

# Joint Statement on Shared Governance Northern Arizona University

## Overview: Guiding Principles and Values

In an era of significant educational and societal change, the success of the University, including that of the Faculty and Administration, has never been more interdependent. The effective use of collective intelligence within the University community as it relates to shared governance is essential.

In order to effectively and efficiently respond to this changing environment, this Statement is written to affirm the acceptance of shared governance. Shared governance involves collaborative participation by both Faculty and Administration—among other constituencies—in the development of policy decisions. It requires sharing of information and a shared understanding that Faculty representatives and Administrators strive for informed participation through deliberation and dialogue.

Both the Faculty and the Administration remain committed to transparency in shared governance, characterized by clear and open communication. Faculty and Administration will communicate as fully and completely as possible to share insights and concerns.

## Areas of Responsibility for the Faculty

Subject to the authority of the Arizona Board of Regents ("ABOR"), the authority of the President of the University, and the limitations imposed by the Faculty Constitution and Bylaws, the Faculty have been charged (through their elected representatives) with shared responsibility for the fundamental areas of academic and educational activities, as well as matters related to Faculty personnel. This includes curriculum, methods of instruction, research and creative activity, Faculty status, and promoting academic freedom and other aspects of University life that relate directly to the educational process.

These Faculty responsibilities are supported by the Faculty Constitution and Bylaws and are operationalized through their representative body, the NAU Faculty Senate. While Faculty input may be provided by a variety of channels including councils, committees, chairs, departments and colleges, the Faculty Senate remains the highest elected, legislative, representative assembly of the Faculty and is responsible for participation in Faculty governance roles.

In addition, ABOR has directed that the Faculty serve in an active consultative role in other areas of institutional policy development. The Faculty Constitution provides that this responsibility includes student services, University facilities, and administration, where these elements affect the academic program. Faculty consultation is particularly important in strategic long-range planning and related Faculty concerns.

## Process of Representation

Where Faculty Senate representation on standing and ad hoc policy groups is not already in place, the Administration will consult with the Faculty Senate Executive Committee ("FSEC") in order to determine how best to represent the perspectives of the Faculty Senate on the particular issue, committee, or panel. The representation plan will be put in place at the earliest reasonable time in the information gathering or decision-making process.

When the Administration proposes any change in a policy or process directly and significantly affecting areas of Faculty responsibility or affecting the Faculty Constitution or Bylaws, the President of NAU or designee(s) will consult the FSEC at the earliest reasonable time.

Notwithstanding the Faculty's and Faculty Senate's responsibilities, it is important and appropriate for the President of NAU or designee(s) to consult with other individuals and organizations, both internal and external to the University. These include bodies such as the Academic Chairs Council, the Associated Students of Northern Arizona University, the Provost's Academic Leadership Council, the Graduate Student Government, ABOR, and elected officials. However, the Faculty Senate remains the formally elected group representing the Faculty as a whole.

## Decision-Making and Resolving Disagreements

A decision to change policies under the auspices of shared governance should optimally be reached only after there is general acceptance of the policy proposal by both the Administration and the Faculty Senate. *General acceptance* is understood to be:

- 1) The Faculty Senate has been consulted throughout the process.

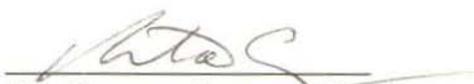
- 2) The Faculty Senate has communicated, or been given the opportunity to communicate, its position concerning the policy to the University President, designee(s), or the Administrator with decision-making authority for the issue. In this process, a spirit of respect between Administration and the Faculty Senate—the taking of each other's positions into serious consideration—is the expectation.
- 3) Where differences arise between the Administration and the Faculty Senate concerning any policy recommendation regarding an area covered by this Statement, the Administration and Faculty Senate will attempt to resolve their differences so as to attain an outcome that has the general acceptance of both parties. Resolving such differences involves the following:
  - a) The first step is deliberation and dialogue between the FSEC and the Administration in which reasonable efforts will be made to achieve general acceptance.
  - b) If general acceptance cannot be reached between the FSEC and the Administration, the deciding body—in the spirit of shared governance and transparency—will explain why it is recommending the policy decision.
  - c) The Faculty Senate and the Administration remain committed to incorporating/considering the concerns and feedback of the other even absent general acceptance.

**Process in Special Circumstances**

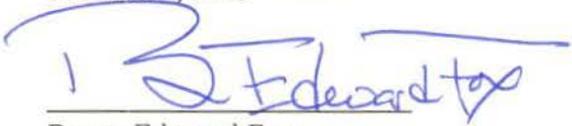
Both the Faculty Senate and the Administration recognize there may be circumstances that warrant an expedited process for decision-making. The FSEC will establish a process to enable consultation in such cases. The decision to pursue an expedited process does not eliminate the responsibility to engage in deliberation, dialogue, and the consultative process.

**Consistency with other Documents**

This Statement reflects the understanding reached between University President John D. Haeger and the Faculty Senate as of the date set forth below. This Statement is subject to Arizona law, ABOR policies and directives, NAU policies and directives, and the Faculty Senate Constitution and Bylaws. Nothing in this Statement is intended, or shall operate to, create a judicial claim or cause of action.

  
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Rita Hartung Cheng,  
President, NAU

1/7/16  
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Date

  
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Bruce Edward Fox,  
President, NAU Faculty Senate

January 7, 2016  
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Date