

*A GIANT LEAP TOWARDS AGILE, INCLUSIVE, AND  
TRANSPARENT SHARED GOVERNANCE  
AT PURDUE UNIVERSITY*

**Prepared by  
The Shared Governance Task Force Founders  
For Listening Session #1  
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# *Overview & Agenda*

- Rationale for Shared Governance Change
- What Are the Most Effective Elements of Shared Governance?
- The Shared Governance Task Force
- One Model with Promise
- Next Steps
- Preliminary Themes from Submitted Questions/Concerns

We have learned from the COVID pandemic that our shared governance structures must continue to evolve. Working closely with stakeholders across campus, we propose a re-examination of the state of shared governance at Purdue University. Jointly, we will explore best practices in shared governance and develop recommendations to innovate Purdue's shared governance structures by identifying ways to enhance the collective voices of our constituencies and further effective collaborations across Purdue campuses.

# *History of the Purdue University Senate*

## How Was the Senate Formed?

- The proposed process for examining shared governance and putting forward a proposal for campus-wide (or potentially system-wide) majority vote ***follows the precedent set in 1964*** when the current iteration of the senate was formed
- The current iteration of the senate has changed little since 1964 other than modest bylaw changes
- Dramatic changes to higher education, technology, and the Purdue campus have occurred over this nearly 60-year timespan
- This proposal is designed to address our contemporary context

Subject to the authority of the Board of Trustees and in consultation with the President, the Faculty shall have the general power and responsibility to adopt policies, regulations, and procedures intended to achieve the educational objectives of Purdue University and the general welfare of those involved in these educational processes.

—Executive Council Document 63-03,  
Final Revision, February 17, 1964

# *Why A Different Way to Engage in Shared Governance?*

## Purdue Faculty COACHE Data on Shared Governance

- We rank in bottom 30% of 109 institutions surveyed in 2018
- Of our 5 peer institutions, we are at the bottom
- The Senate is cumbersome, ineffective, lacks transparency, and fails to represent the needs and voice of the broader Purdue community
- Credibility and relevance are diminished due to a number of deeply entrenched problems including indifference, factionalism, absenteeism, and endorsement of harassment and bullying

I was a senator but quit going the last year because it was too negative and had no power.  
—Former Senator & Professor,  
HHS

# *Why A Different Way to Engage in Shared Governance?*

## Equitable Representation for Entire Purdue Community

- There is a lack of equitable representation for all Boilermakers including faculty, staff, and students
- Leaders from our two staff groups (MaPSAC, CSSAC) serve as advisors to the Senate but cannot vote
- UG and Graduate students have just one voice each and one eligible vote
- Multiple open-ended responses shared across the 4 Senate Surveys
- Protect Purdue Leadership Group

Staff members make up the largest working body at Purdue. Through MaPSAC and CSSAC, they have a formal voice up to HR but have no formal voice to upper administration or the BoT. Shared governance provides an atmosphere where staff are on equal footing with faculty, where we can articulate our needs, and where we will have an equal vote in outcomes impacting the Purdue community.

—Staff Member, Engineering

# *Why A Different Way to Engage in Shared Governance?*

## Why Now?

- Not a Senate initiative, although the impetus comes from Senate involvement
  - High absentee rates (~1/3<sup>rd</sup> regularly miss meetings)
  - Deadlocks and delays
  - Culture of bullying and harassment
  - Many senators express privately an unwillingness to speak freely during meetings due to potential repercussions
- Misunderstanding regarding what institutional agency the Senate has to determine, advise, or implement University policy, decisions, and practices

Shared governance is about equity, collaboration, and respect, yet the current University Senate model promotes and supports an environment that does not reflect these values. To make an impact on this campus in a tangible and action-oriented way, we need to restructure our system of shared governance to realign with the values of our institution and uplift and empower the voices of all our campus stakeholders.

—Current Student

# Evidence-Based Elements of Effective Shared Governance

According to Research, Interviews with Provosts, and COACHE Data

- Effective shared governance is characterized by open and constructive communication<sup>1</sup>
- For shared governance to work, it must be based on a culture of engagement<sup>2</sup>
- Institutional policies that define shared governance should be reviewed periodically to ensure their currency and applicability<sup>2,3</sup>
- Meaningfully incentivize shared governance participation<sup>3,4</sup>

I declined a request to run for re-election as a Senator in [XXXX] due to professional concerns about the ineffectiveness of, and toxicity attendant to, the current Senate make-up. I believe fundamentally revisiting Purdue's model of shared governance is prudent and wise.  
—Former Senator & Professor,  
Engineering

<sup>1</sup>Shared Governance at Vanderbilt University (May 2018) Retrieved from: <https://cdn.vanderbilt.edu/vu-wp0/wp-content/uploads/sites/305/2019/08/06202610/Shared-Governance-Final-Report.pdf> <sup>2</sup>AGB Board of Directors' Statement on Shared Governance (2017) Retrieved from: [https://agb.org/sites/default/files/u27335/2017\\_statement\\_sharedgovernance.pdf](https://agb.org/sites/default/files/u27335/2017_statement_sharedgovernance.pdf) <sup>3</sup>Norman, B. (2019) Faculty leadership and institutional resilience: Indicators, Promising Practices, and Key Questions, Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning. 51, 48-54 <sup>4</sup>Election Procedures Inquiry Commission Report (April 13, 2020)



# *The Shared Governance Task Force*

## Founders, Advisors and Supporters, Working Group, Consultant

- **Founders:** small group of faculty and staff, including former and current leaders, across campus interested in change
- **Advisors and Supporters:** medium-size group of faculty and staff (former Senators, other leaders across campus) who provided feedback, guidance, and support for restructuring shared governance
- **Working Group:** small group of faculty, staff, and students who will work over the summer to incorporate feedback, concerns, and issues from broader community and draft a detailed proposal for campus-wide dissemination in early fall 2021
- **Consultant:** the working group will consult with a higher education/shared governance expert to examine the research and explore best practices in shared governance

This is a great idea and I applaud the constructive and positive thinking that developed this timely approach to shared governance. I am happy to support the effort to find a system of shared government that will work in 2021 and beyond.

—Former University Senate Chair

# The Shared Governance Task Force

## Good Governance Requires Consideration of Three Elements<sup>1</sup>

- **Structure:** What shared governance structures are in place? What works? What changes are needed?
- **Content:** What do the various shared governance structures at Purdue spend their time doing? What is the substance of the work?
- **Culture:** What are the ways things are done around here? What are our cultural norms around shared governance? How can we shape these norms to make all shared governance more effective?

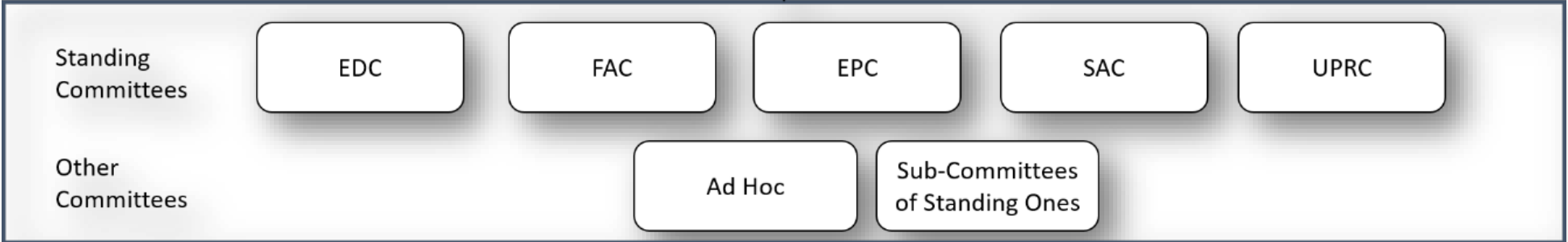
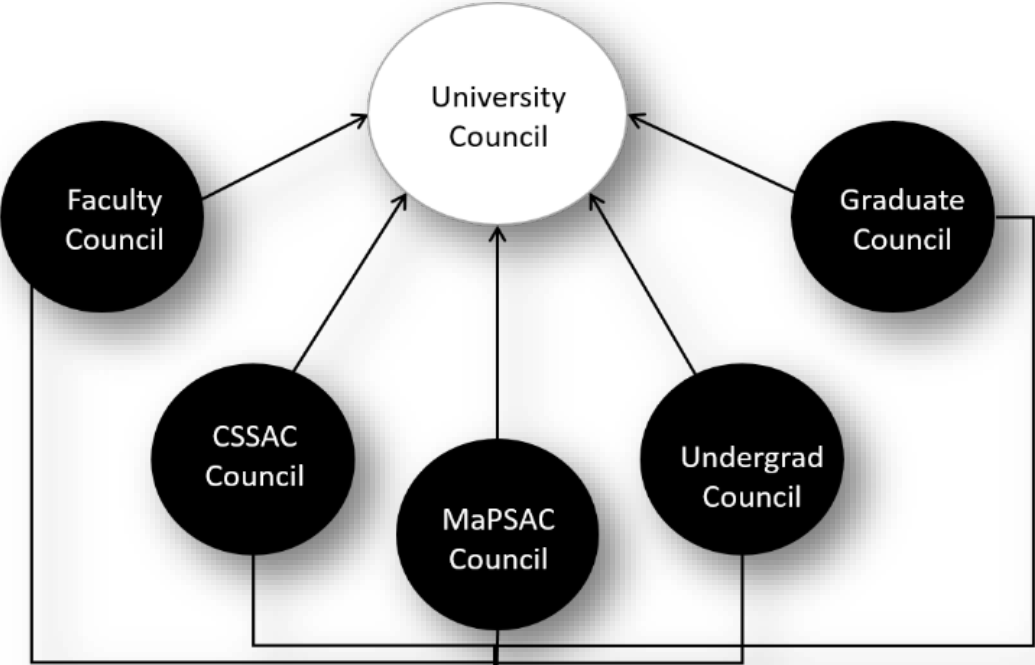
Eckel, P. D., & Trower, C. A. (2018). *Practical wisdom: Thinking differently about college and university governance*. Stylus Publishing, Sterling, VA.

I fully support this...and the decisive action that it proposes to ensure the governance processes at Purdue are responsive, strong, and adaptive. It also reflects the forward thinking that we critically need at this moment to interrogate orthodoxies in higher education to ensure resiliency over time.

—Former Senator & Professor,  
CLA

# ONE MODEL WITH PROMISE

Representation from all constituents: faculty, administration, undergraduate and graduate students, staff, alumni. Similar to Advisory Committee and the Protect Purdue Leadership group formed in June 2020.



# *Next Steps*

## Where Do We Go From Here?

- Finalize the working group
- Determine priorities for the summer
- Continue to collect questions and concerns through website form (FAQ will appear on website)
- Hold additional Listening Sessions as needed to better accommodate campus community (e.g., evening hours)
- Attend meetings/answer questions from various campus constituents
- Draft detailed proposal over the summer and disseminate in early Fall 2021
- Campus-wide vote in Fall 2021
- Presentation to Board of Trustees during October 2021 meeting

# *Preliminary Themes from Submitted Questions/Concerns*

All Submitted Questions and Concerns Will Be Aggregated and Answered on the Website

- Why do this now?
- What is the process?
- How will shared governance be assured?
- Can the BoT just do this without consent? Is consent going to be meaningfully sought?
- How can faculty be sure they won't lose even more power over the curriculum and calendar?
- Will staff finally have a real voice?
- Will this mean more work is offloaded onto staff?

***THANK YOU***

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