overall in reported shared governance, based upon review of the response to this question, did not continue. In fact, senate chairs this year were slightly less likely to report that shared governance is “alive and healthy” at their institutions. As noted earlier, shared governance is perceived to be in a strong and healthy position overall, however, on USM campuses.

Conclusion

In general, according to faculty shared governance leaders at most of the USM institutions, the state of shared governance is good. In fact, at a few campuses, there is strong agreement or agreement with almost every item on the survey, indicating that the relationship between administrators and faculty shared governance bodies is functioning well there. Even at some of these campuses, however, there is dissatisfaction with the level of faculty input in decision making related to budget and resource allocations. This dissatisfaction, coupled with the timing of the new policy and guidelines on faculty workload and the report submitted recently by CUSF recommending that the BOR goal of paying faculty at the 85th percentile of faculty at their peer institutions, represents a special opportunity for improvement. CUSF encourages the use of data-informed decision making on the part of the presidents and provosts, especially with regard to possible salary increases for faculty and addition of new faculty positions to support teaching and learning.

Communication between administrators and faculty leadership appears to be quite consistent at most campuses. Consultation, however, seems to be somewhat spotty at some institutions. Communication and consultation are both required in order for an atmosphere of shared governance to survive and thrive. Unfortunately, however, communication often tends to involve sharing of information from administrators to faculty, to the exclusion of a necessary consultative process. One clear example of one-way communication without serious consultation relates to hiring decisions within academic affairs units. There is a perception among faculty leaders that, on some campuses, the president and provost do not always follow approved shared governance policies and processes with regard to the selection and hiring of high-level administrators in such units. In some cases, terminology such as “reclassification” is used to justify appointment of persons in very highly desirable new positions. This appears to faculty to violate the USM shared governance policy. CUSF would recommend that presidents and provosts be encouraged to live by the spirit of this policy, as doing so would strengthen the relationship between administrators and faculty leaders by showing respect for faculty concerns in this matter. To conduct official searches for positions of this nature would harm no one, and the concomitant good will fomented by doing so would make it well worth the time and effort to do so.

A related area of major concern among many faculty leaders relates to the administrative bloat that they perceive at their institutions. An article entitled *Administrative Bloat at American Universities: The Real Reason for High Costs in Higher Education* published by the Goldwater Institute reported massive increases in administrative positions in universities between 1993 and 2007, as compared to positions in instruction. Some of these increases are understandable in light of new federal and state mandates for higher education institutions. Most new administrative positions, however, are unrelated to these mandates. These positions, which include titles such as assistant provost, associate provost, assistant dean, and associate dean, appear to serve only to expend more money in support of administrators at the expense of making available new faculty positions. As many families struggle to pay higher and higher tuition costs, there is greater scrutiny being placed on how institutions are using funds, and this has contributed to a decrease in the reputation of higher education altogether. Now is an opportune time to encourage presidents to consider very carefully any requests by their provosts and deans for support for

positions that do not directly affect teaching and learning. Teaching and learning are, after all, at the core of the missions of all USM institutions.

A final concern that was expressed by many faculty shared governance leaders in their survey responses relates to shared governance at the sub-unit level. Even at many universities where shared governance and communication are reportedly positive between the presidents and the faculty leadership, there is a perception that some deans and department chairs are permitted to make decisions without consultation with their faculty. This is reportedly very demoralizing to faculty who try to discern how best to contribute to their departments and colleges, only to feel disrespected when they view actions taken by their colleagues (chairs) and their superiors (deans) that the faculty consider arbitrary and without substantive evidence as a basis. CUSF encourages (1) that USM consider revamping its training for academic leaders to include emphasis on the importance of teaching deans and chairs how to engage in true shared governance and (2) that presidents be told that this is a common concern, so that they may ensure that they are providing appropriate oversight to persons in these positions.

CUSF is grateful to the Chancellor for providing CUSF with the opportunity to engage in this important evaluative process.