Review of Shared Governance Procedure Implementation
Senate Doc. No. 15-16-09

Introduction

The University of Maryland has a long standing commitment to shared governance. The 2008 Strategic Plan states that "shared governance ensures that all members of the University family have an opportunity to participate in its course. A continued commitment to openness and accountability is critical to the University's success." In addition, the University's Plan of Organization for Shared Governance notes that "shared governance at the University means governance shared among faculty, staff, students, and administrators at all levels, and includes forming and articulating a vision for the University". A two-way dialog between the University Senate and the administration is a critical element of shared governance at Maryland.

Shared Governance Procedures

Based on our University's principles of shared governance, the Senate leadership developed a series of actionable procedures to increase communication, inclusiveness, transparency, engagement, awareness, and trust. These procedures were intended to improve not only communication and relationships between the Senate, SEC, and the administration, but also to improve our working efficiencies and enhance the awareness of the campus community on the impact that the Senate's activities have on their daily lives and the importance of shared governance. The specific procedures/recommendations are as follows:

1. The President shall have a standing agenda item at each Senate meeting to provide perspective on relevant campus issues. There has been a tool developed for all senators to make recommendations for the President's presentation, and to provide feedback on a presentation. As is to be expected, there will be times when the President cannot attend.

2. Owing to the academic and procedural actions that the Senate undertakes, and because the Provost is the chief academic officer and many important issues fall under the purview of the office, the Provost will strive to attend most meetings of the Senate, and will have a special order of the day as needed to provide for mediated discussions.

3. A protocol has been put in place to facilitate contact with the Senate Chair and Senate Leadership regarding any issue the President and/or Provost may wish to discuss or receive advice upon.

4. For important matters that are not emergencies, the Chair will work with the President/Provost or their assigned representative and the Director of the Senate to arrange for a meeting and/or conference call with the Senate leadership and/or the SEC.

5. The Senate Chair shall provide a brief update of the major issues discussed when giving the Chair's Report at the subsequent SEC and Senate meetings.

6. The Senate Chair will periodically be invited to attend meetings of the Council of Deans to provide information about the shared governance process and structure, to offer Senate input regarding current issues, and to gain information from the deans on issues that they see as important or developing. This information shall be provided to the SEC and Senate

as appropriate.

7. The Senate office shall provide summary slides following each Senate Meeting. These slides shall be posted on the Senate website for download by senators and the campus community.

8. Senators are tasked with serving as a conduit between the campus community and the Senate by engaging their constituents and collecting feedback on issues within the Senate. This can be accomplished by consulting directly with constituents on matters of concern, sharing constituent concerns during the discussion of specific recommendations, and by communicating summary slides following each Senate Meeting.

9. Deans are voting members of the Senate. Many Senate discussions could be enhanced through increased active participation. All college/school assemblies are encouraged to add an ex-officio seat of some kind for an elected senator from their college and school in order to bolster opportunities for information sharing between governance bodies (which would also help faculty know who their Senators are). The assemblies are encouraged to make time available in their agendas for updates from a Senate representative.

10. The SEC will partner more with deans to ensure that there is information sharing taking place through a special President's Breakfast meeting once a year.

11. The Senate leadership should have an annual fall semester meeting with the leaders of the SGA and GSG to share information and ideas about the year ahead and to encourage effective interaction between groups.

12. The SGA and GSG are encouraged to add an ex-officio seat for a senator; the SGA and GSG are also encouraged to make time available in their agendas for updates from a Senate representative.

13. We are creating a training session for new ERG Committee members that focuses on the principles of shared governance and the tools and documents the committee will refer to throughout the year.

14. On the ERG committee, we will use subcommittees on Plan reviews that will carry over between years and allowing members of the subcommittee to continue to serve on the subcommittee after their term on the full committee expires. This will minimize restarting a review because of new members of the committee.

15. New senator and new committee member PowerPoints will be easily accessible and available on the homepage of the Senate website for interested members and for those who are considering participating in the Senate and its subcommittees.

16. The Senate leadership will spread a greater general awareness of what the Senate is doing via direct email messages from the Senate Chair to the campus community. For these emails, the Senate Chair will identify a current major topic of discussion and inform the campus about the pending action (the email shall attempt to weave in specific messages about how participation in the Senate directly affects the campus in meaningful ways, how active participation is necessary and important, and how commitment to shared governance

betters the campus community); this may be a good time to also re-cap what is on the agenda for upcoming meetings

17. While most of us have access to computers, there are some of us that do not. With that in mind the Senate office will identify annual events/opportunities that would be of interest to staff who do not have regular access to computers; the Senate office will create engaging flyers and share them directly with FM Human Resources for outreach to staff in Facilities Management and Residential Facilities, and with Student Affairs for outreach to staff in Dining Services and Transportation Services.

Charge to the SEC

At the October 10, 2015 Senate meeting, the University Senate approved a motion to charge the SEC with reviewing the recommendations for shared governance outlined in the Chair's Report from September 10, 2015, and report back to the Senate on their findings no later than the April 2016 Senate meeting. Specifically, the SEC should be charged with determining:
  • Is there improved engagement with the President and Provost?
  • Is there improved opportunity to provide informed input and feedback for substantive issues that impact faculty, staff, and students?
  • Is there is an improvement in awareness and communication within the campus, colleges, schools, and units regarding the activities of the Senate? Has this led to increased engagement?

SEC Review

The SEC discussed the charge and agreed to create a subcommittee chaired by the Chair-Elect, Jordan Goodman. The sub-committee would be tasked with evaluating the implementation of the procedures and reporting back to the full committee. The subcommittee initially developed a series of questions to assess the implementation of the procedures as outlined below:

Is there improved engagement with the President and Provost?
  1. Has the President provided briefings regularly at Senate meetings?
  2. Have senators been given an opportunity to provide topics for the briefings?
  3. Have senators been given an opportunity to provide feedback on the briefings?
  4. Has the Provost attended Senate meetings regularly and participated when appropriate?
  5. Has the interaction between the Senate and APAC been effective?

Is there improved opportunity to provide informed input and feedback for substantive issues that impact faculty, staff, and students?
  1. Has there been more consultation between the Senate/Senate Executive Committee/Senate leadership and the Administration on issues that affect the campus?
       a. The Strategic Plan Update
       b. The administrative modernization initiatives, including outsourcing of services
       c. Setting academic priorities
       d. New academic partnerships
       e. New research initiatives
       f. Major construction efforts
       g. Plans for restricted research

  h. Major changes to academic programs
  i. Other strategic initiatives

Is there an improvement in awareness and communication within the campus, colleges, schools, and units regarding the activities of the Senate? Has this led to increased engagement?
  1. How has the Senate outreach effort increased engagement of the Faculty, Staff and Students?
  2. Have senators been using the meeting summaries to distribute information to their constituencies?
  3. Have more people been voting?
  4. Have more people been attending Senate meetings?

The subcommittee also collected data from the Senate Office regarding implementation specifics as well as attendance and voting records over the last five years. Based off this information an assessment was made on the areas outlined above. These findings were presented to the full committee at its meeting on April 4, 2016 before being finalized and approved for submission to the full Senate.

Assessment
Is there improved engagement with the President and Provost?
President Loh has made a concerted effort to attend Senate meetings and provide briefings on topics submitted by senators. The President provided briefings at three regular meetings thus far and also provided his annual State of the Campus address. He was unable to attend the February meeting because of obligations in Annapolis and the Senate leadership agreed to cancel the briefing in March because of the the campus-wide forum on March 3, 2016, which would already give the Senate and the campus community an opportunity for direct engagement with the President. Senators were provided an opportunity to give feedback following each briefing. There have also been additional opportunities for engagement, including a whole-day retreat between the SEC and the President and Vice Presidents and monthly meetings between the President and the Senate leadership.

Provost Rankin has also attended the majority of the Senate meetings this year. She provided an overview of the initial strategic plan update process at the September meeting. She was unable to attend the February meeting where the draft Strategic Plan Update was presented to the Senate because of obligations in Annapolis but made arrangements for Associate Provost Beise to provide the presentation and take comments and feedback back to her. In addition, she attended a Senate-sponsored campus-wide forum to get feedback directly from senators and the campus-wide community. Provost Rankin presented the final strategic plan update to the Senate for a final vote on April 7, 2016. The Provost has also continued the practice of meeting with the three chairs of the Senate (past, present, and chair-elect) on a monthly basis. She has also come to the SEC meetings on August 26, 2015 to report on the 2020 workgroups, the strategic plan, budgeting issues, and Dean searches; and again on February 19, 2016 to discuss a new cyber security initiative that the campus is considering.

The Academic Planning Advisory Committee (APAC) was largely dormant since 2012. This year the committee was reconstituted, with input from the SEC on its membership. Historically, the Senate Chair or Chair-Elect had been a sitting member on the committee but the Provost decided that the new membership would not have anyone from the Senate leadership. Instead, the Provost, in consultation with the Senate Chair and APAC, agreed to have a representative of APAC provide updates to the SEC in order to preserve the previous line of communication provided by the Senate Chair and Chair-Elect. APAC met three times this year. The APAC

representative provided a brief overview of the committee's work thus far at its meeting on March 21, 2016.

<u>Is there improved opportunity to provide informed input and feedback for substantive issues that impact faculty, staff, and students?</u>

As noted above, the Senate and the campus community have been engaged in reviewing and providing feedback on the Strategic Plan Update. This process followed historical practice of discussing initial principles, providing an opportunity for feedback on a draft document, and reviewing and approving the final version prior to approval by the President. In addition, the campus community, Senate leadership, SEC, and Senate were all engaged in the process.

As mentioned above the Provost did meet with the SEC twice, once to discuss administrative matters and a second time to present a specific significant research and academic initiative that involved restricted research. The President held a whole-day retreat with the SEC and the President's cabinet in September for a briefing and discussion of administrative structures and plans. The President also met with the SEC to discuss the Strategic Partnership Act of 2016 (SB1052) when that arose. The President provided a broad overview of major construction projects on campus as well as development projects in the surrounding community during his State of the Campus Address. The Chair of the Flagship 2020 Commission met with the SEC in November 2015 to provide an update of the Commission's work to date and noted the importance of including feedback from stakeholders in the process before recommendations are announced and implemented. There have been limited discussions between the Provost and the Senate chairs regarding the administrative modernization initiatives and academic programs throughout the year. However, there was little or no discussion of specific proposals related to these issues with the SEC or the Senate. In addition, there has been no discussion regarding setting academic priorities, new academic partnerships, or other research initiatives. Recently, the campus has started a "Thriving Workplace Initiative". This was presented to the SEC after it was set in motion.

<u>Is there is an improvement in awareness and communication within the campus, colleges, schools, and units regarding the activities of the Senate? Has this led to increased engagement?</u>

The Senate Office has provided summaries shortly after each meeting in three different formats (Word, PDF, and PowerPoint). Senators have been encouraged to distribute the summaries to their constituents, but not all have found an effective means to do so. The Senate leadership met with student representatives and learned that they were not aware of effective pathways to communicate with their constituents. The Senate Office contacted all of the Dean's offices to compile a list of effective communication pathways and contact individuals in each college or school. This information was shared with the undergraduate student senators. The Senate Office is working to identify similar information for the graduate students but graduate students also agreed to work with the Graduate Student Government to disseminate information. The Senate leadership consulted with the faculty and staff senators to discuss communication pathways as well. There was a strong consensus that faculty listservs for each unit would be help facilitate the distribution of material. Because staff constituents are not grouped within colleges or units, the Senate has not yet developed effective means of communication for the staff.

Attendance information from Senate meetings over the last five years was reviewed. The data shows that attendance has increased slightly by about 6%, which is only a marginally significant increase. Changes to many of the constituency categories were approved in the new Plan of Organization for Shared Governance. This election year was a transition period where constituents were moved into the newly defined categories so there were fewer vacancies. As a result, this decreased the pool of eligible voters making it difficult to assess voting trends.

Summary & Recommendations

There has been significant progress in improving some aspects of shared governance since the beginning of the school year. The new procedures that were put in place have helped with increased engagement with the President, Provost, and campus community. The President and Provost have shown a commitment to actively attending and participating in Senate meetings, as appropriate. New lines of communication between the Senate and its constituencies have been opened. In addition, the reconstitution of APAC provides an opportunity for faculty to be consulted on important academic issues. These steps will likely strengthen shared governance by allowing the campus community to be informed on the direction of the University, but they also need to provide opportunities for the campus community to give feedback to the administration in a meaningful way on important issues that impact the campus.

While these steps provide a strong foundation, there is still significant work that needs to be done. The Senate and the administration need to continue to make a strong commitment to engaging the campus community, but they also need to assess the effectiveness of that engagement. Specifically, it is important to recognize that appropriate context and information is needed in order to receive substantive feedback and just providing information is not the same as engaging in substantive discussion.

Following this assessment and a review of the issues that arose this past year, it is clear that there are some issues that were handled effectively, others that should be reevaluated for improved engagement, and still others that should be included in the future.

- The Strategic Plan Update was an excellent example of effective engagement with the Senate and the campus community.
- The reconstitution of APAC is a positive advancement, but the level of interaction with the Senate needs to be reconsidered. It would be more effective to either allow a faculty representative from the SEC to sit on APAC and report back at each SEC meeting or have the APAC representative provide more regular updates so that the information and feedback is more timely.
- The renaming of Byrd Stadium was considered by a working group (appointed by the President) that included the Senate Chair. The SEC independently passed a resolution endorsing the name change; however, the Senate, as a body, was not given an opportunity to weigh in on the decision before it was made. While the President is tasked with making the final decision on issues such as this, it might have been helpful in his decision-making process to have the perspective of the Senate, which is elected to represent faculty, staff, and students.
- President Loh discussed the Strategic Partnership of 2016 (SB1052) with the SEC and also held a campus-wide forum to give a brief overview and collect feedback on the bill. Following that discussion, the Senate independently voted to express its support of the partnership. If the bill passes, the Senate should be given an opportunity to provide feedback about new programs and other elements of the bill that would affect the campus community.
- The cyber security initiative that involves restricted research, but also has academic implications was presented to the SEC. As of yet, there have been no opportunities for the Senate to provide feedback on this initiative. Broader engagement of the Senate and campus community on this and other research initiatives could provide a more comprehensive perspective.
- The administrative modernization review process and briefings from the working group chairs were presented to the SEC. The process of developing a new budget model has been mentioned to the Senate leadership but not discussed extensively. Because these

initiatives have the potential to have a significant impact on the entire campus community, it is important to get feedback from the Senate and the campus community before they are finalized and implemented.

- The Senate should be given an opportunity to weigh in on any significant changes to academic programs.
- An area where there still appears to be a significant lack of transparency is how academic priorities are set. The Senate should be educated on the prioritization process and given an opportunity to weigh in on the direction that the campus is taking.
- Campus leadership should set an inclusive tone for shared governance. While the deans and chairs do provide input on major initiatives, it should be expected that they solicit feedback on these issues from the constituents of their colleges and departments. Shared governance needs to reach everyone.
- The administration should consider the presentation of issues within a timeframe that could include input from the Senate, when feasible.
- A broad overview of major construction projects and redevelopment opportunities for the surrounding community was provided in the State of the Campus address. It is important that the campus community be provided opportunities to offer feedback on these initiatives and continue to be updated on these and other projects that may arise so as to create a better understanding of the vision for the campus and the City of College Park.
- The Senate has made strides in opening lines of communication with its constituents, but it is clear that awareness and engagement will require additional effort and time. The Senate should continue to consider additional opportunities to use a broad range of tools to engage the various constituencies most effectively. The deans, department chairs, and vice presidents should work with senators to facilitate this communication.
- The Senate should find opportunities to increase attendance at Senate meetings and increase participation in the campus-wide elections process.

While engagement between the Senate and the administration and between the Senate and the campus community has improved over the past year, more work still needs to be done. The procedures put in place this year should be reviewed, revised, and expanded to meet the needs of the campus and its constituents. The Senate leadership should continue to work with the administration to improve procedures to enhance shared governance at the University and continue to develop new ways to engage the campus community in the work of the Senate.