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## University of Maine Shared Governance Policy

University of Maine Faculty Senate

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# *University of Maine*

## SHARED GOVERNANCE POLICY

### **I. Shared Governance Philosophy**

This policy, agreed to by The Faculty Senate and administration, outlines the principles of shared governance at The University of Maine and is entered into freely by a faculty and an administration committed to a common vision of the mission of the University. As intended by this policy, the tenets of shared governance or collaborative decision-making are felt most strongly with regard to academic policies. The tenets of shared governance extend beyond oversight of academic policies to participative roles in the selection of administrators and faculty members, peer evaluation, and programmatic decisions. It is expected that faculty members will have a strong and current advisory role in fiscal matters, including budget development and resource allocation, as well as in strategic planning, evaluation of administrators, and in issues related to the University environment.

In an era of significant educational change and fiscal challenges, the success of the University and the positive morale of the faculty and administration are dependent upon continued use of the collective intelligence of the university community in planning and decision-making. Shared governance involves mutual participation in the development of policy decisions by both faculty and administration, and requires shared confidence between faculty members and administrators. This requires extensive sharing of information and a common understanding that faculty representatives and administrators will strive for informed mutual support through shared governance dialogue.

Consultation with faculty members by the administration can take many forms and involve many different faculty members, depending on the issue at hand. The administration may choose to weigh the counsel of various faculty members or faculty groups differently, depending on the circumstances. The administration may consult with students and staff members and their organizations as well as faculty, and weigh their concerns variously.

However, the primary body with which the administration must be expected routinely to consult is the Faculty Senate.

Within shared governance, a decision on a change in any policies, procedures, or protocols under the jurisdiction of this document should normally be reached only after there is general acceptance of the policy proposal in either its original or modified form by both the administrator(s), the Faculty Senate, and any other the appropriate overarching shared governance body for the issue in question.

General acceptance means that (1) the Faculty Senate and any other appropriate shared governance body have been properly consulted; (2) they have communicated support for the initiative to the President (or designee); and (3) the tenets of the initiative have been distributed broadly. In this process, there is an expectation that both the administrator(s) and the faculty will take each other's positions into serious consideration, in a spirit of mutual respect. The President or designee(s), however, can make and announce a final decision without "general acceptance" provided he or she believes that every reasonable effort has been made to reach a common position through consultation and responsiveness, and that such decision is necessary in the best interests of the University. In this circumstance, the President or designee is expected to explain the position taken.

The following guidelines are intended to elaborate further details in the way the faculty and administration address certain issues. These guidelines express a mutual desire to collaborate. It is intended that these guidelines be consistent with and do not supersede University of Maine System Board of Trustees policies, the applicable provisions of the Constitution of the Faculty Senate of the University of Maine, the AFUM contract, Human Resource Policies, and state or federal law.

## **II. Shared Governance Process and Implementation**

In the true spirit of shared governance, this process and implementation guide will be continually under discussion to refine and update its contents. This document serves as the basic reference for prevailing University of Maine policies involving shared governance.

### **A. Faculty Representation in decision making**

Representation of the faculty in decisions that call for collaboration extends beyond fora, large group discussions, or informational reports. Instead, this is a collaborative process, in which the viewpoints and expertise of the faculty influence institutional decisions.

Representation of the faculty at all levels of University shared governance will be: a) chosen by direct election by the faculty to the Faculty Senate; b) appointed by an elected faculty officer; or c) appointed by an administrator from a list of several nominated by the Committee on Committees of the Senate. For some committees, faculty members may be appointed directly by the administration or other representative body, as long as there are also faculty representatives on these committees appointed according to a, b, or c above. In all cases the composition of the committee and the results of committee work will be shared with the Faculty Senate. All representatives must abide by confidentiality requirements if the information under discussion is related to personnel matters or especially sensitive. Since faculty members and administrators have the responsibility to participate in shared governance, their participation shall be recognized as service in work assignments and performance reviews and given the weight necessary to ensure the success of shared governance.

Although consensus is the goal of shared governance, if a substantial minority of any committee involved in areas falling under this policy disagrees with any action taken by that committee, their position should be included as part of the committee's report or recommendations.

## **B. Strategic Planning**

Strategic planning is a collaborative process and to be effective requires input from the administration, faculty, and other sectors of the university community affected by the planning process or specific aspects of the plan. Strategic planning decisions, including when and if to bring consultants, developing (or altering) the strategic plan, and implementing the plan, will be made jointly with the faculty representatives, chosen according to Section A. The process originates through the Campus Planning Committee, at least half of whose members will come from the faculty. The Vice President of the Faculty Senate (or his/her designee) is automatically a member of this committee and is expected to bring reports to the Faculty Senate.

## **C. Academic Policies**

The university's curriculum is the responsibility of the faculty. The faculty, acting as a committee of the whole or through representatives elected by the faculty to the Faculty Senate or designated via procedures established by faculty legislation, must give approval to academic policies affecting more than one college prior to the implementation of the policy.

The areas of shared governance within the academic area include, but are not limited to, the following: (a) graduation requirements at all levels of matriculation; (b) the academic calendar; (c) the undergraduate general education curriculum; (d) academic program reviews; (e) the establishment, merger, or discontinuation of departments, schools, and colleges; (f) the establishment of new degree programs (including online programs); (g) the establishment of or substantive changes to majors; (h) the elimination or consolidation of degree programs; (i) overarching undergraduate admissions policies; (j) overarching attendance and grading policies; and (k) oversight of requirements regarding academic standing (e.g. policies related to add-drop, course-repeat, Student Conduct Code, grade appeal, honors program, probation, suspension, and dismissal).

**D. Budget and Finance**

A budget advisory committee is the university-level forum for shared governance on budget and finance issues. This committee is composed of members of the Faculty Senate's Finance and Institutional Planning Committee, along with additional faculty members chosen according to Section A, administrators, and other sectors of the University community. The President of the Faculty Senate automatically holds a seat on the budget advisory committee, which will receive input from the Faculty Senate and make reports to the Faculty Senate regularly. University budgets and records of University expenditures will continue to be open to all members of the faculty and the public, as required by law.

**E. Academic Personnel Decisions****a. Selection**

The selection of tenured, tenure-eligible, continuing, and continuing-eligible faculty will be made in accordance with the provisions of the AFUM collective bargaining agreement, as well as established Senate, Equal Opportunity, and Human Resource policies. These searches are competitive, except in unusual circumstances. The selection process for heads of academic departments and units is also specified in the AFUM collective bargaining agreement.

The faculty and administration will collaborate in the recruitment and selection of deans, the provost, associate provosts, and other vice presidents. Administrative searches are normally competitive and include open sessions to allow faculty members and other appropriate sectors within the university community to meet and give input regarding candidates. Search committees for administrators will include faculty chosen by accepted faculty governance procedures, as specified in Section A. Faculty representatives shall comprise at least half of each search committee for deans and associate provosts.

Presidential searches will be conducted according to Board of Trustee policy, which includes representation from faculty on this campus.

**b. Evaluation**

The faculty and administration will play a collaborative role in the review of faculty members, heads of departments, academic unit directors, and deans. The expectation is that official evaluations will take place only after proper shared governance dialogue with representatives of the faculty, as detailed in the following paragraphs.

Evaluation of faculty members is conducted in accordance with the AFUM collective bargaining agreement, through the peer review process. In the case of tenure applications, the administration agrees to supplement the process in the following way: if an administrator at any level disagrees with the peer committee recommendation for a specific candidate, that administrator will meet with the peer committee to discuss reasons why he/she could not support the peer recommendation, hear further evidence from the peer committee, and use this meeting to reconsider his/her final recommendation.

For the evaluation of heads of departments, each college will determine the process, which will include significant faculty input, both from inside and outside the department.

For the evaluation of academic unit directors and deans, the faculty's role is largely through membership on the established 5-year review committees. These committees are chaired by deans, and faculty representation is determined through procedures outlined in section A. Faculty representatives shall comprise at least half of each evaluation committee.

As specified in its constitution, the Faculty Senate, acting through its Executive Committee, may evaluate university administrators, in consultation with the University President.

**F. Consistency of the Shared Governance Policy with Other Governing Policies**

In those cases where the provisions of this Shared Governance Policy are inconsistent with the

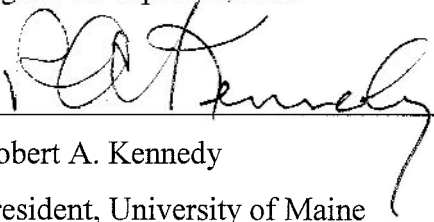
Faculty Handbook, the Constitution of the Faculty Senate or any other University governance documents or policies, either the Faculty Senate or the Administration may request a review of the inconsistencies. The focus of the review will be to reconcile the inconsistencies in a spirit of shared governance without abrogating the specific tenets of this policy.


**G. Review and Update of Shared Governance Policies**

The President of the Faculty Senate or the President of the University, or their designees, may request a review of any facet of shared governance policies at any time to refine or update Section II of the Shared Governance Policy. After a period not to exceed three years, a task force collaboratively developed by the Faculty Senate and by the President shall undertake a review of shared governance at UMaine. The task force shall be comprised of 8 members, four of whom will be faculty members chosen by the Senate, and four will be administrators chosen by the President or the President's designee. The task force will report their findings within two months to the campus community.

In the rare event that the Faculty Senate believes that the shared governance policy herein is not being followed, a meeting between the leadership of the Faculty Senate and the campus administration will be held to resolve the issue. If a resolution still cannot be achieved, the Senate will ask members of the University of Maine System to assist in resolving the issue.

Signed on April 19, 2009

  
 Robert A. Kennedy  
 President, University of Maine

  
 Dianne L. Hoff  
 Faculty Senate President, University of Maine