

UNIVERSITY SENATE

UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

RESOLUTION to IMPROVE SHARED GOVERNANCE AT UNIVERISTY AT ALBANY

Introduced by: Senate Executive Council
Date: April 15, 2020

RATIONALE:

Whereas the SUNY Board of Trusteesⁱ, SUNY Chancellorⁱⁱ, and University at Albany Senateⁱⁱⁱ are all committed to the principles of shared governance; and

Whereas the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) has stated the importance of shared governance since 1920 and published the *1996 Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities*^{iv}, which was jointly formulated with the American Council on Education (ACE) and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB), and calls for “shared responsibility among the different components of institutional government and specifies areas of primary responsibility for governing boards, administrations, and faculties;”^v and

Whereas the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) advocates that shared governance relies on principles such as trust, sufficient time to engage in discussion, respecting diverse voices, broadening perspectives, and nurturing a productive culture in order to move institutions forward^{vi}; and

Whereas the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), the University at Albany’s accrediting body, requires shared governance in Standard VII Governance, Leadership, and Administration which includes, “a clearly articulated and transparent governance structure that outlines roles, responsibilities, and accountability for decision making by each constituency, including governing body, administration, faculty, staff, and students.” and “periodic assessment of the effectiveness of governance, leadership, and administration;”^{vii} and

Whereas the University Senate is committed to its responsibility to work collaboratively with the Administration towards the betterment of the University at Albany and serves as a repository of information on both the long-term functionality and day-to-day operations of our campus; and

Whereas there have been disagreements between the SEC and the Executive Leadership on implementation of shared governance in the recent past^{ix}:

RESOLUTION:

Therefore Let It Be It Resolved that in the spirit of shared governance, the University at Albany Senate will create a Task Force on University Shared Governance—with invited representation from the University Council, the President’s Executive Council, and the University Senate (including faculty, staff,

and student representatives)^{viii}—and charge this Task Force with preparing a comprehensive report on the state and effectiveness of shared governance at the University at Albany. This report should include:

- 1.) a review of higher education shared governance best practices and structures
- 2.) a review of the University at Albany self-study on shared governance generated for the current Middle States evaluation
- 3.) a set of recommendations identifying and implementing further procedures and policies for the promotion and development of shared governance at the University at Albany, inclusive of a mutually agreed upon mechanism for holding both Faculty and Administration accountable for failing to act in good faith in matters of shared governance and an implementation timeline, and
- 4.) a plan to assess the effectiveness of shared governance as called for by MSCHE Standard VII.

The Task Force will be charged with presenting their initial report of 1 and 2 above at the October 2020 University Senate meeting and their final report to include 3 and 4 above at the December 2020 University Senate meeting; and

Be It Further Resolved that the University Senate, the President and his Executive Council, and the University Council work together to enact the recommendations of the Task Force on University Shared Governance to promote a productive shared decision making culture in order to move the University at Albany forward.

ⁱ <https://www.suny.edu/media/suny/content-assets/documents/boardoftrustees/SUNY-BOT-Policies-Jan2019.pdf>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.suny.edu/about/shared-governance/>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.albany.edu/universitysenate/>

^{iv} <https://www.aaup.org/report/statement-government-colleges-and-universities>

^v <https://www.aaup.org/our-programs/shared-governance>

^{vi} <https://www.aascu.org/MAP/PublicPurpose/2015/Winter/SharingGovernance.pdf>

^{vii} https://www.msche.org/standards/#standard_7

^{viii} This representation reflects the constituencies identified in the *Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities* (AAUP, 1966) required for shared responsibility and cooperative action among the components of the academic institution.

^{ix} Examples include:

The Website Redesign – The University’s website is the primary means by which the University’s academic and professional faculty communicates with outside entities. The website is the face of the University and a reflection of the quality of scholarship and services we provide. For more than two years the University Senate had expressed grave concerns to the Administration about the website redesign, and had posed questions on numerous occasions about its roll-out, and content maintenance; the extended period of time that the University Senate’s concerns remained unaddressed and questions unanswered is unacceptable.

The University Senate was not consulted prior to actions taken by the Provost’s Office to move the Department of Information Science into the College of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security and Cybersecurity.