Report on Shared Governance in the University of Missouri System

Intercampus Faculty Cabinet
Task Force on Shared Governance

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Executive Summary

In recent years, Intercampus Faculty Cabinet (IFC) members have noted faculty concerns about shared governance from all UM System campuses, related to issues ranging from faculty morale to compliance with the Collected Rules and Regulations (CRR). The IFC Shared Governance task force was established to research principles of shared governance across academe, gather further information related to faculty perceptions, compare national and UM System-specific faculty perceptions, and develop strategies for productive shared governance.

The task force administered a survey of all UM System faculty based on the AAUP's 2021 Shared Governance Survey. Faculty members were asked to share their perceptions of faculty or administrative dominance, primacy, or joint authority regarding elements of university governance. The task force also asked respondents for specific comments to gather further information.

Primary Findings:

- 81% of all faculty report being either somewhat or extremely dissatisfied with shared governance at their specific university. 78% report dissatisfaction with shared governance at the UM System level.
- 76% of all faculty believe shared governance has gotten worse at their own universities. Sentiments improve at the College or School level, with 56% of all faculty reporting being somewhat or extremely dissatisfied.
- Faculty feel disempowered in areas where they traditionally play predominant roles, such as institutional curriculum decisions; setting promotion and tenure standards; and tenure-track faculty searches
- A common concern for all faculty is the issue of top-down decision-making structures that ignore or fail to seek faculty input. Common examples include failure to adhere to the CRR and/or Faculty Bylaws; lack of transparency in decision making; and irregular sharing of information.
- Faculty morale is low across all UM System campuses. Among the faculty, there is a lack of trust in administration at all levels. Concerns about faculty departures and the recruitment/retention of good faculty are common.

Recommendations:

- Faculty, administrators, and Curators should work together to ensure that faculty retain primary responsibility in the following areas: curriculum, instruction, research, faculty status, degree requirements, appointments, promotions, and recommendations for tenure and faculty dismissal.
- Regular communication between faculty and administrators is crucial. Administrators should view their interactions with faculty as opportunities to solicit feedback on important and pressing issues.
- Information should be shared early and often through shared governance channels.

- Campus committees offer strong opportunities for collaboration between faculty and administration. It is vital to view faculty as key players in advancing the well-being of the university.

Introduction and Background

At the University of Missouri Intercampus Faculty Cabinet (IFC) Orientation in August 2021, representatives from all four universities noted a system-wide thread of concern among faculty: shared governance practices. The scope of shared governance issues discussed was broad, ranging from concerns about compliance with the Collected Rules & Regulations of the University of Missouri System (CRR) to incomplete information sharing. Certain effects, such as low faculty morale, seemed to reflect both long-standing issues and recent rapid changes in policy and/or practices. As the "liaison group between the President and President's staff and the four campus faculties," the IFC decided to focus on shared governance in order to share our findings with UM System faculty, the President, and the Board of Curators.[1]

The IFC created a task force to examine principles of shared governance across academe; regulations in the CRR; faculty perceptions and concerns about shared governance across the System's four universities; and strategies for productive shared governance activities. The task force is composed of one faculty member from each of the UM System universities and is staffed by the University of Missouri System's Academic Affairs Office.

The task force members reviewed all relevant CRR material concerning shared governance as it relates to the three major constituencies involved in its practice: the Board of Curators, university administrators, and faculty. Likewise, the task force administered a survey of all faculty of the UM System universities to learn about current perceptions of and hopes for shared governance. By consulting historical documents and studies related to shared governance, the task force also discussed how shared governance regulations and ideals could be understood in a holistic manner, cognizant of the unique challenges posed in managing complex institutions serving the public good.

While the regulations that shape shared governance are codified in the UM System CRR, it is difficult to ascertain the ethical and philosophical tendencies undergirding their definitions of roles and responsibilities for faculty, administrators, and Curators. In other words, the CRR serves as an operational document—for better or worse. At the same time, there is a long and durable tradition of studying shared governance, from recent scholarly articles to older, foundational texts. In our research, we found the American Association of University Professors' (AAUP's) 1967 essay "Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities" to be particularly useful for investigating the reasoning behind shared governance, especially in terms of productive practices and outcomes.[2] As a professional organization, the AAUP aims to "advance academic freedom and shared governance," while also helping to "define fundamental

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[1] University of Missouri System, "20.100 Intercampus Faculty Cabinet."
https://www.umsystem.edu/ums/rules/collected_rules/administration/ch20/20.100_intercampus_faculty_cabinet
[2] AAUP, "Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities." https://www.aaup.org/report/statement-government-colleges-and-universities

professional values and standards" in order to "maintain quality in education" at the college and university levels.[3]

Shared governance, as reflected in the CRR, is one particular outcome of "joint effort."[4] Yet joint effort is shaped and informed by a "mutual understanding" of university governance that is "based on a community of interest."[5] While different groups with different roles comprise our university system, there is an "interdependence" that is crucial in the development and realization of successful policies and procedures.[6] Mutuality and collaboration, then, serve as ethical guideposts for an effective stewardship of higher education institutions.

This interdependence, however, does allow for certain parties to take on a primary role, and the weight of each party's voice depends on their respective responsibilities and talents. The determination of responsibility is shaped by governing rules and regulations (e.g., the faculty having primary responsibility for faculty evaluations due to their training and competence in evaluating scholarly work and production). In this sense, joint effort rests on a mutual respect of abilities and defined roles. The AAUP guidelines give faculty the primary responsibility for curriculum, instruction, research, faculty status, degree requirements, appointments, promotions, and recommendations for tenure and faculty dismissal. Faculty should also advise on the appointment of department chairs and on policies and procedures governing salary increases. At the same time, university presidents or chancellors have a "special obligation to innovate and initiate" in order to maintain and improve a university's status and station.[7] Further, presidents or chancellors may seek evaluations from recognized scholars to supplement faculty ideas and judgments. As such, actions initiated by any party included in the joint-effort enterprise must maximally engage normative processes as defined in a university's rules and regulations while also recognizing contributions from other parties within and outside the institution.

These normative processes also apply to governing boards, who are often understood to be the "final institutional authority."[8] In public institutions, governing board members are either selected by a state's governor or directly elected by the public. The authority and power of the board, while residing above administrators and faculty, should be shaped by a recognition of the abilities and expertise of both administration and faculty. The AAUP insists governing boards "undertake appropriate self-limitation" when considering the wide range of issues facing universities.[9] Governing boards should maintain a "general overview" of the university or universities they oversee, with an aim to defend the "vested interests of society in the educational institution."[10] This includes "fiduciary responsibility" for their institution(s) and the development

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[3] AAUP, "Mission." https://www.aaup.org/about/mission-1
[4] AAUP, "Statement." https://www.aaup.org/report/statement-government-colleges-and-universities
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid.

of "codified statements that define the overall procedures and policies," with appropriate input from interested parties.[11]

With these responsibilities in mind, joint effort requires all parties to share their expertise while maintaining productive relationships that benefit students, staff, and faculty, as well as the university as a whole. Productive relationships are shaped by frankness, openness, honesty, and humility. Faculty, for example, should recognize that some academic programs may require structural updating to better serve students and society, and that administrators are in a position to recommend plans for reorganization while respecting the faculty's right to determine curricular matters and criteria for the institution of tenure. Presidents or chancellors should strive to share information early and often with faculty so that quality feedback may be developed. Governing boards, while in a position to determine and change the rules and regulations on shared governance, should be open to all views—including dissenting ones—in order to cultivate joint effort and lead in a convincing manner. This mutuality, which accompanies differences in responsibility, is the cornerstone of institutional success and shared effort. When productive relationships are pursued, the full potential of a university may be realized.

Shared governance relies on interdependent members of the university collaborating to best exercise stewardship and responsibility in its governance. The success of shared governance depends on the attitude of the faculty who are willing to step up and who look to the common good: the well-being of the university as a whole. In practice, shared governance consists of a set of structures and practices through which faculty, administration, Curators, staff, and students participate in the development of policies and in decision making that affect the institution. At its best, shared governance creates an environment of stewardship and responsibility that fosters interdependence and interaction within the university community, grounded in shared information.

Shared Governance within the University of Missouri System

Within the University of Missouri System, governing-board authority is held by the Board of Curators, which has established the Collected Rules and Regulations of the University of Missouri System (CRR).[12] These governing documents establish the University of Missouri System (UM System) and the four universities within the UM System. They also specify delegation of authority to the UM System President and to the Chancellor of each of the universities. The principles of shared governance are seen throughout the CRR, for different roles are assigned to the board, the president and chancellors, and the faculty.

Faculty Authority as delegated within the CRR

The decision-making authority of the faculty is defined throughout the CRR, but especially within the faculty bylaws of each of the four universities, found in Chapter 300 of the

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[11] Association of American Universities, "Academic Principles." https://www.aau.edu/academic-principles-brief-introduction; AAUP, "Statement." https://www.aaup.org/report/statement-government-colleges-and-universities
[12] https://www.umsystem.edu/ums/rules/collected_rules

CRR. The authority that rests in faculty is typically defined as being (a) primary and direct, (b) shared, or (c) advisory.

Primary and direct authority is restricted to those areas that directly affect the educational mission of the institution, where faculty expertise provides understanding and context surrounding the decision. In particular, primary authority is granted to faculty in matters related to curriculum development, degree requirements, course content, and standards of academic performance.

Shared authority resides in areas where the faculty bring valuable expertise to the decision at hand, while administrators must also be responsible for the decisions. These areas include promotion and tenure decisions, the structure of academic units, campus standing committee structure, students' rights and responsibilities, the academic calendar, and honorary degree awardees.

Advisory authority resides in other areas of university operations where faculty input can provide valuable information to administrators or where faculty may be substantially impacted by administrator decisions. These areas include resource allocation, physical facilities, and the selection of administrators.

Within the CRR, faculty are delegated responsibilities in the broad areas of faculty performance, standards of conduct, and the resolution process for grievances and Title IX issues.

Faculty Survey of Perceptions of Shared Governance

During Spring Semester 2022, the IFC Task Force on Shared Governance administered a survey on shared governance to learn about faculty perceptions of shared governance in the UM System. The survey questions were primarily taken from the 2021 AAUP Shared Governance Survey that was administered to faculty leaders at universities across the U.S and asked whether various functions at universities reflect faculty or administrative dominance, primacy, or joint authority. To create a point of comparison with the national findings, the task force first administered the survey to faculty members identified as faculty leaders on the four system campuses (generally either current or recent Faculty Senate/Council officers or members of the executive committee). Twenty-two faculty members responded to this initial survey. Subsequently, the task force administered the survey to all faculty members in the UM System. Approximately 460 faculty members across the System completed the survey.

While there was variation in responses between the four universities, the broad themes were consistent. Most noteworthy in the survey results is that all faculty populations have very negative views of the state of shared governance both on their own campuses and in the System as a whole. In response to the question "How satisfied are you with shared governance for your university?" 67% of faculty leaders and 81% of all faculty reported being either somewhat or extremely dissatisfied, with a full half of all faculty selecting "extremely dissatisfied." By contrast, only 8% reported being somewhat or extremely satisfied. Similarly, with regard to the

question "How satisfied are you with shared governance for the UM System overall?" 67% of faculty leaders and 78% of all faculty reported being somewhat or extremely dissatisfied, and only 4% are somewhat or extremely satisfied.

Moreover, faculty members see the trend in shared governance deteriorating. Specifically, 71% of faculty leaders believe shared governance has gotten worse both on their own campuses and at the UM System in their time as a faculty member. Of all faculty members, more than three-quarters believe shared governance has gotten worse both at their own universities (76%) and for the UM System (79%). Faculty were somewhat more positive about their own college or school, although even there a majority of both faculty leaders (52%) and all faculty (56%) reported being somewhat or extremely dissatisfied.

In comparison to the AAUP survey on faculty vs. administrative dominance, the starkest contrasts were in the following areas (except where noted, percentages indicate the proportion of respondents who believe the category reflects faculty dominance or primacy):

	Perceived faculty dominance	
	AAUP	UM System
Institutional curriculum decisions	60%	21%
Tenure-track faculty searches	62%	39%
Setting standards for promotion and tenure decisions	53%	33%
Teaching assignments	64%	40%
Mode of course delivery	36%	17%
Department chair selection	38%	16%
Strategic planning (joint authority percentages)*	21%	8%

*Both sets of respondents agree that this heavily skews toward administration.

The image that emerges from the quantitative analysis of this survey is that UM System faculty feel disempowered, even in areas where traditionally—and nationally—faculty play predominant roles, such as with curricular decisions and faculty searches. They are very unhappy with the state of shared governance both at their universities and in the UM System as a whole. Further, they believe the problem is getting worse.

Unlike the AAUP survey, the survey administered by the task force included an opportunity for respondents to leave comments. The most common complaint in the survey, by far, is about excessive administrative dominance or a top-down decision-making structure that ignores or fails to seek faculty input. The most commonly cited examples are the following:

1) Lack of faculty input on budgetary decisions, resource allocation, hiring, salary recommendations, and workload policies;
2) Lack of faculty input on academic program review or the creation and disbanding of units;
3) Lack of transparency about how decisions are made;

4) Failure to adhere to the CRR or Faculty Bylaws, or actions taken to unilaterally change the CRR when the administration perceives them to be "inconvenient."

The comments reflect widespread concern about low faculty morale *on all campuses,* a rise in faculty departures, and how shortcomings in shared governance will result in difficulty in recruiting and retaining good faculty. They reflect a lack of satisfaction in the current state of shared governance, a lack of trust of administration at all levels, and a belief that shared governance has declined over the past ten years.

In contrast, some survey respondents lay part of the blame at the feet of the faculty themselves, pointing to a widespread lack of interest in participating in shared governance and a need for faculty to communicate well why shared governance is a key component of successful universities. A tiny minority pointed out that faculty have no business making decisions about certain elements of university governance, reflecting a lack of understanding of the nuances of shared governance and the different degrees of faculty authority implicit therein.

The task force members noted that this survey was administered in spring semester 2022, when the effects of the pandemic were still strongly felt, which may have fostered a negative bias in faculty perceptions. On the other hand, task force members and IFC members in general believe, based on informal feedback, that the views of the faculty on their campuses have not shifted significantly since the survey was administered. The IFC has discussed administering the survey at regular intervals.

Conclusion and Recommendations

There is a crisis in confidence in shared governance in the University of Missouri System. Despite many specific roles designated for faculty in the CRR, the general perception among the faculty is that the administration ignores or pays mere lip-service to the foundational principles of joint effort, mutual understanding, and interdependence, as discussed in the AAUP's "Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities." Rather than a joint effort, faculty perceive the current model of governance as top-down, with faculty input rarely sought and frequently ignored. This perception corresponds with low faculty morale, lack of interest in faculty governance, and widespread dissatisfaction with campus and system administration.

Particularly problematic seem to be those areas where faculty have traditionally held dominant or substantial joint authority, such as curriculum development; faculty hiring; the creation and disbanding of academic programs; the development of academic policies; and promotion and tenure decisions. Faculty perceive that these responsibilities are being taken over by the administration.

For their part, faculty should be reminded that the AAUP's principles of shared governance leave certain elements of university governance in the hands of administrators and the governing board. For example, financial matters, university-wide policies, developing a vision for the future, and annual performance evaluation of faculty, staff, and administrators all are the primary responsibility of the administration and governing board. Even in these matters,

however, the principle of joint effort means that faculty input often should be sought, even if the final decision rests with the administration or the Curators. And when final decisions contradict the views of a substantial majority of the faculty, a clear, rational explanation should be provided for why the faculty's opinion is being disregarded or overridden.

When faculty and administrators work together and share open lines of communication, everyone benefits. It is in this spirit that we present the following recommendations for improving shared governance within the UM System:

1. All should work together to ensure that faculty retain primary responsibility in the areas of curriculum, instruction, research, faculty status, degree requirements, appointments, promotions, and recommendations for tenure and faculty dismissal. In particular, this means the following:
    a. While the administration retains an important role in setting the guiding vision for the institution, the implementation of new academic programs must be guided by the faculty who will be teaching them, with courses and degree requirements determined by the faculty.
    b. The closing of academic programs and degrees should never be implemented lightly or without significant input from the faculty—both the affected faculty and the faculty as a whole. Further, faculty in such programs should be retained, barring a declaration of financial exigency by the administration.
    c. Since department faculty best know the standards of their own discipline, disciplinary standards for tenure and promotion, while adhering broadly to the UM System standards of tenure, must be developed independently by the faculty within each department.
    d. Campus procedures for tenure and promotion cases should likewise be developed primarily by the faculty, while adhering to the general procedures stated in the CRR.
    e. Faculty recommendations for tenure should not be lightly overturned by the chancellor. The chancellor should provide a clear, written justification to all relevant faculty committees for any case in which he or she overturns substantial majority recommendations by the faculty committees. This justification should include evidence solicited from scholars both within and outside the university.
    f. Faculty should retain a strong advisory role in the hiring of faculty and department chairs. Faculty search committee recommendations should not be overturned without a clear explanation of the reasons for such decisions.
2. Faculty and administrators should communicate regularly with one another.
    a. Most profitable in this regard will be discussions between administrators and faculty, so that the administration can hear faculty voices on important issues. Meetings of the general faculty and of the Faculty Senate/Council provide good opportunities for administrators to hold discussions with faculty. Faculty frequently complain that administrator appearances at such meetings rarely amount to more than an "information dump." Administrators should refocus these

appearances and view them as opportunities to solicit faculty feedback on important issues.

b. Administration emails to the faculty are also a way to convey important information to the faculty, and this form of communication should not be ignored by administrators or faculty.

c. The faculty should present their views to the administration both through the faculty meetings mentioned above and through their elected representatives, usually the Faculty Senate/Council executive committee.

3. Campus committees should play a vital role in bringing faculty and administrators together to advance the well-being of the university.

a. As with faculty meetings, the faculty perception of committee meetings is increasingly that they are just another way for the administration to convey information to the faculty. Since many committees include both faculty and administrators, they offer a unique opportunity for faculty and administration to work together to solve specific problems and should be used more often to this end.

b. To the extent that it is appropriate, administrators can delegate to committees specific, meaningful responsibilities that facilitate the work of the university.

c. Here are some specific examples in which campus committees could advance shared governance:

   i. Each campus is required to have a committee on tenure. Missouri S&T refers to this committee as the Tenure Policy Committee. In addition to its role adjudicating cases of dismissal for cause, it also is tasked with setting out specific campus policies regarding tenure procedures. This is a good way to ensure a strong faculty role in the development of campus tenure procedures. Similarly, UMSL's Appointments, Tenure, and Promotion Committee has developed and regularly reviews specific tenure and promotion procedures, as well as providing recommendations to the Provost and Chancellor for tenure and promotion cases.

   ii. Most campuses have a committee related to the campus budget. At UMSL, this committee is actively involved in discussions about the financial results for the current year and the budget for the following year, as well as various planning initiatives. These are widely-attended open meetings that help to ensure a faculty voice in the budget process and give the faculty partial "ownership" of the campus budget.

   iii. To the extent that their roles and perspectives are relevant to the work of a given committee, staff and students can be included as full members of committees.

Appendix. UM CRR related to faculty governance.

There are numerous specific examples of delegation of either primary and direct or shared authority to the faculty within the CRR. The delegation of primary and direct authority for curriculum is reinforced in CRR 310.010, "Academic Freedom and Economic Security of Academic Staff," particularly A.2.b, which provides that "Faculty members are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subjects, but have the responsibility not to depart significantly from their respective areas of competence or to divert substantial time to material extraneous to the course."

The review of faculty performance is delegated to the supervisor of the faculty member in CRR 310.015. Further, the development of standards for satisfactory performance of tenured faculty are delegated to the tenured faculty of the department (CRR 310.015.B.1.a), with specific processes for annual review of tenured faculty by their unit chair and five-year review by either the unit chair or an evaluation committee composed of tenured faculty of the department (CRR 310.015.B.1.a-g). The development of a workload policy for tenured and tenure-track faculty is also delegated to the faculty of each department, subject to the review and approval of the Dean and Provost (CRR 310.080).

Performance evaluations of NTT faculty are developed by the faculty of the academic school, college, or unit, with approval from the provost (CRR 310.035.I).

Each campus is required to maintain a Faculty Committee on Tenure (CRR 310.050.B), and to provide two members for the University Faculty Committee on Tenure (CRR 310.050.A). These committees "shall have jurisdiction to hear any case involving the dismissal of a faculty member for cause," as specified in Section 310.060. Such Committee may also be designated by a rule or regulation of the Board of Curators to hear and make recommendations in other cases with such modifications of procedures as may be provided by the rule or regulation in each instance" (CRR 310.050.B.5). These committees are delegated the role of conducting the hearing and providing a recommendation to the Chancellor in cases of dismissal for cause or tenure revocation (CRR 310.060).

In addition to responsibility for unit guidelines for promotion and tenure, responsibility for recommendations regarding tenure and promotion cases at the unit, college, and campus levels are delegated to the tenured faculty in CRR 320.035. In A.1.c-d, qualifications of faculty who may serve in this role are provided. The responsibilities are described in A.2.a, c, and e, as well as the responsibilities of department chairs in A.2.b.

Faculty serve on the evaluation panel and as the "coordinator" in the circumstances of an ability-to-work evaluation (CRR 330.100) and, as such, have been delegated advisory, or perhaps shared, authority in this circumstance.

In CRR 330.110.K.1-3, Standards of Faculty Conduct, a decision with the sanction of suspension requires review by a Faculty Panel, which consists of three tenured professors, who

send a recommendation to the Provost that either agrees or disagrees with the Dean's decision, including grounds for the recommendation. Faculty also serve on the Grievance Resolution Panel that evaluates academic grievances that may be filed by other faculty (CRR 370.010). The panel has "broad administrative latitude to address grievances" (C.5.a) as described in C.5.a-d. While the parties to the grievance may appeal the panel's decision to the Chancellor, this is an example of direct authority delegated to faculty.

Similarly, faculty are included in the expected or required members of Equity Resolution Hearing Panels for Title IX cases (CRR 600.030 and CRR 600.040).

Each of the four universities is required to maintain a faculty committee to hear cases of research misconduct (CRR 420.010), elected from tenured professors ("professors on continuous appointment"). Any allegation of research misconduct is first reviewed by an ad hoc committee of three faculty members (again, professors on continuous appointment) not part of the committee to determine whether an inquiry is warranted. The faculty committee forms the hearing panel that conducts the inquiry and makes recommendations about the findings to the Chancellor.

The role of the faculty in developing, assessing, and reviewing the academic programs of the University is specified in CRR 20.035, reinforcing the responsibility of the faculty for the design and quality of the University's academic programs and degrees. The faculty also review the academic calendar (CRR 20.140), provide input regarding potential department chairs to the dean (CRR 20.110), and are involved in the creation of proposals to establish Centers (CRR 50.010).

The oversight regarding the awarding of Degrees, Diplomas, and Honors is delegated to faculty body responsible for the programs leading to degrees and certificates (CRR 220.020), as is responsibility for the process leading to the revocation of the same (CRR 220.025). Honorary degrees are reviewed by faculty as well (CRR 220.030).