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# Shared Governance: Changing with the Times

## **ABOUT AGB**

Since 1921, the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB) has had one mission: to strengthen and protect this country's unique form of institutional governance through its research, services, and advocacy. Serving more than 1,300 member boards, 1,900 institutions, and 40,000 individuals, AGB is the only national organization providing university and college presidents, board chairs, trustees, and board professionals of both public and private institutions and institutionally related foundations with resources that enhance their effectiveness.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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# Shared Governance: Changing with the Times

## PREFACE

Shared governance is one of the basic tenets of higher education, and yet there is considerable evidence that it is not generally well understood by its primary participants—faculty members, presidents, and members of boards of trustees.<sup>1</sup> Shared governance policies, regardless of their clarity or familiarity to key constituents, are central to the operation of most American colleges and universities, and effective shared governance creates a healthy campus environment that can more easily act on needed change and emerging opportunity.

In its ongoing commitment to member education and advice on this subject, AGB has undertaken a project that explores in depth the state of shared governance and how it is changing. The project has several goals<sup>2</sup>:

- Evaluate the level of general understanding of shared governance by board members, presidents, and faculty members (the three parties to shared governance formally identified in the 1966 American Association of University Professors' "Statement on Shared Government of Colleges and Universities")
- Assess the ways shared governance is currently practiced
- Provide guidance to institutional leadership (board members, presidents, and faculty) on ways to strengthen shared governance

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<sup>1</sup> A note on vocabulary: members of college and university governing boards are known by a variety of titles—this paper will use "trustees"; the chief executive officers of institutions and systems are generally called "presidents" or "chancellors"—"president" will be synonymous with CEO in this paper; participants in our study came from individual institutions as well as from multi-campus system leadership in some cases, but it is not necessary to differentiate between the two in our findings, and we use "campus" or "institution" throughout.

<sup>2</sup> An overview of AGB's present initiative on shared governance is provided in Appendix I.

Building upon AGB's study published in 2016, "[Shared Governance: Is OK Good Enough?](#)" this report provides qualitative information on the state of shared governance. AGB conducted a number of "listening sessions," or focus groups, consisting each of board members, faculty members, and presidents (usually 15-20 participants in each session). The sessions were conducted at the annual meetings of the Association of American Colleges and Universities (faculty), the American Council on Education (presidents), the American Association of University Professors (faculty), and AGB's National Conference on Trusteeship (board members and presidents).

In advance of each listening session, participants were sent a list of questions, as well as an outline of the basic tenets of AAUP's "Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities," so they could reflect on the topic in advance.<sup>3</sup>

Over 200 board members, presidents, and faculty members took part in the listening sessions; faculty members accounted for roughly half of that number, presidents about one third, and the remainder were board members. The participants were essentially evenly divided between independent and public institutions. In addition, members of the project's Advisory Council<sup>4</sup> provided important input and feedback, as did AGB's Board of Directors.

The discussions were frank, honest, and lively, and provided a broad range of insights into and perspectives on the state of shared governance at America's colleges and universities. This report presents the key themes we heard from participants and an independent analysis of implications.

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix II for the questions addressed in the listening sessions.

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix III for a list of Advisory Council members.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Shared governance is the process by which various constituents (traditionally governing boards, senior administration, and faculty; possibly also staff, students, or others) contribute to decision making related to college or university policy and procedure. When done well, shared governance strengthens the quality of leadership and decision making at an institution, enhances its ability to achieve its vision and to meet strategic goals, and increases the odds that the very best thinking by all parties to shared governance is brought to bear on institutional challenges. When done well, shared governance engenders an institutional culture of collective ownership and accountability for the institution's present and future. Further, when faculty, administrators, and boards are actively and collaboratively involved in decision-making processes, decisions are implemented more quickly and more effectively. But strong shared governance also takes effort to cultivate and maintain; it is a tradition unique to the higher education sector, but even senior administrators and faculty—let alone board members, who tend not to be academics<sup>5</sup>—usually lack formal training on the subject. Knowing how shared governance works, how it should work, or how it might work differently, is not second nature to any of the parties involved in it.<sup>6</sup>

To consider shared governance pragmatically means asking questions that go beyond principles. While AGB agrees that the AAUP's "Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities" remains an important touchpoint more than 50 years after its creation, it is important to understand the ways in which shared governance is practiced today. Shared governance is more than an artifact of academic values (though it may be that as well). Effective shared governance is an essential vehicle for ensuring an institution's capacity to thrive.

Making shared governance work is often challenging for a variety of reasons, as this paper will demonstrate, but in a period of challenge, stress, and change for higher education, it is more important than ever that shared governance works well. Because times have changed in the higher education sector, it is also important to ask whether and how the practice of shared governance has adapted and whether further change is necessary.

Where the practice of shared governance today departs from that of the past, important questions arise. Do new approaches uphold established principles or threaten them? Do they complement tradition or replace it? Further, what does a new way of practicing shared governance today suggest for the future?

Five basic assumptions about shared governance underlie this project:

1. The fundamental principles and practice of shared governance in higher education are essential to the health, vitality, and future of America's colleges and universities.
2. There is wide disparity in the ways in which shared governance is understood and practiced on the nation's campuses.
3. The specifics of the practice of shared governance, as codified in constitutional documents (e.g., bylaws, faculty handbooks, policies, etc.), must also be embedded in an institution's unique narrative and shared aspirations to succeed. There is no universal set of practices that will serve all institutions well.

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<sup>5</sup> AGB's most recent research shows about 9.5% of board members in independent institutions and 8.8% of those in public institutions have a professional background in higher education (see [Policies, Practices, and Composition of Governing and Foundation Boards 2016](#), AGB Press, 2016).

<sup>6</sup> While the research reported here focuses on trustees, presidents, and faculty members, AGB acknowledges the value in accounting for students, staff, and other voices on many issues.

4. In the face of a broad range of challenges to the effectiveness of the model, the practice of shared governance is often under extreme stress and requires thoughtful, inclusive, and collaborative review.
5. The project does not question the traditional allocation of authority and responsibility as specified in the AAUP's "Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities"; its focus is specifically on the ways in which the principles of shared governance as articulated in that document are manifested in the governance structures, practices, and cultures of the nation's campuses.

Shared governance has an essential, constructive role to play in the future of higher education. While there are common threshold conditions for effective shared governance (see below), there is no one set of best practices that fits all institutions. Revitalizing shared governance—and adapting it to meet changed realities—must begin with greater understanding of how shared governance works today.

## II. FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

The following themes are useful in understanding key takeaways from the listenings: 1) making sense of shared governance policies; 2) aligning structures with goals; 3) cultivating working relationships; 4) upholding principles of best practice, and; 5) confronting special circumstances. Each category is addressed separately below, beginning with a description of thematic findings and concluding with a discussion of implications.

### *What We Heard: Making Sense of Shared Governance Policies*

#### A. Lack of Consensus on What Shared Governance Is:

In *Shared Governance in Times of Change: A Practical Guide for Universities and Colleges*, author Steven Bahls overviews four perspectives on shared governance (the first three of which he appropriately identifies as inadequate):<sup>7</sup>

- Shared governance as equal rights to governance
- Shared governance as consultation
- Shared governance as rules of engagement
- Shared governance as a system for aligning priorities

With these definitions in mind, it was clear in our discussions that there was a significant divergence among participants on what shared governance actually *means*, and how it should be operationalized. This was not only apparent among different institutions but in a number of cases among board members, presidents, and faculty of the same institution.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Steven C. Bahls, *Shared Governance in Times of Change: A Practical Guide for Universities and Colleges* (Washington, D.C.: AGB Press, 2014), pp. 19-34.

<sup>8</sup> This finding is consistent with prior survey research, which found substantial differences between presidents and board members respectively on the question of how shared governance currently operates and how it should operate. (See: "*Shared Governance: Is OK Good Enough?*" (AGB, 2016).)

## B. The “Statement of Shared Government of Colleges and Universities”

The statement, created and adopted by the AAUP and endorsed by the American Council on Education and AGB in 1966, continues to be the bedrock on which shared governance in most of America’s colleges and universities is based. But a number of participants raised the question of whether or not that document is still effective in serving that purpose. Participants noted the many challenges facing higher education governance in the 21st century—particularly the sustainability of the financial model, changing student demographics, dramatic changes in the composition of faculty, and increased demands for both inclusion and accountability—as factors that suggest that a review and/or update of the statement might be a useful service to the higher education community. To be clear, no one questioned the fundamental principles of shared governance that inform the statement. The questions focused on whether or not it continues to provide full and appropriate guidance in today’s environment.

## C. Process vs. Outcomes

Many participants in our conversations noted that, in their experience, discussions about shared governance tended to focus on process, structure, and areas of authority/accountability in decision making. While these topics were recognized as important, discussants emphasized the importance of prioritizing discussions about governance—and focusing the practice of governance itself—on *outcomes*. How does shared governance relate to institutional outcomes—the education of students, measurable learning outcomes, retention and completion, quality of the student experience, career and graduate school placements, research productivity, and service to the community?

In this context, participants emphasized the importance of connecting the governance structure and practice to the institution’s strategic plan. If governance conversations are not focused on the aspirations and priorities of the institution, then they can become inward-looking and focused on prerogative rather than progress. Clear and inclusive (or shared) institutional direction may not reduce disagreement among constituents, but it can help ensure disagreements are more often substantive and constructive. This view is entirely consistent with contemporary wisdom on strategic governance. For example, as applies to board governance:

... boards of organizations increasingly do well to set their fiduciary responsibilities within a strategic framework... which can set the terms for the board’s place in the strategic leadership of the organization.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Richard Morrill, “Collaborative Strategic Leadership and Planning in an Era of Structural Change: Highlighting the Role of the Governing Board,” *Peer Review*, 15, no. 1 (Winter 2013).

## D. Authority vs. Accountability

Participants observed that discussions about shared governance have focused almost exclusively on the notion of “authority” (i.e., who has control over what, and who gets to make which decisions). Bahls refers to this as the “rules of engagement” approach to shared governance. While the respective areas of authority accorded boards, presidents, and faculty remain foundational, there was a meaningful shift in our discussions: the word “authority” was often accompanied by an emphasis on “accountability.” This is far more than a semantic issue; it reflects a seismic shift—particularly on the part of boards, but on the part of presidents and faculty as well—to the recognition that they are being held, and must hold themselves, accountable for the decisions to which they contribute.

### *Implications: Making Sense of Shared Governance Policies*

- Shared governance is complex. It requires action from multiple people serving in a variety of roles; regular policy review, habitual reflection on policy implementation, and ongoing dialogue should be sought by all involved and ensured by the board. One’s sense of authority in a matter should closely follow one’s accountability for the outcome.
- Board members are responsible for the effectiveness of institutional policies, including shared governance. Boards must hold themselves accountable first and foremost for ensuring shared governance both reflects core academic values and supports institutional progress.

## ***What We Heard: Aligning Structures with Goals***

### A. Committee Structures

As participants made clear, boards and presidents are often finding that the formal committee structure of the board (as codified in the bylaws and other “constitutional” documents) is not well-suited to addressing the major strategic challenges and opportunities facing them. These issues—such as financial sustainability, student demographics, enrollment challenges, strategic planning, campus climate, Title IX, etc.—do not fall neatly into the “buckets” of the usual board committees. Board committees, and even faculty senate committees, often parallel administrative divisions—e.g., finance and budget, enrollment, academic affairs, student life, etc.

An increasingly common practice in addressing these major issues is the creation of task forces composed of those with the experience and expertise to best explore the issue and options, and make recommendations to the board and the administrative leadership. These task forces (or *ad hoc* committees) often include membership of other stakeholders in addition to board members—administrators and staff, faculty, and students, depending on the nature of the issue.

This practice (and other strategies for bringing stakeholders together to consider important issues) reflects one of the points emphasized in our discussions with the project’s Advisory Council: strong shared governance is dependent not so much on formal structures as on organizational cultures in which members of the organization have a sense of ownership, responsibility, and accountability for the institution’s health, vitality, and relevance.

### *Implications: Aligning Structures with Goals*

- Governance that is properly aligned with strategic goals may benefit from *ad hoc* structures that recognize standing board or faculty committees are not best-suited for a given task for reasons such as timing, workload, and expertise.
- Whether boards, presidents, or faculty senates seek to empower special committees, the organizing authority should anticipate legitimate concerns about shared governance principles and should ensure that the values of the community are being upheld.



## *What We Heard: Cultivating Working Relationships*

### A. Knowledge Silos

Participants in all three categories in our listening sessions (board members, presidents, and faculty) acknowledged—and indeed emphasized—that there is a huge information gap between boards and faculty. They noted that board members often have very little—if any—understanding of the nature of faculty work, of the nature of academic culture, of the real meaning of academic freedom, and of the history and importance of faculty self-governance and the faculty role in shared governance. At the same time, faculty members appear to have little knowledge of a board’s roles and responsibilities and about how and why board members are chosen to serve.

It is not surprising that these gaps in knowledge are often filled by unsubstantiated assumptions about the “other” that are significant obstacles to the kinds of mutual respect and trust essential to effective shared governance.

This lack of mutual knowledge and understanding has at least one obvious cause. AGB survey data indicate that slightly less than two-thirds of institutions address the roles and responsibilities of faculty governance in their board orientations, barely half review the processes of academic decision making, and less than half address the concept of academic freedom. At the same time, only 34 percent of independent institutions and 48 percent of public institutions address the roles and responsibilities of the governing board in their faculty orientations.<sup>10</sup>

Providing a more robust focus on these issues in faculty and board orientations is the most apparent solution. But it is also clear that intentionally creating opportunities for board members and faculty to interact outside the formal governance structure—from serving on cross-functional *ad hoc* committees or task forces, to holding face-to-face discussions about institutional governance policy and practice, to hosting social interactions—can go a long way toward mitigating this problem.

#### *Implications: Cultivating Working Relationships*

- All faculty can be more effective institutional citizens if they understand the fundamental role of the board. Board members can serve more effectively if they understand the essential work of the faculty. Board members and faculty are responsible for demonstrating curiosity about the work of the other and inviting meaningful dialogue. The board as a whole is responsible for ensuring constructive opportunities for learning and collaboration become commonplace.
- Senior administrators can play a key role in either facilitating constructive interactions or stifling them. Today’s senior administrators would do well to become adept at facilitating strong working relationships between the board and faculty.

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 14-15.

## *What We Heard: Upholding Principles of Best Practice*

### A. Cultural Markers of Shared Governance

We heard a lot of blame attributed to the “other” in our discussions: boards and presidents who see faculty decision making as too slow; presidents who feel that faculty want authority without accountability; faculty who criticize presidents for lack of communication and transparency, and who claim that their boards do not understand the institution; and boards who claim that they’re being kept in the dark about critical issues at the institution.

In all of our discussions—with trustees, presidents, and faculty members—seven words emerged with frequency: *trust*, *collaboration*, *communication*, *transparency*, *inclusiveness*, *honesty*, and *integrity*. All groups emphasized that these concepts and behaviors were critical to successful and effective shared governance and, even more, to the health and vitality of the campus culture.

Two takeaways were clear from our discussions on these markers that indicate a healthy governance model: 1) They do not happen by accident but rather as the result of sustained and intentional efforts on the part of board, administration, and faculty leadership; 2) As noted earlier, when commitment to these principles are well established in the culture of the institution, the importance of formal structure retreats somewhat into the background. And, as we heard, commitment to upholding these principles is a prerequisite factor for boards, presidents, and faculty to consider new approaches to institutional challenges and opportunities without innate opposition.

### B. Inclusiveness

Participants frequently pointed to three concerns about the 1966 statement as it relates to the contemporary environment on America’s campuses: 1) while the document notes that, “Ways should be found to permit significant student participation within the limits of attainable effectiveness,” it does not provide much guidance for dealing with contemporary student demands for a greater role in institutional decision making; 2) the statement has nothing to say about the role of staff, and; 3) while noted in separate AAUP guidance,<sup>11</sup> the statement itself does not address the significant presence of contingent faculty in our colleges and universities.

Participants emphasized repeatedly that it is vital that institutional and board leadership find ways outside the formal governance structure to incorporate the voices of all faculty, staff, and students in the campus discourse on issues of importance, to take those voices seriously, and to include those voices in ways that the stakeholders themselves find valuable.

We heard a variety of approaches to the issue, including faculty and students serving on governing board committees or task forces that addressed important strategic issues. Alternatively, some participants cited the use of regular forums (retreats, conferences, convocations), where cross-constituent groups might discuss and debate matters that affect the institution’s future. We also heard from some participants that voting positions on the governing board had been created for representatives of different constituencies. AGB does not recommend adding vote-holding positions on a governing board that are representational in nature.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> In both “The Status of Part-Time Faculty” (1980) and “The Inclusion in Governance of Faculty Members Holding Contingent Appointments” (2012), the AAUP offers a series of policy recommendations on the part-time faculty role in governance.

<sup>12</sup> According to a recent [AGB survey](#), a number of governing boards include voting representatives from the following groups: faculty (10.9% public; 15.4% independent), students (44.9% public; 9.7% independent), staff (4.8% public; 19.1% independent), and alumni association (43.7% public; 55.3% independent).

### C. Simultaneous and Collaborative vs. Serial and Discrete Governance

Board members and presidents in particular lamented the length of time required to make important decisions in the most common approaches to shared governance. They expressed the concern that the current practice of shared governance impedes an institution's ability to be agile, flexible, and responsive in a rapidly changing environment—whether the issue was taking advantage of opportunities or responding to acute challenges.

As a typical example, a proposal for a new academic program that comes from the faculty requires the scrutiny and approval—sequentially—of: the department members and chair; in many cases, the faculty senate; the dean of that particular unit; the provost/vice president for academic affairs; the president; the academic affairs committee of the board; and the full board of trustees. At each stage of that process, questions are asked about the need for the new program (such as student and/or workforce demand), whether or not the institution has the human and financial resources to support it, what the facilities and equipment needs are, and so on. In many institutions, that process can take more than one academic year—something that most board members find puzzling and frustrating and that also increases the likelihood that the circumstances that justified the program's development may no longer be operative at the time of implementation (for instance, competitor institutions have launched the same program in the meantime).

At the same time, many board members feel that by the time a proposal reaches them, “all the interesting and important discussions have taken place already,” and they are just being asked to “rubber stamp” the motion for approval. While recognizing that the substance of curricular matters is the province of the faculty, board members felt that: 1) participation by specific board members in these discussions could provide useful expertise and perspective; and 2) involving board members in ways that respect the responsibility delegated to the faculty can contribute to healthy board member engagement more broadly.

It must be emphasized that some faculty may well find participation by board members in discussions about curricular matters to be problematic—ranging from inappropriate to intimidating. Any such efforts in that direction should be undertaken at the initiative of faculty and academic leadership, with all due sensitivity to the potential concerns that might arise.

Importantly, faculty participants observed (often with compelling examples from their own experience) that administrators and board members often use words such as “agility,” “flexibility,” and “responsiveness” as code for “we can't involve the faculty in this discussion/decision because it will take too long.” Other faculty members expressed that excessive concern about the market might divert the institution from its mission and core values.

#### *Implications: Enacting Principles*

- All parties to shared governance should strive to identify processes that allow for timely decisions on critical issues while not losing the thoughtfulness, deliberation, and consideration of multiple viewpoints that characterize academic decision making.<sup>13</sup>
- Commitments to trust, collaboration, communication, transparency, inclusiveness, honesty, and integrity pay dividends, and all parties should put sustained effort into cross-constituency relationships.

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<sup>13</sup> As an example of this approach, see *A BHEF Case Study: Equipping Liberal Arts Students with Skills in Data Analytics* (Washington, D.C.: Business-Higher Education Forum, 2016).

## *What We Heard: Confronting Special Circumstances*

### A. The Erosion of Faculty Participation in Governance

Both presidents and faculty members expressed deep concern about what they see as declining faculty commitment to and participation in governance—both faculty self-governance and faculty participation in shared governance. They attributed this phenomenon to a variety of factors: 1) faculty workload and competing responsibilities; 2) the fact that, at many institutions, participation in governance does not contribute to salary increases, promotion, and tenure; 3) changes in generational attitudes regarding the relationship of the individual to an organization, as well as a stronger commitment to work-life balance, and; 4) the preponderance of contingent faculty (e.g., part-time, non-tenure track, contract faculty) on many campuses, who in most cases do not have a formal role in governance.

### B. Faculty Preparation for Effective Participation

All three categories of participants in our discussions noted that, through no fault of their own, faculty members are often unprepared in terms of experience and expertise to participate effectively in decisions on major strategic issues (e.g., finance and budget, strategic planning, student recruitment and enrollment, facilities planning, and campus climate). This concern was in no way intended as a criticism of faculty, but a recognition that faculty members' training is typically focused on their discipline and on teaching and research. It led to robust discussion on the kinds of professional development opportunities administrators and faculty leaders should consider providing in service of shared governance.

### C. Complacency: "What Problem Are We Fixing?"

As one participant noted, "The current practice of shared governance works just fine when there aren't any problems. It breaks down as soon as the institution faces a significant challenge." While there are admittedly few colleges and universities that are not facing some kind of serious challenge, this observation foregrounds the critical notion that colleges and universities—their boards, presidents, and faculty—need to be attentive to the effectiveness of their governance practices on an ongoing basis. Neither an unexpected emergency nor a brief window of opportunity is the time to discover that an institution's governance structure and culture of decision making are not up to the task. Reliable shared governance requires continuous, intentional effort.

### D. Issues for Public Institutions

Presidents and faculty noted that board member selection for public institutions and systems—most commonly political appointments by the governor—can result in boards that lack the expertise, experience, perspectives, or even motivation to fulfill their governance roles well. While some presidents and faculty praised individual board members, or even a majority of them, some public boards were characterized as disadvantaged for effective governance in contrast with the self-perpetuating boards typical of independent institutions.

Further, presidents, board members, and faculty all agreed that the open meeting laws regarding the boards of public institutions in most states significantly impede effective governance. While they also agreed without reservation on the importance of transparency and accountability to the public, they saw the fact that any utterance at a meeting could end up as a headline in the local press was a virtually insurmountable obstacle to productive debate and discussion at board meetings. Participants argued that the open meeting format stifled governing board members' ability to engage in open dialogue, both among themselves and with presidents and faculty.

## E. Faculty Unions

Several of the presidents in our discussions indicated that the growing presence of faculty unions presented challenges to shared governance and decision making. On some campuses it was clear that the jurisdiction of the faculty union was limited to issues of compensation, benefits, and workload, and the faculty senate (or faculty as a body of the whole) exercised authority over traditional governance issues like curriculum and faculty appointments. However, on other campuses, the dividing line between governance and collective bargaining was less clear, or had even been breached in the past. A lack of clarity on these issues often made the processes of decision making unnecessarily complex and, at times, burdened shared governance by inhibiting trust across constituencies.

### *Implications: Confronting Special Circumstances*

- The challenges and opportunities facing higher education today differ significantly from those of decades ago. Many circumstances encourage new and adaptive approaches to shared governance. Institutions benefit when presidents, board members, and faculty leaders consider together how to manage the most acute challenges they face, and new connective mechanisms are increasingly necessary.

## III. CONCLUSIONS

Our discussions reflected a strong belief on the part of board members, presidents, and faculty that shared governance is an essential component of America's higher education institutions that needs to be preserved and enhanced. At the same time, we also heard a variety of concerns among all three groups regarding the appropriateness, sustainability, and integrity of how shared governance is practiced today.

It is not the purpose of this paper to prescribe universal best practices for shared governance. With nearly 4,000 colleges and universities in this country, there is, of course, no single "right answer," no guaranteed success through replication. Instead, the practice of shared governance should be the focus of ongoing review and discussion at regular intervals and with some frequency in every institution—discussions that include governing boards, presidents, and faculty (and possibly others) and that are held with a stated commitment to openness and respect.

The notion that shared governance practices should be continuously reviewed for potential improvement hints at a key finding of this study: shared governance is a dynamic system that can become ineffective. The purpose of such assessments should be to ensure that, in both policy and practice, shared governance supports the institution's strategy and vision.

While the best practices in shared governance are cultivated locally, our research with board members, faculty, and presidents did point to certain threshold conditions for effective shared governance—conditions that set the table for design and implementation of high-functioning shared governance wherever it is found. Those threshold conditions include the following:

1. A shared commitment on the part of faculty, administration, and board members to the principles of shared governance<sup>14</sup>, and a current, shared understanding among faculty, board, and president of what shared governance actually is and how it operates/functions/works in their institution.
2. A shared and clearly articulated commitment to *trust, collaboration, communication, transparency, inclusiveness, honesty, and integrity*.
3. An institutional culture of good will, good intentions, and commitment to common values that is reinforced through the practice of shared governance. Clear policies concerning authority and standard operating protocol are important to develop, but without goodwill and commitment to shared values, they can't lead to effective decision making on meaningful issues.
4. A shared commitment among all parties to focus the practice of shared governance on the institution's strategic goals, aspirations, and challenges.
5. Constitutional documents (such as bylaws, faculty handbooks, policy statements) that clearly codify decision-making authority as well as a thorough, nuanced understanding on the part of board members, faculty, and presidents of their own respective roles in shared governance, as well as those of their colleagues.
6. A shared appreciation by board members and faculty of the complexity of the president's role in facilitating a constructive relationship between the board and the faculty.
7. A recognition that while students, staff, and contingent faculty often do not have a formal role in shared governance, boards, presidents, and faculty should create regular opportunities to include their voices in the discussion of important issues and major decisions.
8. A shared recognition that institutional change is necessary, constant, and inevitable; the dynamically changing external environment and continued institutional relevance demand it. All stakeholders must be open to doing things differently when circumstances require.
9. A recognition that the most important decisions are often the most difficult and contentious, but that the preservation of relationships is vital to sustained effectiveness in governance.
10. A recognition by the president, board chair, and faculty leadership that they have collective responsibility to ensure that the above conditions exist.

The most relevant question about shared governance facing governing boards, presidents, and faculty is: How can the principles of shared governance best be applied in the context of circumstances that are more complex and dynamic than they were even a generation ago? The practice of shared governance is, in many institutions and in various ways, changing with the times. It is important for practitioners to assess local policies and procedures as they exist today to determine—often collaboratively, sometimes creatively—the most promising ways forward given the challenges ahead. Board members, presidents, and faculty alike would do well to examine the threshold conditions above in determining where shared governance needs additional work in their institutions.

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<sup>14</sup> Specific reference to the "Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities" in the institution's governing documents is an important foundation for this shared commitment.

# Appendices

## APPENDIX I

AGB's current project on shared governance has three phases, the first of which was a national survey in 2015 of board members and presidents, which collected quantitative data describing the state of shared governance around the United States. Over 2,500 people responded. The results of that survey were published in "Shared Governance: Is OK Good Enough?"<sup>15</sup>

This report is the result of the second phase of the project,<sup>16</sup> which was a series of listenings to understand the ways in which shared governance is being practiced today. This includes the contemporary challenges to effective shared governance faced by governing boards, presidents, and faculty, as well as adaptations and new ways of operating given those challenges.

Phase three will comprise a series of case studies of a range of colleges, universities, and systems that have taken intentional, sometimes innovative, action with shared governance that will provide useful models for other institutions to consider. The case studies will be based on extensive interviews with board chairs, presidents, and faculty leadership, as well as review of relevant documentation. Overall, the project on shared governance is designed to provide answers to the following questions:

1. Is shared governance as it currently exists and as it is currently practiced up to the challenges that institutions are facing?
2. Is shared governance an institutional asset, and do the parties to shared governance recognize it as such? If it is not an asset, what can be done to reclaim its role?

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<sup>15</sup> Published by AGB in the summer of 2016 with support from the TIAA Institute.

<sup>16</sup> Phases two and three of the project have been made possible by support from the Teagle Foundation.



## APPENDIX II

The following is the list of questions we asked participants in the listening sessions:

1. At your institution, is the definition of shared governance well established and widely understood? Are the processes related to shared governance well established? Is it practiced in a manner that is consistent with the way it is defined in your institution's policies?
2. At your institution, does shared governance include a clear role for faculty members? Is that role well understood? Valued?
  - a. Of the non-tenured/non-tenure track faculty at your institution, how many have a formal role in shared governance? How important is that? Has that changed in recent years?
3. What are the challenges to shared governance at your institution?
4. How effective is the communication among the three parties of shared governance (i.e. faculty, board, and administrators)? Do you see shared governance on your campus as a genuine partnership among all three groups or as three distinctly divided entities operating in parallel?
5. Based on your experience and given what we've discussed, are there ways to modify shared governance to serve institutions better? If the model needs to change, what are the obstacles to change?
6. Based on your experience, what do presidents and boards need to be thinking about to ensure that shared governance is functioning at their institutions?
7. Based on your experiences at your institution, how could shared governance be improved or strengthened?
8. Why does shared governance really matter? Why does it matter if it works? Why should it need to work better?
9. Is there anything that we haven't touched on, but is important for our project and our understanding?

## APPENDIX III

### *Project Advisory Council*

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