

**SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY  
ONE WASHINGTON SQUARE  
SAN JOSE, CA 95192**

**SS-S15-6, Sense of the Senate Resolution, Endorsing the Statement on Shared Governance at San José State University**

**Legislative History:** At its meeting of May 11, 2015, the Academic Senate approved the following Sense of the Senate Resolution presented by Chair Heiden for the Executive Committee.

**SENSE OF THE SENATE RESOLUTION  
Endorsing the Statement on Shared Governance at San José State University**

**Background and Rationale:** In November 2013, the Senate passed a resolution calling for a review of campus governance at San José State University. One of the needs identified as a result of the review was to develop a mutual understanding of shared governance at SJSU. Collaborative work by the Senate Executive Committee, which includes faculty, students, and administrators, and the College Deans produced a Statement on Shared Governance that integrates primary principles and practices identified in existing SJSU and the CSU Statewide Senate documents, in statements and policies of the CSU Board of Trustees and Chancellor's Office, by the American Association of University Professors, and in academic publications.

This statement expresses our commitment to collegiality, engagement, consultation, and communication at San José State University and aims both to make explicit and energize our collective dedication to shared governance. Therefore, be it

Resolved: that the Academic Senate of San José State University endorses the Statement on Shared Governance attached herein; and be it

Resolved: that the Statement on Shared Governance be posted on the appropriate University websites, including, but not limited to, the Senate website.

# **Statement on Shared Governance at San Jose State University**

## **INTRODUCTION**

At San José State University, we are proud of our long history of faculty, students, staff, and administrators working together in the best interest of the university.

The California State University (CSU), the California Higher Education Employer-Employee Relations Act (HEERA), and the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) all recognize that shared governance is a fundamental operating principle in institutions of higher learning. The *CSU Report on the Board of Trustees Ad Hoc Committee on Governance, Collegiality, and Responsibility* (1985) defines shared governance broadly as a “complex web of decision making and responsibility that translates into university policy or action” and emphasizes that collegial governances “allows the academic community to work together to find the best answers to issues facing the institution.”

The rapidly changing landscape of higher education makes the need for effective governance at SJSU greater today than ever in our history. The foundation for effectiveness in this environment is an agreement among faculty, staff, students, and administrators as to what shared governance means and how it translates into practice on any given campus.

In their 1985 report, the CSU Board of Trustees delineated the complexity of decision-making in the CSU and provides meaningful guidelines for collegiality and shared governance.

Moreover, in considering the meaning of shared governance, Tierney and Minor's (2003) proposed three modalities:

- Shared governance means *fully collaborative decision-making*. The faculty, staff, students, and administration make decisions jointly; consensus is the goal.
- Shared governance means *consultative decision-making*. Many individuals and groups may be brought into the process; however, the focus is on sharing information and discussion rather than joint decision-making.
- Shared governance means *distributed decision-making*. Discrete groups are responsible for specific issues and decisions, giving faculty, students, or staff the right to make decisions in some areas, and administration in others.

Effective shared governance depends on judicious use of all three modalities, consistent with the following five Principles of Engagement:

1. Create an environment where it is safe to speak, regardless of one's position within the University.
2. Consider whom we serve and why we are here.
3. Commit to an environment of trust and assume good intentions on the part of all.

4. Consult, collaborate, and cooperate.
5. Foster healthy conflict and respectful debate

Establishing the structures and authority of faculty and academic senates is an important exercise; however, culture is an equal contributor to effective governance (Tierney & Minor, 2004). In fact, the “soft” aspects of governance, such as trust and social capital, can be more consequential than the “hard”, structural aspects of governance (i.e., procedures of the Academic Senate or other formal representative bodies).

The following SJSU principles of shared governance recognize both structural and cultural aspects of shared governance:

### **Guiding Principles of Shared Governance**

#### **1. Collegiality**

Fundamentally, a commitment to collegiality and collaboration lies at the heart of all effective shared governance structures. As defined by the CSU Board of Trustees” (1985), collegiality “consists of a shared decision-making process and a set of values which regard the members of the various university constituencies as essential for the success of the academic enterprise.” Collegiality is therefore driven by core values that include a basic respect for shared decision-making, respect for differing points of view and assigned responsibilities, respect for diversity, and mutual trust based on experience. It relies on “a network of interlinked procedures jointly devised” (CSU BOT, 1985) and requires ongoing efforts to build and maintain trust.

#### **2. Engagement**

To be effective, shared governance requires the identification and engagement of appropriate stakeholders in the analysis of problems, the identification of possible solutions, and decisions regarding implementation. Such stakeholders may include, administrators, faculty, staff, students, and others, as appropriate, such as alumni or community members.

#### **3. Consultation and Decision-Making**

“Administrative officers make sure that there is continual consultation with appropriate faculty representatives on matters involving admission and degree requirements, the curriculum and methods of teaching, academic and professional standards, and the conduct of creative and scholarly activities”.  
- *The CSU Board of Trustees, 1985*

The “Report of the Board of Trustees’ Ad Hoc Committee on Governance, Collegiality, and Responsibility in the California State University” (1985) provides a clear explanation of the importance of consultation and its role in decision-making processes:

Meaningful, timely consultation on operational, administrative, and fiscal matters that affect the instructional program of the University should take place early and throughout the decision-making process. Such consultation should be a mechanism for evidence-based dialogue and evaluation with the goal of improving the outcome for the entire university. Existing structures for

consultation should be utilized, as well as new structures (e.g., focus groups, ad-hoc committees, etc.) when needed. The value of the faculty voice in budgetary matters is recognized, “particularly those directly affecting the areas in which the faculty has primary responsibility.”

At SJSU, the Academic Senate serves as the principal agency for the formulation and recommendation of University policy. Academic and curricular matters, professional standards, governance issues, student affairs, and additional subjects identified by the *CSU Statement on Collegiality and the California Higher Education Employer-Employee Relations Act* are appropriately the concern of university policy formulated by the Academic Senate and recommended to the President. Other administrative regulations that do not fall within these areas may be issued as Presidential Directives to distinguish them from policies that require a Senate recommendation. Whether formulating policy, issuing directives, or making decisions of less formal character, both the Senate and the Administration should consult widely with those affected by decisions. In this capacity, the Senate is an essential, although not exclusive, body for consultative processes. Other consultative bodies include, but are not limited to, Associated Students, the Council of Deans, University Council of Chairs and Directors, taskforces, and formal committees.

#### **4. Communication**

Effective shared governance requires regular, transparent communication regarding news, budget, policies, practices, and strategic direction, among other items important to the University community. It also requires that faculty, students, staff, administrators, and others in a representative role as appointed or elected leaders on the campus take responsibility for communicating to their constituents and that all constituents participate actively in receiving and engaging with such communication.

As emphasized in the *Report of the Board of Trustees' Ad Hoc Committee on Governance, Collegiality, and Responsibility in the California State University* (1985), sincere, open communication builds trust and enables the participants in shared governance to be effective in helping the entire university move forward positively and strategically.

Communication mechanisms should include explanations of decisions made such that constituents understand the rationale for those decisions. All constituents recognize that some decisions (e.g., regarding personnel and other confidential information) cannot be discussed.

#### **Conclusion**

This statement expresses our commitment to collegiality, engagement, consultation, and communication at San José State University and aims both to make explicit and energize our collective dedication to shared governance.

## **References**

- AAUP Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities (1966).  
<http://www.aaup.org/report/1966-statement-government-colleges-and-universities>
- California Higher Education Employer-Employee Relations Act (HEERA, 2013).  
<http://www.perb.ca.gov/laws/HEERA.aspx>
- California State University Report on the Board of Trustees Ad Hoc Committee on Governance, Collegiality, and Responsibility in the CSU (1999-2000).  
<http://www.calstate.edu/AcadSen/Records/Resolutions/1999-2000/documents/2491att.pdf>
- Tierney, W. G. and J. T. Minor (2004). "A cultural perspective on communication and governance." New Directions for Higher Education (127): 85-94.