

Shared Governance Review Project

White Paper

Background Information and Process

Harper College's *College Plan* for 2011-2012 included several institutional priorities for the 2011-2012 year. Among them was the goal of conducting a campus-wide assessment and review of the College's Shared Governance System and developing recommendations (if any) for system modification. To accomplish this goal, a Shared Governance Steering Committee was formed in January 2012 to examine the policy development process outlined in the current Shared Governance system as it addresses instructional and academic programs, student support services and co-curricular activities, administrative and finance, and those policies affecting personnel practices and support systems. The Committee's specific responsibilities included:

- Understanding and supporting the purpose of shared governance at Harper College
- Reviewing literature on effective shared governance systems
- Reviewing and commenting on alternative frameworks for effective shared governance
- Establishment of a set of design guidelines to be used for evaluating the current system as well as recommendations for improvement
- Coordinating briefings that inform stakeholders of key benchmarks and progress
- Managing the participation of various constituency groups, including but not limited to employees, students, and community members
- Recommending a framework that will work within the culture, structure and climate of Harper College

A list of the individuals participating as part of the Shared Governance Committee is included at the end of this document.

The effort of the Shared Governance Steering Committee was seen as an eighteen-month effort. In the Spring of 2012, the committee focused on the following:

- High level review of the current shared governance structure and process at Harper College
- Review of the literature pertaining to shared governance in higher education
- Development of a definition of Shared Governance that aligns with Harper College culture, structure and climate
- Development of principles to guide the development of design criteria, governance structure and implementation
- Development of design criteria which reflect specific goals that the new governance structure must achieve in order to be successful

Subsequently, in the Fall of 2012, the work of the Steering Committee was shared with the entire college community through multiple discussion forums with college employees given a variety of mechanisms for contributing their feedback. During the fall, the Steering Committee also inventoried all current shared governance groups within the college and, using the feedback from employees, developed a revised shared governance structure for Harper College.

In the Spring of 2013, the new structure was again shared with the internal college community and the Steering Committee began work, in earnest, on the development of revised shared governance committee

charters, process flows and forms to be used within the proposed new shared governance system. This work was shared with existing shared governance committees and other groups within the College during the spring and was finalized for presentation to the College Assembly for approval in April of 2013.

This document reflects the work of the Shared Governance Steering Committee and serves as a high level description of the revised Shared Governance structure at Harper College.

Definition of Shared Governance

At Harper College, shared governance is defined as the process used to gather input and develop recommendations that may result in institutional policy and/or address campus needs. Collegial decision-making, open and broad-based communication, transparent processes, and timely decision-making characterize shared governance. Aligned with the mission, values and goals of the institution, shared governance seeks to balance maximum participation and decision-making with clear lines of accountability. Critical to our understanding of shared governance is the concept that all constituent groups of the college have a role to play, but not every constituent group has the same role.

Guiding Principles for Shared Governance

To guide the review of the Shared Governance structure at Harper College, the Shared Governance Steering Committee identified the following guiding principles that are meant to be simple, direct statements designed to reflect how we believe we should relate to each other and with our students. These guiding principles were derived from and align with the institution's core values of integrity, respect, excellence and collaboration.

- The Shared Governance System will recommend policy as informed by employee and student involvement to anticipate and address the institutional needs of the College, as a whole.
- We will hold each other accountable for active and responsible participation in the Shared Governance system.
- We recognize our interdependence and will work together to address and resolve issues in a consensual manner, as they arise.
- Transparency in processes is critical to our success.
- Our decisions will align with the mission, vision and values of Harper College and will positively affect students and employees to create a successful learning and work environment.
- Each member of the Harper College community is valued and we will encourage broad-based involvement of stakeholder groups in the Shared Governance System so that each member of the community may contribute his/her expertise in meaningful ways and to aid in the success of the institution.
- Faculty are recognized as experts in their subject matter areas and we value their input in this regard.
- We will create an open and safe environment for gathering input and exchanging ideas to inform the work of Shared Governance.
- Through our system of Shared Governance we will foster collaboration, the building of community, and a rewarding environment.
- We will openly listen to each other and respond with empathy and respect.
- We will use positive humor to affirm a healthy and enjoyable environment.

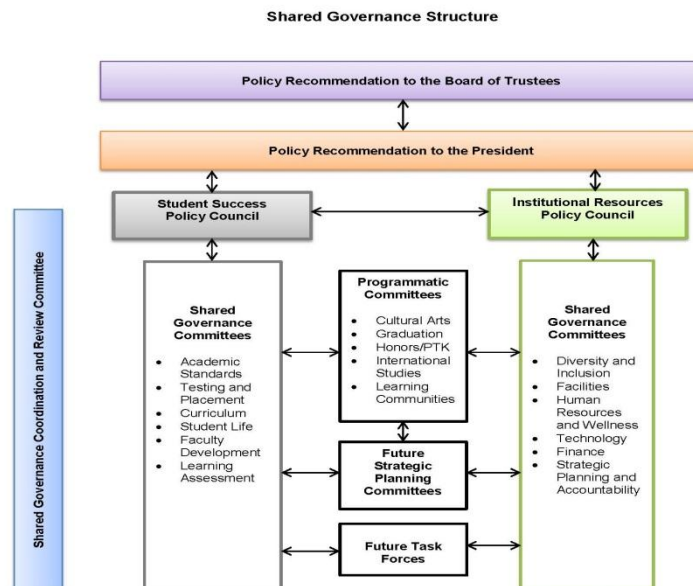
Design Criteria for Shared Governance

Design criteria are explicit, clearly stated goals that the governance structure must achieve in order to be successful. At Harper College, the shared governance structure must:

- Align with the College mission, goals and core values
- Align with the institution's organizational and administrative structure
- Include membership from constituent groups and those with relevant expertise
- Include clear, well-understood, and transparent processes for routing information and recommendations to appropriate decision-making bodies
- Be flexible to ensure ongoing active participation
- Include clear definitions of what is and what is not included in shared governance, including how shared governance and other collaborative decision making groups are created and managed
- Include mechanisms for widespread, two-way "real-time" communication
- Include regular and ongoing assessment and review of committee charges and their relevance
- Provide professional development and ongoing training in shared governance principles and procedures

Role of Collaborative Decision Making

Harper College values a culture that engages and solicits input, thus creating a collaborative decision making environment. This allows for the sharing of ideas that can originate from "the bottom-up" as well as "top-down" constituents. Based upon the Guiding Principles and Design Criteria for Shared Governance above, the Shared Governance Steering Committee developed the following new Shared Governance Structure for Harper College.



In this Shared Governance Structure, there are two *policy councils* that review recommendations brought forth from institutional committees. These councils are responsible for thoroughly vetting recommendations to ensure approvals were obtained through a first reading of the proposal. Once this has been ascertained, the policy councils are responsible for gathering representative group input/feedback. After input/feedback has been gathered and there are no substantive issues or challenges with the recommendation, the policy councils forward recommendations to the President for consideration by the Board of Trustees.

Shared Governance Committees within the new structure, focus on issues of ongoing, institution-wide significance. These committees have specific charges that will be reviewed and assessed for relevance on an annual basis. Shared Governance Committees are supported by institutional administrators and administrative support personnel. Shared Governance Committees will have, as part of their purview, the development of policy recommendations that will be submitted to one of the Policy Councils for review and consideration.

The other major component of the new Shared Governance Structure is the Shared Governance Coordination and Review Committee whose primary purpose is to coordinate the Harper College system of shared governance to ensure that it works.

In addition to the Policy Councils, Shared Governance Committees, and the Shared Governance Coordination and Review Committee that compose the formal shared governance structure, there are Programmatic Committees that are primarily focused on specific programs or events. Any policy-related recommendations emanating from a Programmatic Committee must be vetted through a Shared Governance Committee before being submitted to a Policy Council. Programmatic Committees have designated charters that will also be reviewed and assessed for relevance on an annual basis.

The College may also establish future strategic planning committees or future task forces that will be defined as ad-hoc committees. These committees will have direct institution-wide impact, and will be authorized and charged by the Office of the President. Task forces will exist only for the specific timeframe required to complete their charge.

College administrators, managers and department chairs/coordinators shall also be authorized to create whatever department-specific committees necessary to ensure that collaborative input is solicited.

Any decision or recommendation that will result in policy creation or change must move through the shared governance process before going to the President and the Board of Trustees.

Roles in the Shared Governance Process

- The Board of Trustees – The Board of Trustees is the official authorizing body for the College. The Board sets policy based on broad participation obtained through the shared governance process and recommended by the President.
- Constituents – Defined broadly, constituents include the groups mentioned below.
 - Employees – Employee participation in shared governance may be based on employee group as well as area of expertise. Employee involvement in shared governance should be used to ensure that policy recommendations are informed by the opinions of those most impacted by the decisions at hand and that the work of the College is completed. Employee groups include:
 - Administration
 - Full-time faculty

- Adjunct faculty
 - Professional Technical
 - Supervisory/Management
 - Classified
 - Custodial Maintenance (Physical Plant)
 - Harper College Police
- The College Administration – Led by the President of the College, the administration has overall accountability for managing the institution. It is the job of the administration to ensure that recommendations forwarded to the Board of Trustees have been vetted through the shared governance process, to establish and support the overall governance structure, and to align the work of shared governance with institutional priorities. It is also the administration’s responsibility to ensure broad-based communication related to the shared governance process is evident.
 - Students – Students shall participate in shared governance based upon the particular charge of the governance committee or task force.

The Importance of Good Communication in the Shared Governance Process

Open, broad-based, two-way communication is a critical component of effective shared governance. Individuals who participate in shared governance activities have a major responsibility for communicating with the constituent group they represent to gain input into governance work as well as to share the deliberations and outcomes resulting from the governance activity. The Harper College Shared Governance Steering Committee worked for over 14 months on the revision of the Harper College Shared Governance structure with a primary focus on ensuring improved two-way communication on issues of importance moving through the shared governance structure. It is believed that the new structure will improve communication in the following specific ways.

1. Linking the Policy Councils and the Shared Governance committees to the college organizational structure, through the appointment of non-voting, ex-officio members will identify specific individuals who will have the primary responsibility for ensuring that open, broad-based communication of committee activities and actions is collected and disseminated college-wide.
2. Providing designated administrative support for each of the Policy Councils and the Shared Governance Committees, will ensure support for the production and posting of agendas, the compilation and posting of meeting minutes and other related tasks so that the workings of the committees are posted to the portal or other communication outlet as specified and so that everyone in the College can educate himself/herself on what is happening.
3. Requiring the Policy Councils and the Shared Governance Committees to post all agendas, meeting minutes, recommendations and action items within a specified time period on the portal or other communication outlet, will allow the College community to have timely notification of events and upcoming discussions.
4. Expanding the membership of Policy Councils and Shared Governance Committees to include multiple constituencies ensures that more voices will be included in discussions and decision-making.
5. Implementing the Shared Governance Proposal Recommendation Process for both non-policy and policy recommendations, and assigning the non-voting, ex-officio member of the councils/committees to assist in identifying stakeholder groups whose input should be solicited on items coming before the councils/committees, will better ensure a more comprehensive institutional review of recommendations as they are being formed and before final action is taken. Included with this new process is the assurance that the input of the Faculty Senate and the

- Communications Council will be solicited on all recommendations coming before the Policy Councils and the Shared Governance Committees.
6. Including the a Harper College internal communications manager as a non-voting member of the Shared Governance Coordination and Review Committee, will help to provide broader communication of shared governance events through an expanded number of on-campus communication vehicles.
 7. Clearly stipulating that shared governance meetings are open and that anyone is free to attend meetings and providing a special comments period on each meeting agenda, will allow more individuals to participate in shared governance discussions.
 8. Training for all shared governance participants, particularly Chairs and Vice-Chairs of shared governance councils and committees, including responsibilities for communicating shared governance activities, will better ensure consistent processes across all shared governance groups.

Shared Governance Artifacts

In addition to the development of new/revised charters for all of the Shared Governance Committees, the Policy Councils and the Shared Governance Coordination and Review Committee, the Shared Governance Steering Committee developed process flow diagrams that clearly show how recommendations move through the new Shared Governance Structure. The committee also revised or developed new templates for the working of the various shared governance groups to ensure consistency and open communication. These work flow processes and artifacts, along with all shared governance charters can be found on the employee portal.

Members of the Harper College Shared Governance Committee

Ken Ender – Convener
Sheila Quirk-Bailey – from Oversight Committee
Judy Marwick – from Oversight Committee
Tom Dowd – from Oversight Committee
Anne Abasolo – from Oversight Committee
Margie Sedano – from Oversight Committee
Donna Harwood – Supervisory/Management
Festus Johnson – Classified
Diane Talsma – ICOPS
Darin Buckman – IEA/NEA Physical Plant
Robert Alexander – Adjunct Faculty
Tammie Mahoney – College Assembly

Maria Coons – Supporting Steering Committee
Evelyn Seiler – Support Staff
Jan Baltzer – Consultant