Cases of Shared Governance from a Faculty Perspective

Compiled by Members of the Committee on Academic and Professional Status of the Faculty Senate of Virginia Commonwealth University

29 April 2014

page

1 Introduction: Cases of Shared Governance from a Faculty Perspective
4 Reflection: A Dialogue More Open Than a Faculty Perspective Only
6 Suggested Model E-Mail for Members of the Committee on Academic and Professional Status to Send to the Faculty in Their Units
8 A Working Definition of Shared Governance (the suggested model e-mail to faculty provided a link to this document)
9 CASE 1 - A Case of Control over Students Enrolling in Independent Study Courses
11 CASE 2 - A Case of Powerless Elected Position
13 CASE 3 - A Case of New Hires without Faculty Input
15 CASE 4 - A Case of “Stacking the Deck” through Voting
17 CASE 5 - A Story about Shared Governance and Curriculum Planning
19 CASE 6 - A Story about Shared Governance and Integrated Graduate School Policy
21 CASE 7 - A Case of Curriculum Decision Making
22 CASE 8 - An Episode about Shared Governance and Curriculum Revision in a Multidisciplinary Department
24 CASE 9 - An Episode about Shared Governance and a School’s Strategic Planning
26 CASE 10 - A Story about Shared Governance and Appointing a Department Head
29 CASE 11 - An Episode about Shared Governance in the Assessment of Faculty Performance and Salary Raise/Awards
32 A 2-Page Case with a 4-Page Appendix (the suggested model e-mail to faculty provided a link to this document)
Introduction:
Cases of Shared Governance from a Faculty Perspective

In the spring semester of 2014, the Committee on Academic and Professional Status of the VCU Faculty Senate collected information on shared governance as experienced by faculty. Committee members solicited input from colleagues in their respective units. The result was 11 cases, the detailed facts of which paint an extraordinarily diverse picture of problems in shared governance throughout VCU. The situations and problems across the cases are too diverse to lend themselves to easy generalization, but they were nonetheless sufficient to elicit insightful reactions from the Committee members when they met to discuss the cases today, on 27 March 2014.

The cases roughly fall into three categories: those for which explicit, written shared-governance procedures (such as bylaws) exist, but are not followed; those for which such procedures "sort of" exist and/or "sort of" apply to the problem at hand; and those for which no such procedures exist.

For those cases in the first category (explicit, written shared-governance procedures exist), a problem is enforcement. If an established procedure or policy is not being followed, does this mean that the burden falls on the aggrieved faculty member to, for example, take his or her complaint about the dean to the provost or ombudsperson? Clearly, power differentials, especially regarding probationary and term faculty, make such a path prohibitively risky.

For those cases in the second category (cases where such procedures “sort of” exist and/or “sort of” apply), a problem is communication: How does one come to know what procedures already exist and, of those that exist, how does one come to know whether or how they apply to the specifics of one’s case?

For those cases in the third category (those for which no such procedures exist), a fundamental problem shared with the cases in the first two categories is that there is a general lack of knowledge or awareness about what shared governance is in the first place and, therefore, there is also a lack of understanding that the principles of shared governance can and should be applied in new situations.

A theme that emerged in the Committee’s discussion was the need to institutionalize a form of oversight. For instance, when a faculty member is experiencing a problem in shared governance (whether or not codified in a written policy or procedure) between him/herself and his/her superior, the faculty member ought to be able to avail him/herself of an oversight mechanism for information, assistance, and perhaps even enforcement. Such oversight needs to be institutionalized, but outside of administrative structures that answer to the dean or the provost.

Another theme that emerged is that many faculty members seem unaware of what shared governance is. A definition of shared governance should be made prominently available at different places on the VCU web site, such as the Faculty Senate’s web side, the Provost’s web site, and the Human Resources web site. When a faculty member is hired and when an administrator (especially, a department head, associate dean, dean, and provost) is hired, he or she should be informed or even receive training about what shared governance is. A related point is that an administrator’s performance in shared governance should be one of the criteria by which the administrator is assessed in his or her annual evaluation by faculty members.
Finally, problems in shared governance appear to be inextricably tied to problems in communication and problems in participation. Shared governance presupposes that good lines of communication are already in place. Shared governance will work only if the interested parties participate and if the participation is meaningful. Communication and participation, in turn, will follow only if governance is genuinely shared.

The Committee on Academic and Professional Status is hereby making these cases available to faculty, staff, students, and administrators for them to use in our collective effort to bring about excellence in shared governance at VCU. In the short run, we hope that the richness of these cases, replete with “on the ground” or “in the weeds” details from faculty experiences, will be useful to the University Council’s Committee on Faculty Affairs. The latter committee is now in the process of overseeing revisions of the University Council’s bylaws so that University Council may become an even better forum for implementing shared governance throughout the university. We also hope the other constituencies represented on University Council – staff, students, and administrators – will be inspired to document their own cases of problems in shared governance and to make their cases available as well. In the long run, we hope that all of these efforts will result in a schedule for implementing shared governance, where objectives and measures related to shared governance will be “hard coded” into WEAVE in preparation for VCU’s next Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) Reaffirmation Committee review.

I have done my best to express the gist of the discussion by the Committee on Academic and Professional Status, and I accept all responsibility for any misstatements and omissions. I am thankful for the work of my fellow committee members in collecting the information for the cases. They are Julio Alvarez, Andrew Crislip James Farmer, Masoud Manjili, Robert Simms, and Amy Rector Verrelli.

Allen S. Lee  
Chair, Faculty Senate Committee on Academic and Professional Status  
27 March 2014

Julio Alvarez offers the following succinct summary, suitable for quoting in e-mails, of the main points above:

Yesterday the committee met to review the cases and found that the stories essentially fall in three categories:

A) In some cases explicit shared governance procedures exist (in the form of by-laws) but they are not being followed

B) In other cases the procedures “sort of” exist or “sort of” apply to a case but are not clear

C) In other cases procedures of shared governance do not exist at all

The reasons at the root of these problems in shared governance are believed to be:

A) Lack of oversight, enforcement and evaluation of shared governance
B) Lack of communication, transparency and dissemination of procedures of shared governance across units

C) Lack of awareness of what “shared governance” is or at least the definition adopted by VCU

To deal with these issues the consensus in the committee was to propose addressing the following:

A) The need of an institutional oversight structure independent of administrative structures such as the dean or the provost.

B) The need to include “performance in shared governance” as a criterion in the annual evaluation of administrators by faculty members.

C) The need to have a unified definition of “shared governance” which must be disseminated and communicated across campus for all employees to follow.

D) The need to have all procedures of shared governance at unit levels disseminated, communicated and accessible to corresponding faculty members and administrators.
Reflection:

A Dialogue More Open Than a Faculty Perspective Only

As the chairperson of the Committee on Academic and Professional Status, I sent a draft of this document (containing all the items in the table of contents of this final document except for this “Reflection”) to Provost Beverly J. Warren. I received this reply:

From: Beverly J Warren <bjwarren@vcu.edu>
Subject: Re: DRAFT version of "Cases of Shared Governance from a Faculty Perspective"
Date: April 20, 2014 at 5:28:38 PM EDT
To: "Allen S. Lee" <aslee@vcu.edu>

Allen -- Thanks for sharing this compendium of cases addressing shared governance concerns. In some instances, I believe that the issue is more of a communication challenge than it is a challenge to shared governance at VCU.

I might offer a counter-view to the case regarding the hiring of term faculty without faculty input (case #3). I actually authorized the appointment of adjunct faculty to a temporary full-time term appointment to comply with the affordable care act at a considerable cost because I believed it was the right way to proceed to protect our students. To my knowledge, these adjunct faculty were scheduled to teach for the Fall semester in the College of Humanities and Sciences -- as best I understand, these adjunct faculty members had been teaching for some time in the College. Department chairs/directors/program area leads were consulted and all agreed that providing interim full-time appointments (minimum of two years) would provide greater stability to the teaching and learning environment in the College. The alternative would have been to hire multiple adjunct faculty additions to abide by the terms of the affordable care act and to have these adjunct appointments in place by the beginning of the Fall semester. These appointments are interim appointments, and while I agree consultation is always a good idea, there is no requirement to form a search committee for a temporary/interim appointment.

My concern is that the ideas of shared governance require a conversation rather than a faculty perspective solely. I know that some faculty feel challenged by the administration and feel that conversation has not been invited by the administration nor, when it has occurred, the conversation has not resulted in a successful resolution. I, for one, would really appreciate a more open dialogue. How do you think that dialogue can best be achieved?

Thanks for sharing

Bev

Provost Warren’s reply raises, ever so tactfully and penetratingly as she always does, several issues facing the unfolding of shared governance at VCU.

The first issue is that when one segment of the VCU community (administrators, faculty, staff, and students) reports its experiences, there is the possibility for the report to be factually incomplete and even, in parts, incorrect.

Second, even (and especially) if such a reporting of experience is complete and correct, there is always another side to the story. A proper understanding of any such reporting of experiences is that it should not be considered alone, but needs to be a part of an ongoing dialogue. Even for faculty to understand their own experiences in shared governance, more than just their own perspective is needed.
Third, whereas any problem of a report’s being incorrect or incomplete can be readily solved, there is the more difficult-to-solve problem of conflict. Even when everyone can agree on the facts, there can be conflicts that are newly created in, or are already existing but exacerbated by, the situation that is being reported. These conflicts are part and parcel of university life (indeed, life in general) and they challenge us all to become better people. Excellent leadership can show us how to do this by example. In the past few years, as indicated by Dr. Warren’s e-mail, we have enjoyed such leadership at VCU from the provost. The goal would be that this example permeates through the units that make up the university.

How, then, ought we proceed? Simply putting different people in the same room and asking them to talk to each other will not suffice. Power differentials are a fact of life, especially university life. Required are both a formal institutionalized platform and an informal organizational culture in which one would feel safe to share one’s past experiences in shared governance and one’s future expectations of shared governance. In this sense, true shared governance requires truly shared communication.

For the dream of shared governance to be realized at Virginia Commonwealth University, the challenge of developing a safe platform, environment, or culture for “a more open dialogue” needs to be met. No single person or single segment of the VCU community can bring this about. This is a challenge requiring the development, in good faith, of a shared understanding by the President, the Provost, the University Council, the Faculty Senate, the Staff Senate, and the Student Government Association.

Allen S. Lee
Chair, Faculty Senate Committee on Academic and Professional Status
29 April 2014
Dear Faculty Colleagues in the [NAME OF UNIT],

As a member of the Faculty Senate’s Committee on Academic and Professional Status, I am interested in hearing from you about shared governance. Although VCU already has many documents on shared governance (e.g., tenure-and-promotion procedures, guidelines for search committees, roles-and-rewards documents, faculty handbooks), it is impossible for any set of shared-governance documents to anticipate and cover all situations that arise. *In your experience, is there anything significant that “fell through the cracks” between our shared governance documents, and that you would like to share?* The experiences could be at the level of a unit, a department, the school, or the university.

For a one-page working definition of shared governance, click either [here](http://bit.ly/1mKHzd3) or [http://bit.ly/1mKHzd3](http://bit.ly/1mKHzd3). Shared governance involves, among other things, not only the people who have the final decision-making authority in a given area, but also the people whose input to, or other participation in, the decision-making process is required.

**Example 1 of Shared Governance:** A dean typically makes the decision to forward a tenure-and-promotion recommendation to the provost, but the dean must also apply standards for (among other things) excellent, good, satisfactory, or unsatisfactory research – which are standards that the faculty establish and provide as inputs to the tenure-and-promotion process. Respecting the different roles that they play, the dean and the faculty share the governance of the tenure-and-promotion decision-making process.

**Example 2 of Shared Governance:** A new curriculum involves (1) faculty who determine the content of the new curriculum and (2) administration who determine the resources that will be allocated to implement the new curriculum. Faculty may not unilaterally decide to implement curriculum changes that require the hiring of new faculty for whom there is no additional budget, or that administration could not defend to accreditation agencies. Likewise, administration may not unilaterally decide to implement MOOC’s and to require faculty to staff them. Respecting the different roles that they play, faculty and administration share the governance of the process of implementing a new curriculum.

**Example 3 of Shared Governance:** The determination of merit raises may involve input from faculty, using their academic judgment, to establish standards for measuring a faculty member’s performance in research and teaching, among other things. The calculation of an individual faculty member’s merit raise, or the range of the merit raise, can depend on a formula previously agreed upon by the faculty and the department head, and written up in a roles-and-rewards document. The department head forwards the recommended merit raises to the dean, where the final merit raises might not be the amounts recommended by the department head, but would still retain the same ranking of faculty. Respecting the different roles that they play, faculty and administration share the governance of the process of determining merit raises.

The Committee on Academic and Professional Status is creating a report that will compile stories/reports/cases of such experiences that faculty have had with shared governance. The stories/reports/cases can be expressed anonymously and without identifying details. The purpose will be to provide information useful for determining the requirements to be met by the ongoing
and future implementation of shared governance at VCU. University Council’s bylaws are now in the process of being revised in order to better institutionalize shared governance. This will help facilitate the implementation of better shared governance throughout VCU.

*Input that you provide can contribute to the betterment of the working lives of your fellow faculty in the future, not only in the School of Business, but throughout VCU.*

**If you can already think of an experience you would like to tell me about, there is no need to read beyond this paragraph. Just contact me by e-mail at [E-MAIL ADDRESS OF COMMITTEE MEMBER] by March 7. I’ll respond by giving you some guidelines about how to write up your experience. Of course, we can also meet.**

If it would be helpful to you to examine a case illustrating a situation that “falls between the cracks” of existing shared-governance documents or practices, click either [here](http://bit.ly/1oa6CVG) or [http://bit.ly/1oa6CVG](http://bit.ly/1oa6CVG) to get a 2-page case with a 4-page appendix.

The facts of a case are never generalizable to a different setting. However, a case can be useful if treated as an instantiation of something more general (here – principles of shared governance, the lack of principles of shared governance, good but imperfect principles of shared governance, etc.), which manifests itself in different settings or at different times in the same setting.

1. In your recent experience, what incident involving an actual problem or potential problem, related to shared governance, might the above case evoke? The experience could be positive (e.g., the problem was resolved amicably) or negative (e.g., the problem was not resolved). This experience could be at any level: department, unit, school, college, or university.

2. Does the department, unit, school, college, or university already have general written shared-governance guidelines, or general established share-governance practices, for how to remedy or prevent this problem? (Written guidelines can include bylaws, tenure-and-promotion policies, roles and rewards documents, etc.)

3. In light of the above, are any improvements or other changes warranted in the department’s, unit’s, school’s, college’s, or university’s general written shared-governance guidelines, or general established share-governance practices, for how to remedy or prevent the problem?

It’s important for the Committee on Academic and Professional Status to hear success stories as well as stories about situations that “fall between the cracks” of existing shared-governance documents or practices.

**If the above case has caused you to think of any stories/reports/cases that you would like to share with me, please contact me by e-mail at [E-MAIL ADDRESS OF COMMITTEE MEMBER] by March 7. I’ll respond by giving you some guidelines about how to write up your experience. Of course, we can also meet.**
What is shared governance in a university?

Shared governance is not consensus government. Shared governance is not everyone having an equal say or equal voice.

Rather, shared governance is based on a clearly and explicitly established distribution of decision-making responsibilities.

In shared governance, there is transparency. Faculty, staff, students and administrators know which university group has primary responsibility for leading the decision-making process on university matters. Transparency involves, among other things, clarity regarding the primary responsibilities that faculty, staff, students and administrators assume in leading university decision-making. Shared governance intends that all groups have a voice and, at the same time, shared governance involves agreement on which constituency has the primary responsibility for leading a particular decision-making process, where the agreement is clearly articulated and honored.

In shared governance, there is communication. Decisions are not made in a vacuum. The making of a decision occurs with communication to, between, and among all those affected by the decision, all those with an interest in the decision, and all those who should or need to be informed that the decision will be coming up for consideration, that the decision is being considered, and that the decision has been made.

In shared governance, there is trust. Trust can never be mandated, but can be cultivated over time. Trust is initiated by individuals whose motivations are not to give in order to receive, but to give of oneself simply for the common good. Trust in a community is cultivated and sustained not by an individual, but by a critical mass of individuals who strive for trust to become a shared value by persistently treating others in ways that they themselves would like to be treated.

Successful shared governance in a university develops slowly over time, where the process of development is itself guided by shared governance. In its ideal or mature state, shared governance is marked by the institutionalization of the aforementioned (1) distribution of decision-making responsibilities, (2) transparency, (3) communication, and (4) trust. Being institutionalized, these four elements of shared governance do not change merely because of natural turnover in the people participating in shared governance; these elements are not “personality dependent.” Properly institutionalized, they will not disappear simply because an effective leader departs or because an ineffective leader is appointed. In its ideal or mature state, shared governance further develops as needed, but still slowly over time, where the process of further development is itself guided by shared governance.

Allen S. Lee (aslee@vcu.edu) is the author of the working definition of 11 October 2013, which he bases on ideas voiced by Beverly Warren at October 8th’s Leadership Development Workshop and Reception. Allen Lee gives credit to Beverly Warren and Bob Andrews for important additions and other improvements, takes responsibility for all errors and flaws in this document, and encourages all others to work on this working definition, or on new working definitions, of shared governance.
CASE 1

A Case of Control over Students Enrolling in Independent Study Courses:

As described in the course catalogue, Independent Study courses in the school can be enrolled in at the discretion of the faculty who will mentor the student and the program coordinator for the program in which the faculty resides. In this case, school admin decided that a student could not sign up for an independent study with a faculty member, when the faculty member (who in this case was also the program coordinator), had already approved the proposal of the student. Admin argued that the student did not meet the minimum requirements for eligibility, when the student did, in fact, meet those requirements stated in the course description. It is unclear what role the admin plays in this process, and why they have access to Independent Study proposals at all.
the episode:
Enrolling a Student in Independent Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOUR PILLARS OF SHARED GOVERNANCE</th>
<th>PROBLEM</th>
<th>DO ANY OFFICIAL GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTS COVER THIS (E.G., PREVENTION, PROHIBITION, REMEDY)?</th>
<th>WHAT SHOULD BE ADDED TO OR CHANGED IN THE GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTS?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DISTRIBUTION OF DECISION-MAKING RESPONSIBILITIES</td>
<td>In this case, administration made a decision about enrollment of the student without respecting the judgment of the faculty mentor.</td>
<td>Yes. The course catalogue.</td>
<td>Needed: more clarity on the role the admin plays in deciding appropriate independent study enrollment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRANSPARENCY</td>
<td>While the course description is clear in general description, the mechanism by which the admin were given the ability to comment on the student proposal is still unknown.</td>
<td>Yes. The course catalogue.</td>
<td>Needed: dissemination of materials relevant to the role the admin plays in deciding appropriate independent study enrollment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMUNICATION</td>
<td>Insufficient communication between the admin and faculty about how the process of enrollment in independent study works at the curricular and admin levels (and what influence these levels have on each other).</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Needed: see “Transparency”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRUST</td>
<td>No trust is given to the faculty member on how to judge appropriate enrollment, and no trust is given to the admin on their ability to make this decision.</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Needed: procedures that include both admin and faculty in decision making for enrollment (if the admin is appropriately involved)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CASE 2

A Case of Powerless Elected Position:

As described in school bylaws, there is a nominated and elected Coordinator position designed to oversee curricular, "cohesiveness," and assessment issues shared by all tracks in one major offering lower level Gen Ed courses (there are multiple tracks taught by different faculty; some are large, others are small, but all the Gen Ed courses at the 100 and 200 levels are analogous and thus have similar assessment and curricular goals). A faculty member was asked to run for this Coordinator position, but was told by school admin shortly after being elected that the position would only oversee the courses in a small subset of the tracks. The faculty member was specifically told that the other (larger) tracks did not need Coordination, effectively rendering the Coordinator powerless to complete the duties of the Coordinator. When this faculty member was asked to run for this position again the faculty member declined, and the school currently has no one filling this Coordinator position because no other faculty member was interested in running for a position that was not supported in its goals, even though the bylaws specifically state the importance of this position.
the episode:
An Elected Position Was Made Powerless by School Admin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROBLEM</th>
<th>DO ANY OFFICIAL GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTS COVER THIS (E.G., PREVENTION, PROHIBITION, REMEDY)?</th>
<th>WHAT SHOULD BE ADDED TO OR CHANGED IN THE GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTS?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DISTRIBUTION OF DECISION-MAKING RESPONSIBILITIES</td>
<td>A Coordinator elected to oversee all Gen Ed courses offered in various tracks of one major was told by school admin that the responsibilities would only include a subset of the tracks, and that no Coordination was needed for certain tracks. Effectively this rendered the Coordinator powerless to fulfill the duties of the position.</td>
<td>Yes. The bylaws describe the responsibilities of the Coordinator. Needed: more clarity on the role the school admin plays in deciding the responsibilities of officials who are elected to do a specific job in the school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRANSPARENCY</td>
<td>While the bylaws include a clear description of the responsibilities of the Coordinator, the reason for the admin decision to abbreviate the Coordinator responsibilities is unknown (or what role the admin plays in manipulating the duties of elected officials).</td>
<td>Yes. The bylaws describe the responsibilities of the Coordinator, but there is nothing in the bylaws specifically stating the role the admin has in manipulating these responsibilities. Needed: dissemination of materials relevant to how this elected position is influenced by the admin. Needed: dissemination of materials relevant to how this elected position is influenced by the faculty in the various tracks of the major.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMUNICATION</td>
<td>Insufficient communication between the admin, the elected Coordinator, and the faculty members of the major in question in regards to the role the admin plays in the responsibilities attributed to the coordinator.</td>
<td>No. Needed: see “Transparency”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRUST</td>
<td>No trust is given to the elected Coordinator, and no trust is given to the admin who unilaterally made a decision to revoke responsibility without any real supporting reasons why.</td>
<td>No. Needed: procedures that include admin, the Coordinator, and potentially the rest of the faculty in the major in deciding how the duties of the Coordinator will be performed or abbreviated.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CASE 3

A Case of New Hires without Faculty Input:

With the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, it became clear that many of the part-time adjuncts in the school would have to be consolidated and converted into fewer full-time Term positions. The school was offered ~16 new Term positions, and all hires were made over the summer when most faculty weren’t on campus. Additionally, no search committees were formed, and full-time faculty were not included in the search or decision making process. Current faculty who were interested in providing input into the process were told that it was a simple case of converting some part-time faculty into full-time, but were given no voice in deciding which part-time faculty would be converted. Additionally, some new faculty members were hired into these new Term positions who had not been working for the school previously (so it was not a simple conversion). It appears that all the decisions made about hiring these Term positions occurred at the administrative level with little-to-no input from the full-time faculty who had experience with these very candidates and positions.
the episode:
Term Faculty Were Hired Without Any Input from Full-Time Faculty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOUR PILLARS OF SHARED GOVERNANCE</th>
<th>PROBLEM</th>
<th>DO ANY OFFICIAL GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTS COVER THIS (E.G., PREVENTION, PROHIBITION, REMEDY)?</th>
<th>WHAT SHOULD BE ADDED TO OR CHANGED IN THE GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTS?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DISTRIBUTION OF DECISION-MAKING RESPONSIBILITIES</td>
<td>It appears that admin exclusively made hiring decisions about the new Term positions in the school. School faculty members were not given a voice in the search or decision making process.</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Needed: description in the bylaws on the role the school admin and full-time faculty play in both &quot;normal&quot; hires and special situation searches and hires.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRANSPARENCY</td>
<td>There is currently no wording in the bylaws for how hires are organized (i.e., there is no description of how a search is run, how a search committee is formed, or which faculty get to vote on candidates). Additionally, in special cases like this one, there is no description of how these hires differ from the usual hires in the school.</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Needed: dissemination of materials relevant to what kind of role full-time faculty play in searches and hires (and the composition of search committees and who has voting privileges).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMUNICATION</td>
<td>Insufficient communication between the admin and the full-time faculty in regards to how these hires were being structured or carried out.</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Needed: see “Transparency”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRUST</td>
<td>No trust is given to the full-time faculty in having a voice in the hiring process, and no trust is given to the admin who seemed to hire faculty they chose without consulting any faculty members who may have relevant input on appropriateness of the candidates.</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Needed: procedures that include admin and full-time faculty in decision making in regards to both &quot;normal&quot; and special situation hires.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CASE 4

A Case of “Stacking the Deck” through Voting:

The school has multiple committees, including committees devoted to matters directly concerning each major, as well as a Curriculum Committee, Personnel Committee, etc. One of the associate directors of the school currently sits on a major committee as well as the Curriculum Committee, and as a member of each of these has voting privileges. Additionally, the associate director can also cast a vote on certain matters in that administrative role. Effectively, this means that the associate director could actually have the opportunity to cast three separate votes about the same issue at multiple levels, thus having a specific viewpoint/position overrepresented.
# the episode:
Administration is Able to Vote Multiple Times on the Same Issue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOUR PILLARS OF SHARED GOVERNANCE</th>
<th>PROBLEM</th>
<th>DO ANY OFFICIAL GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTS COVER THIS (e.g., PREVENTION, PROHIBITION, REMEDY)?</th>
<th>WHAT SHOULD BE ADDED TO OR CHANGED IN THE GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTS?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DISTRIBUTION OF DECISION-MAKING RESPONSIBILITIES</td>
<td>As members of various committees in the school, admin has voting rights on multiple levels and can effectively vote on the same issue multiple times.</td>
<td>No. Though the new bylaws that are currently being drafted do at least include wording that prevents the associate director from having voting privileges on certain standing committees.</td>
<td>Needed: description in the bylaws that prevents one individual from voting multiple times on any one issue (whether or not they are members of the admin)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRANSPARENCY</td>
<td>There is currently no wording in the bylaws to prevent administration (or anyone else sitting on multiple related committees) from casting votes on the same issue and effectively over-representing their own viewpoint.</td>
<td>No. The new bylaws will address this to some degree, but rules that are implemented will have to be followed.</td>
<td>Needed: dissemination of materials relevant to how votes are cast at all levels of decision making processes. Additionally, bylaws must be followed when relevant parameters exist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMUNICATION</td>
<td>Insufficient communication between members of the admin/committees and the Personnel Committee, who is tasked with reviewing the bylaws and taking measures to prevent this type of occurrence.</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Needed: see “Transparency”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRUST</td>
<td>No trust is given to the Personnel Committee and other committees to implement effective bylaws, and the admin loses trust by apparently “stacking the deck” when it comes to voting.</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Needed: procedures that ensure voting takes place in a visible and systematic way, and that members of committees can object when it appears there are situations where one person could vote multiple times on the same issue.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CASE 5

A Story about Shared Governance and Curriculum Planning

A committee was assembled to devise a Ph D Program for an Engineering unit. The committee worked a whole year on this assignment following the parameters given by the President at the time. Eventually the committee’s plan was thrown out and another plan of unknown origin was implemented. It is the opinion of the faculty member who provided this story that because of consistent disregard of faculty’s input in instances of shared governance such as this, older faculty members have grown conditioned to not participate when opportunities arise.
### The Episode: Curriculum for a New Ph.D. Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Problem</strong></th>
<th><strong>Do Any Official Governance Documents Cover This (e.g., Prevention, Prohibition, Remedy)?</strong></th>
<th><strong>What Should Be Added to or Changed in the Governance Documents?</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Four Pillars of Shared Governance</strong></td>
<td><strong>Distribute Decision-Making Responsibilities</strong></td>
<td>The plan devised in a year-long period by faculty with expertise and knowledge in the subject of the new Ph.D. program was disregarded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Transparency</strong></td>
<td>Needed: the committee’s recommendation should be implemented or provide valid arguments when this is not done. Needed: there should be a set of rules to follow in cases when there is disagreement between a committee’s recommendation and other units.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Communication</strong></td>
<td>The reasons for throwing out the plan proposed by the committee were not given. This occurred in spite of the committee following guidelines given by the President at the time. The implemented plan was of unknown origin at least for the faculty in the committee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Trust</strong></td>
<td>Needed: if a committee’s recommendation is not followed or is not implemented for lack of support, such arguments should be discussed in the open involving all the corresponding units. Needed: have an alternate option of transparent rules to follow when disagreement arises between a committee’s recommendation and the affected units.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Trust arises by sharing opinions openly, admitting disagreement and willingness to work/compromise on the differences*
CASE 6

A Story about Shared Governance and Integrated Graduate School Policy

In this Department, that belongs to one the physical sciences, graduate students are partially supported by funds from the Dean’s office to pay students tuition whereas the Department pays monthly salaries for the students who are hired as teaching assistants for lab lectures. The rest of the graduate students become research assistants in a research group directed by a faculty member and are paid their monthly salary from the faculty member’s grant. The research in this department is primarily done by graduate students who on average spend five years doing their Ph D.

A coherent policy on graduate student funding integrated with recommendations given by the faculty and Graduate Director from this Department is required for optimal research performance. However, over the years the Graduate School has acted independent of this Department implementing unrealistic parameters for funding and making the process in general (admission, graduate school requirements, operation, etc.) inefficient. Likewise, despite the promises to come up with a funding model that will be lighter on faculty grants for students who have passed the oral candidacy exam for Ph D (usually in the third year), the Dean’s office has not produced such a model.
# Integrated Graduate School Policy

## Four Pillars of Shared Governance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pillar</th>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Do Any Official Governance Documents Cover This (e.g., Prevention, Prohibition, Remedy)?</th>
<th>What Should Be Added to or Changed in the Governance Documents?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Distribution of Decision-Making Responsibilities</strong></td>
<td>There is no optimal distribution of responsibility to determine the best policy to apply. The policy is made by VCU graduate school with no input from this department. Recruitment for graduate school is completely different than for undergraduate students.</td>
<td>If there is any official documents about distribution of responsibility in this case, it is not being implemented</td>
<td>Needed: allow shared governance to this department so it can influence VCU graduate school policy and adapt it to the research goals and the population of students sought to be recruited by this department. Needed: Dean, Department Chair, Department Graduate Director and VCU Graduate Director should set a coherent and financially sound policy consistent with the goals and the population of students sought by this department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transparency</strong></td>
<td>The process is transparent as all parties know what is happening but at the moment it appears to be unilateral and disregarding the needs of the unit in which this policy is implemented.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Needed: Attention should be put on the issue of shared governance as specific criterion in evaluated administrators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication</strong></td>
<td>Communication exists but is useless because there is no integration of the department’s view in the policy.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Needed:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trust</strong></td>
<td>Distrust in the faculty has grown over the years because this department has no say on the graduate policy implemented in this department.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Needed:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**CASE 7**

**A Case of Curriculum Decision Making**

**Summary:**

In the School of World Studies, the curriculum committee added 6 hours of credit for the foreign language major in 2010 that were not fully discussed in advance of their making the proposal. The faculty agreed to the proposal on good faith that the proposal would include the curricular changes and structures that were being told to them, but they did not actually get to see the finished proposal product, so effectively agreed to something that had not been fully vetted by them (and thus was not fully understood by them). The result is a loss of majors in French, German, and Spanish. We still do not have a mechanism to review the changes that we were told by administrators there was no time to consider in 2010, and there is no faculty oversight group, only individuals who are criticized if they question administrators' judgment on the curriculum. All SWS faculty need the same opportunity to review curriculum initiatives and courses in their programs before the Curriculum Committee votes on them. Our by-laws say this as well, but for some reason administrators have interpreted our by-laws to mean that FL and INTL don't get to review programs that go across languages. RELS and ANTH already discuss, debate, and vote among themselves before their curricula are determined by a school-wide curriculum committee. FL and INTL need the same opportunity if we are to have consistency. Better by-laws can help.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOUR PILLARS OF SHARED GOVERNANCE</th>
<th>PROBLEM</th>
<th>DO ANY OFFICIAL GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTS COVER THIS (E.G., PREVENTION, PROHIBITION, REMEDY)?</th>
<th>WHAT SHOULD BE ADDED TO OR CHANGED IN THE GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTS?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DISTRIBUTION OF DECISION-MAKING RESPONSIBILITIES</td>
<td>The Curriculum Committee has the final say on curricular changes.</td>
<td>Bylaws state that faculty have the right to review curricular changes before the Curriculum Committee votes on them.</td>
<td>Needed: Stricter enforcement of the bylaws relating to review of proposed curriculum changes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRANSPARENCY</td>
<td>While the bylaws are clear on this matter, faculty have not been able to review curricular changes in certain areas before votes.</td>
<td>Covered by bylaws but not the process is not always carried out</td>
<td>Needed: dissemination of course proposals and other curricular changes to the appropriate faculty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMUNICATION</td>
<td>Insufficient communication with appropriate faculty about proposed curricular changes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>Timely communication about the curriculum changes accompanied by the necessary documentation with a specific due date.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRUST</td>
<td>There were no real trust issues between the Curriculum Committee and the faculty.</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>Needed: procedures encouraging more administration/faculty collaboration on curricular matters.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A multidisciplinary department (henceforth, the Department) houses three disciplines, where one of them is dominant and the department head was a member of the dominant discipline. The Department head had an academic background in only the dominant discipline and had no training in, or teaching and research record in, the other two disciplines.

In the Department, it is the Department head who appoints the chairs of all the Department’s committees. The Department head appointed the chair of the Department’s curriculum committee, where the committee chair was from the dominant discipline, just like the Department head. This committee was dominated by the Department’s dominant discipline (i.e., “stacked”). In a curriculum revision effort, the committee was split up into three groups, reflecting the three disciplines, and each group worked independently on the curriculum for the students in its major. When the groups were done, the group for the dominant discipline revealed that it eliminated what had long been a required course in the curriculum for the students in its major, where this course happened to be taught by one of the other disciplines in the department. There was no voting on this curriculum change; instead, people were asked, “does anyone here have any objections,” and no one who had any objections felt sufficiently safe to voice an objection.
the episode:  
Curriculum Revision in a Multidisciplinary Department

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOUR PILLARS OF SHARED GOVERNANCE</th>
<th>PROBLEM</th>
<th>DO ANY OFFICIAL GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTS COVER THIS (E.G., PREVENTION, PROHIBITION, REMEDY)?</th>
<th>WHAT SHOULD BE ADDED TO OR CHANGED IN THE GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTS?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DISTRIBUTION OF DECISION-MAKING RESPONSIBILITIES</td>
<td>The Department head can unilaterally appoint chairs of committee. A discipline in this multidisciplinary department can make curriculum decisions impacting another discipline.</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>Needed: formal input from faculty (e.g., the faculty nominate 1 candidates for committee chair, department head selects one of them). Needed: “good fences make good neighbors” policy for the different disciplines in the department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRANS-PARENCY</td>
<td>Criteria for appointing a committee chair are not known or explicit. When the three groups in the committee (each one representing a different discipline) worked separately, the impact that one group’s decisions would have on another group was not visible.</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>Needed: explicit criteria for what a committee chair’s qualifications Needed: explicit procedures requiring either formal input from or outright approval by a discipline before its courses can be changed from being required to being optional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMUNICATION</td>
<td>There was no communication between the faculty and the department head in the selection of the committee head. There was no communication between the groups working on the curricula until the very end, when no one felt safe to speak up.</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>Needed: open discussion at a Department faculty meeting on candidates for committee chairs before final selection Needed: Whenever a discipline in the Department conducts a curriculum revision, at least one member of each other discipline ought is present.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRUST</td>
<td>An atmosphere of lack of trust between the department head and one of the disciplines contributed to setting up this situation and, afterwards, perpetuating it.</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>Needed: A criterion for selection of Department head requires that viable candidates have research, teaching, or administrative experience in at least two of the Department’s three disciplines</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CASE 9

An Episode about Shared Governance and a School’s Strategic Planning

In this school, the faculty (T&R faculty) learned that there was a presentation of the School’s strategic planning efforts to an outside group. This was the first time that the faculty heard anything about a strategic planning effort for the school being underway. The school had hired a consultant to manage the strategic planning process. No faculty were a part of the process. Initially it was unclear who the members of the strategic planning committee were or how such members were selected.

When the school’s committee on faculty affairs, representing all T&R faculty in the school, asked the dean’s office who the members of the strategic planning committee were, the membership was disclosed. The school’s committee on faculty affairs deliberated the matter further and eventually made a request to the school’s dean for faculty to be included among the members of the strategic planning committee. The dean acceded to this request. The focus of the strategic planning effort was expanded from development to also include academics. As for setting the agendas for the meetings of the strategic planning committee, it was initially unclear who was in control of this or how it was done. The school’s committee on faculty affairs took the initiative to ask the faculty overall for input in the strategic planning process.

As it turned out, the school’s bylaws indeed explicitly mention strategic planning and state that the school’s committee on faculty affairs is to determine, jointly with the dean, how faculty are to be involved in strategic planning. It is not clear that the dean or the school’s committee on faculty affairs were aware of this part of the school’s bylaws. Regardless, the school’s bylaws have no enforcement mechanism for this (or any other part) of the bylaws.
the episode:
A School's Strategic Planning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOUR PILLARS OF SHARED GOVERNANCE</th>
<th>PROBLEM</th>
<th>DO ANY OFFICIAL GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTS COVER THIS (E.G., PREVENTION, PROHIBITION, REMEDY)?</th>
<th>WHAT SHOULD BE ADDED TO OR CHANGED IN THE GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTS?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DISTRIBUTION OF DECISION-MAKING RESPONSIBILITIES</td>
<td>lack of clarity on who (dean, faculty, or both) initiates, administers, participates in, etc., the school’s strategic planning</td>
<td>bylaws mention that the school’s committee on faculty affairs and the dean determine jointly how faculty are to be involved in strategic planning, but no other mention of strategic planning process</td>
<td>Needed: establishing who participates in and who decides what, at what stages, at what times, and what the stages/decision points are, in the school’s strategic planning process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRANSPARENCY</td>
<td>formation of the school’s strategic planning committee was not announced to the faculty; first outside presentation by the strategic planning committee was not announced to the faculty</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>Needed: timeline of announcements about what events, decisions, meetings, calls for membership and input, etc., to be made to the faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMUNICATION</td>
<td>no communication between the dean and the faculty regarding the initiation of the strategic planning process</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>Needed: schedule or timeline of real-time meetings and electronic means for sharing opinions, soliciting input, provide input</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRUST</td>
<td>a pre-existing atmosphere of lack of trust</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>Needed: discouraging distrust and rumors by establishing explicit checklist of dean’s responsibilities and faculty responsibilities in strategic planning, and by better communication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CASE 10

A Story about Shared Governance and Appointing a Department Head

In this school, the dean has the final say on the appointments of all five members of the search committee for a department head. The department recommends three of its voting faculty members to the dean to consider for selection to the committee. The dean must select three committee members from among the voting faculty members of the department. The dean may consider appointing, but is not required to appoint, the three voting faculty members recommended by the department. The remaining two members of the search committee must be voting faculty members from outside this department, i.e., from other departments in the school. The dean may delegate his or her participation and power in the department-head selection process to the associate dean.

In an instance of the search process, the context that made a difference. First, the dean had appointed the acting department head without any input from or dialogue with members of the department. This unilateral action and lack of transparency ran counter to the culture and past practice.

Second, at the time that the search for a permanent department head commenced, the department had an acting department head who had already been serving in that capacity for over a year. The result was that the acting department head was perceived as benefitting from the advantage of incumbency.

Third, the advantage of incumbency was not just harmful as a perception but actually made a difference. The acting department head had hired three faculty members, one of whom ended up as a member of the search committee. This amounted to a conflict of interest in a second way as well. This committee member, who was an untenured assistant professor, had to account for real possibility that the acting department head, if selected as the permanent department head, would be in the future position to approve or disapprove of the assistant professor’s application for promotion and tenure.

Fourth, there was another conflict of interest with another committee member. He or she was also an assistant professor and had just submitted his or her application for promotion to tenure. Of course, this application required the acting department head’s signature. This committee member was replaced only when this problem was brought up to a separate school-wide faculty body, which had no any official role in the search process but nonetheless mentioned this problem to the dean.

The search committee membership ended up including 2 tenured faculty members from the department, 1 untenured faculty member from the department, and 2 tenured faculty members from outside the department. The final committee vote was 3 to 2, to recommend the hiring of the acting department head as the permanent department head. There was the subsequent perception that the 2 tenured faculty members from the department had cast the 2 dissenting votes. This added to the overall impression that the committee membership was “stacked.”
Faculty members in the department voted on the candidacy of the acting department head for the permanent department head position. The majority vote was in favor of this candidate. The vote was close: not including the abstentions, if just one voter had changed his or her vote, the overall vote would have been tied.

The chair of the search committee then wrote up and forwarded the recommendation that the acting department head be hired as the permanent department head. If there was a written rationale accompanying the recommendation, it was not announced or distributed to the department faculty.
## Appointing a Department Head

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOUR PILLARS OF SHARED GOVERNANCE</th>
<th>PROBLEM</th>
<th>DO ANY OFFICIAL GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTS COVER THIS (E.G., PREVENTION, PROHIBITION, REMEDY)?</th>
<th>WHAT SHOULD BE ADDED TO OR CHANGED IN THE GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTS?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DISTRIBUTION OF DECISION-MAKING RESPONSIBILITIES</td>
<td>The dean has the final say on who are the members of the search committee for the department head. The faculty may at best only recommend three members. Dean makes recommendation to provost.</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>Needed: more than just a “making recommendation” role for the faculty; better “checks and balances” between the dean and the faculty on selection of search committee members. A possibility is that the dean chooses 2 members, the faculty vote to select 2 members, and then the result 4 members select the 5 member. Needed: statement on what level of vote is required for final recommended candidate (simple majority of those voting or of all faculty, or two-thirds, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRANSPARENCY</td>
<td>The formal governance document is explicit in describing the dean’s and faculty’s roles in selecting committee members. It is unknown or unannounced as to which candidates are forwarded to the provost.</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>Needed: Criteria that are used in making selections for committee members need to be made explicit. Prevention of conflict of interest is needed. Needed: Dean’s recommendation to the provost for the department head appointment, along with rationale, needs to be announced to the faculty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMUNICATION</td>
<td>No real-time dialogue or meeting between dean and faculty member on what the dean was looking for or what the faculty were looking for in the new department head</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>Needed: see above (“Transparency”) Needed: a timeline of the search/appointment process, indicating meetings, events, tasks, action points, along with who is involved at that point and what is announced to the faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRUST</td>
<td>There was not distrust between the dean and the faculty, but trust itself was not yet established.</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>Needed: Currently, the formal documents do not preclude situations where faculty may perceive (rightly or wrongly) that the search committee member can be “stacked.” The documents need to describe selection process for search committee members that is “beyond reproach.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CASE 11

An Episode about Shared Governance in the Assessment of
Faculty Performance and Salary Raise/Awards

Criteria for determining merit for faculty salary increases and bonus award process are not explicitly outlined in the Department. According to Faculty Handbook, "the determination of merit, in comparison with other members of the faculty member’s administrative unit, is made by the dean on the recommendation of department chairs. The Faculty Roles and Rewards policy encourages faculty, in consultation with their department chair or director, to specify at the beginning of each rewards cycle the specific criteria by which they wish to be evaluated". Despite meeting and sometime exceeding the Department’s expectation during annual evaluations some faculty do not receive salary raise or award.
### Salary raise and awards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Do any official governance documents cover this (e.g., prevention, prohibition, remedy)?</th>
<th>What should be added to or changed in the governance documents?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Distribution of decision-making responsibilities</strong></td>
<td>The Department chair can unilaterally decide about salary raise and awards.</td>
<td>Faculty handbook mentions that: the determination of merit, in comparison with other members of the faculty member’s administrative unit, is made by the dean on the recommendation of department chairs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transparency</strong></td>
<td>Criteria for salary raise and bonus award process are not explicitly defined and documented in the Department. This prevents an objective decision-making about salary raise and awards.</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication</strong></td>
<td>Communication of problems is not encouraged by the Department chair</td>
<td>The Faculty Roles and Rewards policy encourages faculty, in consultation with their department chair or director, to specify at the beginning of each rewards cycle the specific criteria by which they wish to be evaluated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trust</strong></td>
<td>A pre-existing atmosphere of lack of trust prevents an effective communication</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following pages contain a 2-page case with a 4-page appendix. The suggested model e-mail to faculty (pages 6 and 7) provided a link to this document.
Context

VCU is wholeheartedly embracing the principles of shared governance. Provost Beverly Warren can be credited for taking the initiative to do this. University Council is now in the process of better “hard coding” the principles of shared governance into its bylaws. This effort is taking place under the aegis of University Council’s Committee on Faculty Affairs, where representatives of administration, faculty, staff, and students have joined together in a true spirit of collaboration.

Shared governance is not optional. VCU’s main accreditation body, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), requires shared governance. 1

Exactly what is shared governance? Shared governance is not consensus government. Shared governance is not everyone having an equal say or equal voice. Rather, shared governance is based on a clearly and explicitly established distribution of decision-making responsibilities. 2

Facts of the Case

On 8 February 2012, the Dean of the VCU School of Business sent a letter to the School’s department heads in which he announced his decision to raise the annual teaching load of faculty members to 3:3 (3 sections in the fall, 3 sections in the spring) for those faculty members who, in the preceding 6 years, did not publish a total of at least 6 “PRJ” articles (PRJ = peer reviewed journal). This new requirement was to be applied retroactively to past performance. The letter did not mention the quality of the published articles, their impact, their significance, etc. The letter was never officially communicated to the faculty. Faculty learned about the new decision by hearing about it from their department heads or colleagues.

The appendix includes a scanned copy of the two-page letter, sent by the Dean to one of the department heads.

In the spirit of case analysis, consider three hypothetical outcomes:

**Outcome 1:** In time for the next academic year, the faculty’s objections and misgivings were resolved. Apparently, the matter of teaching-load/research-productivity balance was already covered, for the most part, across the School’s existing shared-governance documents (e.g., the School’s bylaws, departmental “roles and rewards” documents, individual work plans). There were no further objections or misgivings after the relevant procedures in the documents were identified and applied.

1 Please see, in the appendix, the one-page document, “Explicit Requirements about Governance in the 2012 SACS Document.”  
2 Please see, in the appendix, the one-page document, “A Working Definition of Shared Governance.”
Outcome 2: In the next academic year, teaching loads were increased in accordance with the Dean’s letter. Overall, the faculty’s objections and misgivings were not resolved. It was, at best, only arguable that the School’s existing shared-governance documents covered the matter of teaching-load/research-productivity balance. Furthermore, of the few aspects of the issue that were arguably covered, the documents contained no provision for their enforcement. For faculty members who felt aggrieved, their only recourse was to seek advice from the University ombudsperson and to file a grievance.

Outcome 3: In the next academic year, the faculty’s objections and misgivings were somewhat resolved, but only on an ad hoc, informal, case-by-case basis. For instance, in one case, a department head assigned a new “topics course” with small enrollment to a faculty member for him to teach to graduate students, where this faculty member had fallen just one article short of the “6 PRJ’s in 6 years” requirement. There were additional instances of living up to the letter, but not the spirit, of the Dean’s letter. Overall, the faculty’s objections and misgivings were, at best, somewhat resolved, but the faculty remained uneasy over the lack of a systematic remedy.

Each one of the three hypothetical outcomes can pose different, and interesting, considerations with regard to the following questions.

**Questions about what actually happened in the decision-making**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who had the authority to decide what?</th>
<th>Who should have had the authority to decide what?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who participated in, or otherwise contributed to, the decision-making?</td>
<td>Who should have participated in, or otherwise contributed, to the decision-making?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whose participation in, input to, and/or notification of the decision-making process should be considered necessary, regardless of their decision-making authority?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| What was the timeline for when the problem was identified, when people were notified and/or involved, when alternative solutions or actions were formulated and considered, and when the final decision was made? | What should have been the timeline for when the problem was identified, when people were notified and/or involved, when alternative solutions or actions were formulated and considered, and when the final decision was made? |

| What were the general written shared-governance guidelines or the general established shared-governance practices for how to make this decision? | What should have been, or should be, the general written shared-governance guidelines or the general established shared-governance practices for how to make this decision? |

*Considerations of what should have happened can involve principles of shared governance.*

Allen S. Lee
14 February 2014

Shared governance at VCU is not an option. It is required by VCU’s main accreditation body, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACS). This is made clear in the Fifth Edition of the SACS document, “The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement” (Revised by SACS’ College Delegate Assembly, 2011). This document is available at https://duckduckgo.com/?q=The+Principles+of+Accreditation%3A+Foundations+for+Quality+Enhancement. (Although the revision took place in 2011, this document is informally known as “The 2012 Principles of Accreditation.”)

The underlining, below, is added for emphasis.

Page 3 of the document states:

Accreditation expects an institution to develop a balanced governing structure designed to promote institutional integrity, autonomy, and flexibility of operation.

Page 26 of the document states:

3.2.6 There is a clear and appropriate distinction, in writing and practice, between the policy-making functions of the governing board and the responsibility of the administration and faculty to administer and implement policy. **(Board/administration distinction)**

Page 31 of the document states:

3.7.5 The institution publishes policies on the responsibility and authority of faculty in academic and governance matters. **(Faculty role in governance)**

Also deserving emphasis is that the principle of governance, as required by SACS, does not mean that a consensus, a majority vote, or any vote at all is required for decision-making to proceed. What the principle of governance requires is, among other things, a clearly delineated distribution of responsibilities for administering and implementing policy, where specific responsibilities are delineated as belonging to the administration, to the faculty, or to other groups.
A Working Definition of Shared Governance
(working definition of 11 October 2013)

What is shared governance in a university?

Shared governance is not consensus government. Shared governance is not everyone having an equal say or equal voice.

Rather, shared governance is based on a clearly and explicitly established distribution of decision-making responsibilities.

In shared governance, there is transparency. Faculty, staff, students and administrators know which university group has primary responsibility for leading the decision-making process on university matters. Transparency involves, among other things, clarity regarding the primary responsibilities that faculty, staff, students and administrators assume in leading university decision-making. Shared governance intends that all groups have a voice and, at the same time, shared governance involves agreement on which constituency has the primary responsibility for leading a particular decision-making process, where the agreement is clearly articulated and honored.

In shared governance, there is communication. Decisions are not made in a vacuum. The making of a decision occurs with communication to, between, and among all those affected by the decision, all those with an interest in the decision, and all those who should or need to be informed that the decision will be coming up for consideration, that the decision is being considered, and that the decision has been made.

In shared governance, there is trust. Trust can never be mandated, but can be cultivated over time. Trust is initiated by individuals whose motivations are not to give in order to receive, but to give of oneself simply for the common good. Trust in a community is cultivated and sustained not by an individual, but by a critical mass of individuals who strive for trust to become a shared value by persistently treating others in ways that they themselves would like to be treated.

Successful shared governance in a university develops slowly over time, where the process of development is itself guided by shared governance. In its ideal or mature state, shared governance is marked by the institutionalization of the aforementioned (1) distribution of decision-making responsibilities, (2) transparency, (3) communication, and (4) trust. Being institutionalized, these four elements of shared governance do not change merely because of natural turnover in the people participating in shared governance; these elements are not “personality dependent.” Properly institutionalized, they will not disappear simply because an effective leader departs or because an ineffective leader is appointed. In its ideal or mature state, shared governance further develops as needed, but still slowly over time, where the process of further development is itself guided by shared governance.

Allen S. Lee (aslee@vcu.edu) is the author of the working definition of 11 October 2013, which he bases on ideas voiced by Beverly Warren at October 8th’s Leadership Development Workshop and Reception. Allen Lee gives credit to Beverly Warren and Bob Andrews for important additions and other improvements, takes responsibility for all errors and flaws in this document, and encourages all others to work on this working definition, or on new working definitions, of shared governance.
February 8, 2012

Dear Roland:

As you know, advancing knowledge is one of the key goals of the VCU Quest for Distinction. The VCU School of Business maintains a doctoral program and is part of a university that is in the very highest Carnegie Foundation classification for research universities. Accordingly, our major emphasis in research should be on discipline-based research that is published in peer-reviewed journals (PRJs).

Last week, Provost Warren asked me to share with you a productivity analysis for the School of Business faculty. Of particular interest is the record of our tenured/tenure eligible faculty regarding PRJs published between 2005 and 2011. We have some very impressive and productive researchers. However, a closer look at the details reveals we have some work to do. Specifically, most of our tenured/tenure eligible faculty do not produce an average of one journal article per year. I am fully aware that publication output can vary from year to year for a variety of reasons. However, a look over the last six years taken together is hard to ignore. Here are some of the numbers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRJs Produced 2005-2011</th>
<th>Number of Faculty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total with ≤ 6 PRJs</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I have calculated the average cost to produce a PRJ, based on salaries, and it's not a flattering number. You all know that state funding has been on a constant decline and now represents less than 30% of our funding. The balance comes from tuition and the generosity of our alumni and friends. In addition, salaries are the bulk of our expenditures. It is vitally important that we utilize our talent in the most efficient and effective way possible.
The School of Business is committed to striking an equitable balance between teaching loads and research. Therefore, I am counting on you to assign teaching loads appropriately based on the following criteria: Our most productive researchers—those who have produced at least six PRJs within the last six years—and assistant professors seeking tenure, will carry a maximum 2:2 teaching load. Everyone else should have a 3:3 load with consideration given for special assignments or unusual circumstances. You will be required to review the exceptions with me and obtain approval for any exception.

Together, we will review your effectiveness at meeting this goal by preparing productivity projections based on the evolving fall 2012 class schedule. We must do a better job of allocating our valuable resources appropriately for research, teaching and service. Meeting this goal will also impact department requests for additional faculty positions—whether they are tenure-eligible, collateral, or adjunct.

We have been talking about and rationalizing teaching loads for almost a year. This is another opportunity for the chairs to collectively make decisions that will have a significant impact on our research and teaching mission. It is now time to make it happen. As always, your feedback and comments are welcomed, and I thank you for your cooperation.

Best regards,

[Signature]

Ed Grier

cc: David Urban