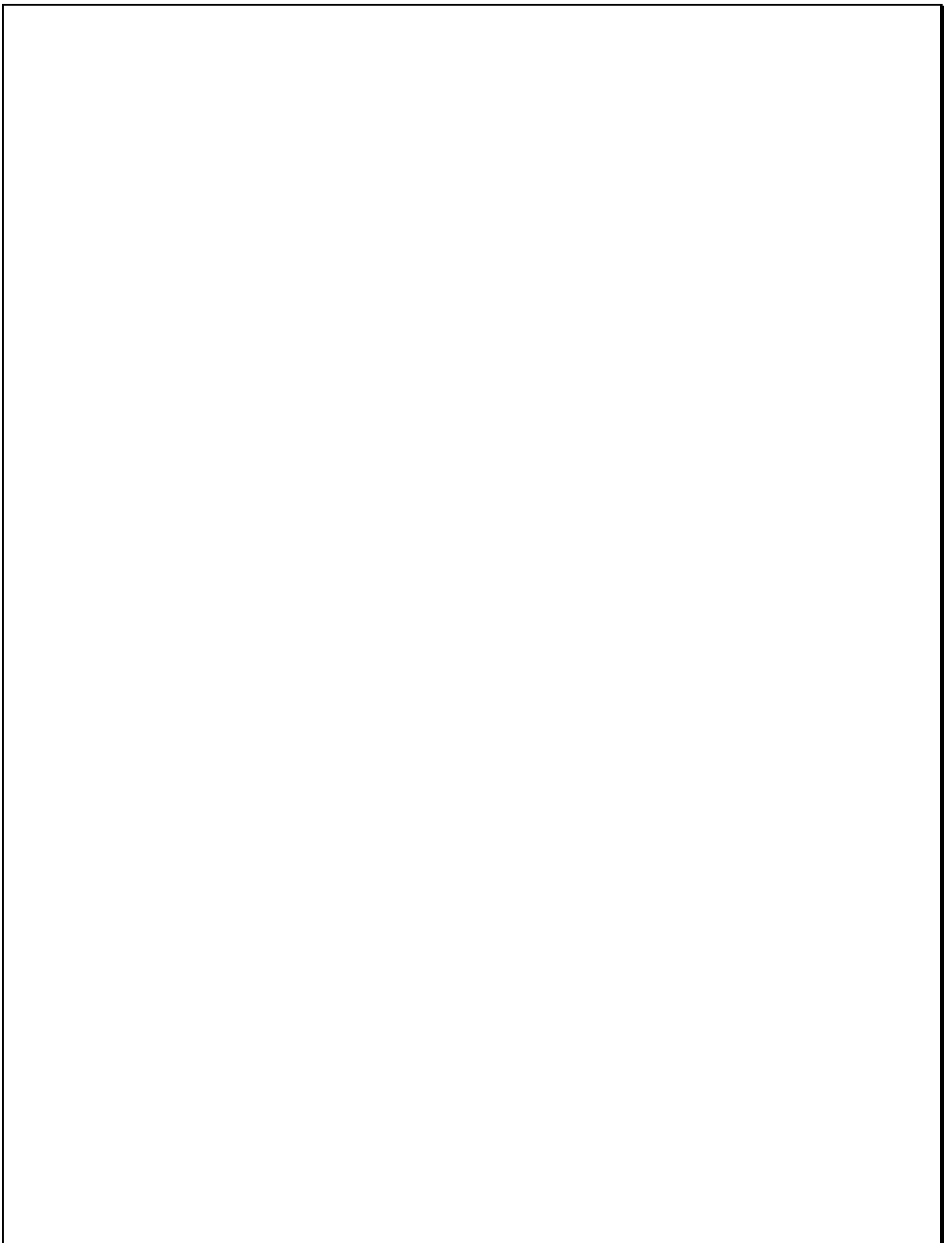**An Evaluation of the Shared Governance System
At Harper College**

Summer 2004

Prepared by the Office of Research
Teaming to Serve Research Needs of the College
August 11, 2004

Executive Summary

In spring 2004, a multi-method research process was used to investigate the shared governance system at Harper College. The research strategy included focus groups with committees, a survey of committee members to assess their satisfaction with the system, and a survey of employees who were not serving on a committee to assess how well the system was meeting their needs.

Notable findings include:
- The shared governance system is an important part of the culture of the College, allowing participation and building collegiality;
- Committee members perceive that the system allows a forum for reasoned deliberation, leading to the gradual betterment of the institution;
- Committee members recognize that there are trade-offs inherent in a democratic system—they stated that gathering input from multiple parties may be inefficient, but a democratic system is preferred to the alternatives;
- Communication between committees is infrequent and generally through informal channels (e.g., conversations between colleagues);
- Many committee members actually do not desire more frequent or formal communication, preferring to seek out information based on their own interests;
- Members of committees generally work well together in a positive, collegial environment;
- Committee members generally feel that they are making a contribution to policies at the College;
- The process by which committees (especially Assembly committees) forward their recommendations and receive feedback on actions taken is poorly understood;
- Many committee members, especially those on Assembly committees, indicate that their committees have outgrown their original charge;
- Some committee members suggested that it may be desirable to have one committee (e.g., the Oversight Committee, the Assembly Committee, or the committee of Governance Chairs) serve as a "central clearinghouse" that assigns issues to the most appropriate committee;
- A bare majority of committee members reported being satisfied with the system, while only about 20% of non-members reported being satisfied;
- Among committee members, Academic and Programmatic members were generally more satisfied with the system than members of Assembly committees;
- Among non-members, Faculty were generally the most satisfied employee group, while Classified and IEA/NEA were generally less satisfied;
- The system might benefit from a formal orientation process for both new committee members and new committee chairs;
- Some committees reported having good experiences with a "co-chair" system in which the outgoing chair serves as a mentor to the new chair for a year,

thereby providing continuity and sharing the benefits of their experience with the process;

- Information about the committees should be more accessible, to the committee members themselves and to employees at large (a suggestion is to re-work the committee information on the HIP page, including updated rosters, the committees' likely agendas for the upcoming year, and an interface whereby employees can bring issues to the attention of the committees);
- The process by which new committee members are selected should be made more transparent, including feedback to those not selected; and
- Care should be taken to provide information in a manner accessible to all employees—in addition to updating the information on the HIP page, email notifications can be used, as well as hardcopy memos and bulletin board postings where appropriate.

Introduction

Built into Harper College's shared governance system is a periodic evaluation of the system itself (see the committee data sheets for the College Assembly and the Oversight Committee). In an effort to assess where the system is strong and meeting the needs of the College, and where opportunities for improvement may be found, the Office of Research teamed with the College Assembly, the Oversight Committee, and the Chairs of all shared governance committees to design a research process. The research process included focus groups with the shared governance committees themselves, a survey of committee members, and a survey of Harper employees who were not serving on any committee. This multi-method approach was designed to gather information from all constituents who could be affected by the shared governance system.

Focus groups were completed with eighteen out of twenty shared governance committees (a 90% response rate). Of the 266 employees currently serving on shared governance committees, 159 completed member surveys were received (a 59.8% response rate). The non-member survey was sent to 570 employees; 140 completed surveys were received, for a response rate of 24.6%. Taken as a whole, the data-gathering process provides confidence that all Harper employees had the opportunity to share their input; the response rates are high enough to give confidence in the research findings. This report details the findings of the research process, and suggests recommendations for further consideration where appropriate.

The report is organized into an Executive Summary, an Introduction, a Results and Discussion Section that presents the results from the focus groups and the two surveys, and a Summary Section. Verbatim comments from the surveys, as well as copies of the focus group protocol and the survey instruments, are presented in Appendix A.

Results and Discussion

The three data-gathering strategies (the focus groups, the committee member survey, and the non-member survey) will be discussed separately below, with the findings integrated in a subsequent section.

Committee Focus Groups

A focus group protocol[1] was designed to obtain committee members' insights into what the concept of "shared governance" means to them, as well as their more specific observations about the specific committee on which they were serving. Focus groups were held during the regularly-scheduled meeting times of committees, in order to maximize the likelihood that members would be able to attend and to minimize disruptions to peoples' schedules. A copy of the focus group protocol is provided in the Appendix.

Focus groups lasted approximately ninety minutes. To ensure that people could share their candid opinions, participants were assured of the anonymity of their responses. Participants were first asked their thoughts about the philosophy of shared governance (i.e., what the concept means to them, the goal(s) a shared governance system should serve). Next, they were asked to share their experiences with their current committee, including: the effectiveness of communication; the division of labor in the committee; feedback regarding the committee's decisions/recommendations; how they represent their constituents (most committees have members appointed as representatives of their employee group); and, any ideas they may have regarding how the system can be made more effective.

Tables below show the common themes in responses, tabulated by the type of committee (Academic, Assembly, Programmatic, and Oversight). The most common responses are listed first in the tables. The first table shows the themes that emerged regarding the philosophy of shared governance.

Table 1: Philosophy of Shared Governance

Issue/Theme	Number of Mentions by Committee Type				
	Academic	Assembly	Programmatic	Oversight	Total
Voice, input, participation, representation	8	18	15	2	43
Rules, procedures, structure	4	8	3	1	16
Improve the institution	5	5	3	1	14

---

[1] A focus group protocol is simply a "script" used by the focus group facilitator to provide structure to the discussion.

Table 1: Continued

Issue/Theme	Number of Mentions by Committee Type				
	Academic	**Assembly**	**Programmatic**	**Oversight**	**Total**
Input from people with relevant expertise	2	4	4	1	11
Build community	4	2	4	1	11
Control	4	3	3	1	11
Share opinions, all play a role	2	5	2	1	10
Checks and balances	2	4	2		8
Democratic ideal	2	4	2		8
Bureaucracy	2	1	3	1	7
Slow, gradual, conservative change	5		1		6
Actions/decisions, not just voice		3	2		5
Synergy		3			3
Structure, order	1	1		1	3
Different issues are important to different people	1		1		2
Keep people informed		2			2
Decision making		1		1	2
Setting goals		1		1	2
Maintenance	1		1		2
Stewardship		1	1		2
Make the best decisions		1			1

When asked their philosophy of shared governance, committee members most commonly said that the shared governance system was a forum to allow more people to have input into decisions that affect the institution. The participatory process was sometimes taken as a means of obtaining buy-in, sometimes as a means of involving those with relevant expertise, and sometimes as a means of ensuring decision quality by considering a range of perspectives. Regardless of the underlying process (ranging from political to pragmatic), the sense was that increased participation was a good thing—the notion that individuals should have the opportunity to provide input into issues that affected them or interested them.

Shared governance was discussed in terms of a democratic ideal, and it was mentioned that giving people voice in the system provides a check to the power of any

one group on campus. Several participants mentioned that shared governance was a shared *responsibility*, in addition to a shared right. Governance was acknowledged as a bureaucratic process; interestingly, several participants noted that slow, conservative change was a positive thing. Given the magnitude and potential far-reaching impact of some committee decisions (especially the Academic committees), the perception was that it was more important to get the decision "right" than to rush to judgment. When asked about the goals of the shared governance system, participants mentioned the opportunity to participate as an end in itself, the betterment of the institution as a whole, and the building of a sense of community (within and between different employee groups).

The themes that emerged regarding the committee process are broken out by several major topic areas in the tables below.

Table 2a: The Committee Process: Communication Between Committees

Issue/Theme	Number of Mentions by Committee Type				
	Academic	Assembly	Programmatic	Oversight	Total
Communication is infrequent/ accidental	8	13	6	1	28
Need more interaction between chairs	2	5	1		8
Share annual reports	1	3	2		6
Lack of communication is OK	3		2		5
Provide monthly updates	2	1	1		4
Form subcommittees with overlapping members		1	2		3
Don't rely on HIP, use email too		1	1	1	3
Don't know who Oversight committee is	1		1		2
New faculty don't know how to get on committees			1		1
Should share information via hardcopy			1		1

When asked about communication between committees (were they aware of what other committees were working on, etc.), participants were consistent in reporting that the communication was infrequent. In fact, the communication was often described as

"accidental," meaning that they only heard about the work of other committees through personal relationships (i.e., if they served on more than one committee, or someone they knew served on another committee and it happened to come up in conversation). Interestingly, most participants seemed unconcerned about the lack of communication; some said that if they were interested in the work of other committees, they would take steps to find out. There were several suggestions as to how to improve communication, including: holding more frequent meetings of committee chairs; forming subcommittees with members from several different committees; and building a structure to make the committees' work more accessible to the campus community (such as posting annual reports and other work product on the HIP page, emailing committee updates, sharing hard copies of committees' work products). There was no one clear method for sharing committee information that would satisfy the needs of all employee groups (i.e., not all groups have ready access to the HIP page or email; hard copy may not be the most efficient use of resources; etc.). It is unclear whether communication needs to be improved via a formal structure, or by strengthening the more informal channels that are currently in use.

Table 2b: The Committee Process: Feedback on Committee Decisions

	Number of Mentions by Committee Type				
Issue/Theme	Academic	Assembly	Programmatic	Oversight	Total
Decision process is vague	9	14	4		27
Just provide recommendations, not decisions or implementation		3			3

Participants most often reported that the committee decision process was vague. For example, they were not aware of where their decisions/recommendations were sent (committee chairs were familiar with the process, but members at large were not), and they often did not hear any feedback about whether their recommendations were approved or how they were implemented. In response to the first point, it can be noted that the decision process is explained in the committee information on the HIP page, and that members are not aware because they usually do not *need* to be aware (the committee chairs are typically responsible for forwarding their recommendations through the proper channels). Despite this, the second point still holds: the perception is that, once a recommendation has been forwarded, that is the last that a committee hears about a given issue. Even committee chairs reported that feedback was lacking. For the sake of closure, committee members would likely appreciate a feedback loop from whoever is approving and/or implementing their recommendations.

A point raised by some Assembly committee members was that their committees simply provided recommendations (which could be accepted or not)—some members indicated that this sometimes made them feel as part of a façade of shared governance, that they could express an opinion but that their opinion had no real weight. This point is related to the relative ambiguity (see below) of the charges of Assembly committees:

Academic and Programmatic committees often have a more clearly defined charge, and a longer institutional history, than Assembly committees.

Table 2c: The Committee Process: Working on This Committee

Issue/Theme	Academic	Assembly	Programmatic	Oversight	Total
Committee works well together	7	3	8		18
Dissent is rare	3	6	5		14
Can make self/own opinions heard	3	4	4		11
Committee's charge is hard to define	2	6			8
Need to update committee's charge		5	2		7
Informal discussion and consensus	3	2			5
Need more resources	1		3		4
A demanding committee	1	3			4
Division of labor in committee is good/improving	2		2		4
Committee is not vital/vibrant		3			3
Committee is needed			3		3
Need members to share more honest opinions		2			2
Attendance can be a problem		1	1		2
Committee is almost irrelevant		1			1
Committee is vital/vibrant			1		1

  When participants were asked about their experience on their current committee, the responses generally indicated that the committee had a positive, collegial internal dynamic. Open dissent among members was apparently rare; when there was disagreement about an issue, the committee discussed the various sides to come to a consensus position. Participants generally indicated that they felt they could make their opinions heard in their committee (if any participants did not feel this way, they did not voice the concern during the focus groups). While many members indicated that dissent was rare, on rare occasions people noted that *more* dissent would be useful and desired.

There was a concern voiced by a few participants that people were not taking the opportunity to voice their true opinions about issues during committee meetings. Some noted that people sometimes expressed any concerns privately to the committee chair.

Some participants, notably those in Assembly committees, mentioned that it may be time to update their committee's charge. The concern was that a committee may have been formed to deal with a particular issue, and once the issue had been resolved the committee felt a relative lack of direction and purpose. In some cases, the committee simply needs a new charge; in others, it may make sense to reconstitute as a subcommittee of another committee; in others, the recommendation may be to disband the committee entirely.

Table 2d: The Committee Process: Efficiency and Effectiveness

Issue/Theme	Number of Mentions by Committee Type				
	Academic	Assembly	Programmatic	Oversight	Total
Shared governance is vague	2	10	6		18
Trade-off: speed/efficiency vs. participation	6	3	2	1	12
Too many meetings	3	3	4		10
System is not perfect, but as good as it can be (worthwhile tradeoffs)	4	2	1	1	8
Committee chairs are overworked	3	1	2	1	7
Oversight committee should do more to approve changes, streamline practices	2	1	2	1	6
System is cumbersome inefficient by nature	4			1	5
Too much information		1	2	1	4
Duplication of effort		3			3
Diffusion of responsibilities		1	2		3
Concerns get diluted, issues fall through cracks		2			2
Division of labor between committees is vague			1		1

Focus group participants commented on the perceived efficiency and effectiveness of the shared governance system. The most common theme was that shared governance was vague, either as a concept or as a system. People were not always sure of what the system was intended to accomplish, the specific mandates of their committees, the process by which decisions are made and implemented. Related to the point raised above, members of the Assembly committees were apparently more likely to raise this concern. Several participants noted that there was a trade-off inherent in any democratic system: decisions take longer to make, simply because it takes more time to allow for participation and to achieve buy-in. Some participants explicitly stated that this was a worthwhile trade-off to make: the quote that democracy is the "least bad" form of government was often repeated, a recognition that any system has its flaws, but the flaws of a democratic system are preferable to the alternatives. Participants noted that it sometimes felt as if there were "too many meetings," but the concern was more about the effectiveness of meetings than the number of meetings.

Several participants mentioned the "vagueness" of the system as leading to a potential for duplicated effort. When the division of labor between committees is unclear, the possibility exists that two or more committees may be exploring the same issues. The converse may also be true, in that issues may "fall through the cracks" because it is unclear which committee "owns" the issue. Perhaps related to the "vagueness" of the system, several participants noted that the burden was most often carried by the committee chairs, leading to the chairs being overworked. Some noted that the Oversight committee should do more to streamline processes, and provide approvals more quickly (for procedural issues like adding new members to committees, etc.).

Table 2e: The Committee Process: Possible Improvements to the System

Issue/Theme	Number of Mentions by Committee Type				
	Academic	Assembly	Programmatic	Oversight	Total
Training for new members is needed	2	8	4		14
Need a different committee structure	4	9			13
Lack of trust (esp. between faculty and administration)	1	7	5		13
Faculty need committee membership for promotions		3	2		5
Co-chairs for smooth transition		1	3		4
Is information open, or is it being "managed"?		3			3
Assembly committee has vague purpose		3			3

Table 2e: Continued

Issue/Theme	Academic	Assembly	Programmatic	Oversight	Total
How to assign issues to committees		1	1		2
Committees should communicate their agenda for upcoming year	1				1
Should make greater use of subcommittees	1				1

Number of Mentions by Committee Type spans the Academic, Assembly, Programmatic, Oversight, and Total columns.

The most frequent suggestion for improving the shared governance system was also the most concrete: a training or orientation should be provided to new committee members, and to new chairs. The committees that currently had a "co-chair" structure (an experienced chair to serve as mentor, a new chair to serve as protégé) remarked that it helped the committee work effectively through transitions in leadership. One person suggested that the volunteer services group in the Harper Foundation could be called upon to provide the new member/chair training, as it would be in some ways similar to the orientation offered to new volunteers. A good number of participants, especially among the Assembly committees, suggested that the committee structure be modified (i.e., modifying the charge of a committee; changing the type of committee, for example from Assembly to Programmatic, etc.).

A surprising number of participants noted a lack of trust between some employee groups, especially between faculty and administration; some people only alluded to this, but some said it outright. As a related point, several members voiced the rhetorical question of whether information is truly open, or if it is being managed to serve some agenda. There is a concern that the shared governance system may be radically modified, in the name of efficiency, and that the modification would result in a reduced opportunity for voice and participation.

Several participants noted that the current promotion system for faculty more or less requires committee participation; as a result, any reduction to the current number of committees would need to take this into account, and broaden the definition of "service" accordingly.

Some participants commented that the Assembly committee has a vague purpose (related to the point about restructuring committees, some wondered if their committee should report to the Assembly, or directly to a Vice President as a Programmatic committee). A suggestion was made that the Assembly committee could revise its role to serve as a central clearinghouse for issues, assigning issues to the most appropriate committee. Related to the point about creating an orientation program for new chairs and members, people generally felt that the committees would work more effectively if new members and chairs were selected in the spring for the upcoming fall. Similarly, one

person suggested that committees publicize their agendas for the upcoming year to allow people to decide which committees were addressing issues to which they could contribute.

Table 2f: The Committee Process: Representing a Constituency

Issue/Theme	Number of Mentions by Committee Type				
	Academic	Assembly	Programmatic	Oversight	Total
Constituency doesn't offer input	4	5	2		11
Represent self and constituency	2	3	5		10
Need to focus on students	2	1	2		5
Represent the needs of students		3	1		4
Invite guests with relevant information		2	2		4
Interface with constituency is random	2	2			4
Have surveyed constituency	1		1		2
Represent the Harper community		1			1
Need more campus-wide involvement		1			1

Participants were asked how they felt about the shared governance system as a representative democracy: that is, were they conscious of their role in representing their employee group? Participants most often responded that their constituents did not really offer input, with the implication that people are generally as involved as they want to be (related to the point made above, that communication is infrequent, but people hear about what interests them). If an issue was important to a person, the perception was that that person would find a way to communicate with the relevant committee member. A good number of participants said that they were generally conscious of their group's perspective on an issue, and took that into account while in committee meetings. However, very few reported having done anything systematic to ascertain their constituency's feelings on an issue; when input was obtained, it was most often done informally, for example through casual discussions with colleagues over lunch.

Committee Survey

A brief survey was designed to be used in conjunction with the focus group; it was distributed to focus group participants at the end of the session, and they were asked to complete the survey and return it before the meeting was adjourned. On rare instances,

people had to leave the session early; these individuals were asked to send the survey back via campus mail. For one committee whose agenda was booked until the end of the semester, the survey was sent to its members via email. A copy of the survey is presented in the Appendix. Responses to the survey are presented below. Statistically significant differences in responses based on committee type (Academic, Assembly, or Programmatic) are also discussed where applicable.

Table 3: Number of Survey Respondents by Committee

Committee	Number of Respondents
Academic Standards	14
Assessment and Testing	10
College Assembly	8
Cultural Arts	10
Curriculum	9
Diversity	5
Facilities	6
Graduation	5
Human Resources	8
Institutional Planning Review	8
Institutional Technology	11
Instructional Technology	7
International Studies	5
Learning Communities	10
Marketing	7
Oversight	5
Student Life	8
Teaching and Learning	12
Wellness	11

Table 4: Becoming a Part of Shared Governance

Do you feel that Harper employees know the process of how to become a member of a committee? (N=152)	Academic n (%)	Assembly[2] n (%)	Programmatic n (%)	Overall n (%)
Definitely yes[a]	4 (9.3%)	1 (1.7%)	2 (4.1%)	7 (4.6%)
Mostly yes	21 (48.8%)	15 (25.0%)	23 (46.9%)	59 (38.6%)
Not sure	9 (20.9%)	12 (20.0%)	5 (10.2%)	26 (17.1%)
Mostly no	9 (20.9%)	24 (40.0%)	18 (36.7%)	51 (33.6%)
Definitely no	0 (0.0%)	8 (13.3%)	1 (2.0%)	9 (5.9%)

[a] Members of Academic committees were more likely to indicate that employees knew how to become committee members (χ^2=22.43, df=8, p<.01).

---

[2] Throughout this section of the report, "Assembly committees" refers to the group of Assembly committees, e.g., Facilities, Human Resources, Institutional Planning, Institutional Technology, etc., and not narrowly to the College Assembly.

In general, committee members were ambivalent about whether or not employees know how to become a part of the shared governance system—roughly equal numbers report that employees do and do not know. Members of Academic committees were more likely to indicate that employees knew the process; members of Assembly and Programmatic committees were more likely to indicate "mostly no." Furthermore, Assembly committee members indicated "definitely no" more than members of other committees. This suggests that the process of becoming a part of shared governance can be made more transparent.

Table 5: Bringing Issues to a Committee's Attention

Do you feel that Harper employees know how to bring an issue to a committee's attention? (N=151)	Academic n (%)	Assembly n (%)	Programmatic n (%)	Overall n (%)
Definitely yes[a]	2 (4.7%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (2.0%)	3 (2.0%)
Mostly yes	16 (37.2%)	10 (16.9%)	14 (28.6%)	40 (26.5%)
Not sure	12 (27.9%)	13 (22.0%)	11 (22.4%)	36 (23.8%)
Mostly no	13 (30.2%)	32 (54.2%)	23 (46.9%)	68 (45.0%)
Definitely no	0 (0.0%)	4 (6.8%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (2.6%)

[a] Members of Academic committees were more likely to indicate that employees knew how to bring an issue to a committee's attention (χ^2=16.58, df=8, p<.05).

When asked if they believed Harper employees knew how to bring an issue to a committee's attention, committee members were again ambivalent, but were more likely to lean toward the negative. Members of Academic committees were again more likely to indicate that employees were aware of the process. Since part of having a voice is being able to bring issues forward to the appropriate body, an important opportunity for improvement may lie in communicating more clearly the appropriate channels to have one's issues heard by the system.

Table 6: Awareness of Other Committees' Work

Are you aware of what other committees are doing? (N=157)	Overall n (%)
Definitely yes[a]	3 (1.9%)
Mostly yes	27 (17.2%)
Not sure	12 (7.6%)
Mostly no	90 (57.3%)
Definitely no	25 (15.9%)

[a] Responses from different types of committees were not statistically different.

When asked if they were aware of what other committees were working on, most committee members (73.2%) said that they were not. This was consistent across the different committee types. As noted above in the focus group responses, the committee members themselves may not necessarily see this as a problem, the perception being that they can find out about the issues that interest them.

Table 7: Effectiveness of This Committee

Do you feel as if issues are being addressed by this committee? (N=151)	Academic n (%)	Assembly n (%)	Programmatic n (%)	Overall n (%)
Definitely yes[a]	25 (59.5%)	19 (33.9%)	32 (66.7%)	76 (52.1%)
Mostly yes	17 (40.5%)	24 (42.9%)	14 (29.2%)	55 (37.7%)
Not sure	0 (0.0%)	8 (14.3%)	2 (4.2%)	10 (6.8%)
Mostly no	0 (0.0%)	5 (8.9%)	0 (0.0%)	5 (3.4%)
Definitely no	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)

[a] Members of Academic and Programmatic committees were more likely to indicate that issues were being addressed (χ^2=23.30, df=8, p<.001).

The great majority of committee members (89.8%) indicated that issues were being addressed by their committees. However, Academic and Programmatic committees were far more likely to make this assertion than Assembly committees. A small number of Assembly committee members (8.9%) reported that issues were *not* being addressed by their committees. This point is likely related to the perception, noted in the prior section, that Assembly committees have vague charges in comparison to the other types of committees, and also related to the relative newness of Assembly committees in the shared governance structure (Academic and Programmatic committees predate the current shared governance system).

Table 8: Voice

Do you feel like the employee group you represent has a voice because of your participation on this committee? (N=151)	Academic n (%)	Assembly n (%)	Programmatic n (%)	Overall n (%)
Definitely yes[a]	20 (46.5%)	20 (33.9%)	23 (46.9%)	63 (41.7%)
Mostly yes	20 (46.5%)	21 (35.6%)	16 (32.7%)	57 (37.7%)
Not sure	0 (0.0%)	8 (13.6%)	9 (18.4%)	17 (11.3%)
Mostly no	3 (7.0%)	7 (11.9%)	0 (0.0%)	10 (6.6%)
Definitely no	0 (0.0%)	3 (5.1%)	1 (2.0%)	4 (2.6%)

[a] Members of Academic and Programmatic committees were more likely to indicate that their groups had a voice (χ^2=18.25, df=8, p<.05).

The majority of respondents (79.4%) indicated that their participation on a shared governance committee did give their employee group a voice in the system. Again, though, the members of Academic and Programmatic committees were more likely to respond positively than Assembly committee members.

Table 9: Familiarity with Committee's Data Sheet

Are you familiar with your committee's data sheet? (N=159)	Overall n (%)
Definitely yes[a]	75 (47.2%)
Mostly yes	59 (37.1%)
Not sure	10 (6.3%)
Mostly no	10 (6.3%)
Definitely no	5 (3.1%)

[a] Responses from different types of committees were not statistically different.

A great majority of respondents (84.3%) reported being familiar with their committee's data sheet. However, 15.7% were either unsure or not familiar with their data sheet.

Table 10: Contribution to Policies

Do you feel your committee makes an important contribution to policies at Harper? (N=152)	Academic n (%)	Assembly n (%)	Programmatic n (%)	Overall n (%)
Definitely yes[a]	33 (76.7%)	23 (38.3%)	26 (56.1%)	82 (53.9%)
Mostly yes	7 (16.3%)	21 (35.0%)	15 (30.6%)	43 (28.3%)
Not sure	2 (4.7%)	7 (11.7%)	5 (10.2%)	14 (9.2%)
Mostly no	1 (2.3%)	8 (13.3%)	2 (4.1%)	11 (7.2%)
Definitely no	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.7%)	1 (2.0%)	2 (1.3%)

[a] Members of Academic committees were most likely to feel that their committee made important policy contributions; Programmatic committee members were next most likely, while Assembly committee members were less likely than the others (χ^2=17.53, df=8, p<.05).

Once again, a large majority of respondents (82.2%) indicated that their committee makes an important contribution to policies at the College. This perception indicates a strength of the system: people feel as if they are having an impact for the betterment of the institution. However, the level of impact appears to vary somewhat dramatically depending on the type of committee on which one serves. Academic committee members resoundingly agreed that their committee definitely had an impact on policies. A majority of Programmatic committee members also gave the most positive response. Members of Assembly committees only gave the most positive response approximately one-third of the time, and were more likely than other committee members to give negative responses (just over one-quarter of Assembly committee members were unsure, or said their committee did not have an impact).

Table 11: Orientation to Committee Work

Would it be helpful to have a formal orientation for new committee members and new chairs? (N=159)	Overall n (%)
Definitely yes[a]	102 (64.2%)
Mostly yes	31 (19.5%)
Not sure	17 (10.7%)
Mostly no	6 (3.8%)
Definitely no	3 (1.9%)

[a] Responses from different types of committees were not statistically different.

The great majority of respondents (83.7%) agreed that it would be helpful to have some sort of orientation program to familiarize new members and chairs with the role.

Table 12: Communication Between Committees

How would you rate the communication between committees? (N=159)	Overall n (%)
Definitely good[a]	7 (4.4%)
Mostly good	23 (14.5%)
Not sure	34 (21.4%)
Mostly poor	65 (40.9%)
Definitely poor	30 (18.9%)

[a] Responses from different types of committees were not statistically different.

Most committee members (59.8%) agreed that communication between committees was generally poor. Only 18.9% indicated that communication was good. There were no significant differences by type of committee.

Table 13: The Committee's Charge

Is your committee's official charge (based on the data sheet) too narrow, too broad, or just right? (N=152)	Academic n (%)	Assembly n (%)	Programmatic n (%)	Overall n (%)
Too narrow[a]	2 (4.7%)	8 (13.3%)	0 (0.0%)	10 (6.6%)
Appropriate	35 (81.4%)	31 (51.7%)	43 (87.8%)	109 (71.7%)
Too broad	2 (4.7%)	13 (21.7%)	3 (6.1%)	18 (11.8%)
Don't know	4 (9.3%)	8 (13.3%)	3 (6.1%)	15 (9.9%)

[a] Members of Academic and Programmatic committees were more likely than Assembly committee members to feel that their committees' charges were appropriate (χ^2=22.87, df=6, p<.001).

Overall, very few respondents (6.6%) indicated that their committee's charge was too narrow. A larger proportion, but still a small minority (11.8%) reported that the committee's charge was too broad. Most (71.7%) felt the charge was appropriate. However, there were large differences depending on the type of committee. Assembly committee members were far less likely to believe that their committee's charge was appropriate, compared to either Academic or Programmatic committee members.

Furthermore, Assembly committee members were more likely to believe that the charge was too broad (21.7%) than too narrow (13.3%).

Table 14: Timeframe of Committees

Should your committee be a permanent standing committee, a short-term or periodic task force, or other? (N=149)	Academic n (%)	Assembly n (%)	Programmatic n (%)	Overall n (%)
Permanent standing committee[a]	41 (95.3%)	50 (83.3%)	46 (100.0%)	137 (91.9%)
Short term task force	1 (2.3%)	9 (15.0%)	0 (0.0%)	10 (6.7%)
Other	1 (2.3%)	1 (1.7%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (1.3%)

[a] Members of Assembly committees were more likely than other committee members to feel that their committees should be short-term or periodic task forces (χ^2=12.30, df=4, p<.05).

The great majority of respondents reported that their committees should remain as permanent standing committees. However, members of Assembly committees were more likely than Academic or Programmatic members to indicate that their committees could serve as short-term or periodic task forces. Of those who said "other," the write-in responses indicated that they felt their committee should be disbanded, or reconstituted as a subcommittee of another committee. It is important to recognize that these responses still represent a relatively small minority of committee members; most participants in the shared governance system appear satisfied with their committee's standing as a permanent committee.

Table 15: Committee's Place in Structure

Should your committee be: (N=139)	Academic n (%)	Assembly n (%)	Programmatic n (%)	Overall n (%)
Academic[a]	40 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (2.3%)	41 (29.5%)
Assembly	0 (0.0%)	36 (65.5%)	0 (0.0%)	36 (25.9%)
Programmatic	0 (0.0%)	6 (10.9%)	39 (88.6%)	45 (32.4%)
Not sure	0 (0.0%)	13 (23.6%)	4 (9.1%)	17 (12.2%)

[a] Members of Academic committees were unanimous in reporting that their committees should remain Academic; members of Assembly committees were more likely than other committee members to report that their committee should be in a different part of the governance structure (χ^2=21.16, df=4, p<.001).

When asked where their committee should be located in the shared governance structure, members of Academic committees were unanimous in reporting that their committees were in the appropriate place. Members of Assembly committees were relatively more likely to be unsure, or to report that their committee should be in a different place in the structure (of those who recommended a change, it was consistently to convert their committee to a Programmatic committee).

Table 16: Forming Committees

Question[a]	Spring n (%)	Fall n (%)	Not sure n (%)
Should new committees be formed in the: (N=150)	60 (40.0%)	90 (60.0%)	n/a[b]
Should new committee chairs be elected in the: (N=152)	91 (59.9%)	32 (21.1%)	29 (19.1%)

[a] Responses from different types of committees were not statistically different for either question.
[b] "Not sure" was not offered as an option for this question.

Committee members were slightly in favor of continuing to form new committees in the Fall, but tended to favor electing new committee chairs in the Spring.

Table 17: Overall Satisfaction with Shared Governance

Overall, are you satisfied with the shared governance system at Harper? (N=152)	Academic n (%)	Assembly n (%)	Programmatic n (%)	Overall n (%)
Very satisfied[a]	4 (9.3%)	4 (6.7%)	6 (12.2%)	14 (9.2%)
Satisfied	26 (60.5%)	19 (31.7%)	21 (42.9%)	66 (43.4%)
Not sure	9 (20.9%)	18 (30.0%)	16 (32.7%)	43 (28.3%)
Dissatisfied	4 (9.3%)	17 (28.3%)	5 (10.2%)	26 (17.1%)
Very dissatisfied	0 (0.0%)	2 (3.3%)	1 (2.0%)	3 (2.0%)

[a] Members of Assembly committees were less likely to be satisfied with the shared governance system (χ^2=15.65, df=8, p<.05).

A bare majority of respondents (52.6%) reported being satisfied with the shared governance system. Nearly a third (28.3%) were unsure, and the remainder expressed some degree of dissatisfaction. Not surprisingly, members of Assembly committees were more likely than others to express some dissatisfaction; this is likely related to the greater level of ambiguity of the Assembly committees.

Non-Member Survey

A second survey was designed, similar in scope and topics, but phrased to be applicable to Harper employees who were not currently serving on a shared governance system. The survey was sent via campus mail to all 570 full- and part-time employees (including faculty, staff, and administration) who were not current members of a shared governance committee. A copy of the survey is presented in the Appendix. Responses to the survey are presented below. Statistically significant differences in responses based on employee group[3] (Administration, Classified, Faculty, IEA/NEA, Pro/Tech, and Super/Con) are also discussed where applicable.

---

[3] Surveys were sent to eleven ICOPS employees in an attempt to get their feedback, but no responses were received.

Table 18: Number of Responses by Employee Group

Employee Group	Number of Respondents
Administration	2
Classified	56
Faculty	26
IEA/NEA	15
Pro/Tech	23
Super/Con	18
Total	**140**

Table 19: Becoming a Part of Shared Governance

Do you know how to become a member of a shared governance committee? (N=139)	Admin n (%)	Classified n (%)	Faculty n (%)	IEA/NEA n (%)	Pro/Tech n (%)	Super/Con n (%)
Definitely yes[a]	1 (50.0%)	3 (5.4%)	10 (38.5%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (4.3%)	4 (23.5%)
Mostly yes	0 (0.0%)	10 (17.9%)	11 (42.3%)	1 (6.7%)	3 (13.0%)	2 (11.8%)
Not sure	1 (50.0%)	9 (16.1%)	3 (11.5%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (13.0%)	3 (17.6%)
Mostly no	0 (0.0%)	7 (12.5%)	1 (3.8%)	1 (6.7%)	5 (21.7%)	4 (23.5%)
Definitely no	0 (0.0%)	27 (48.2%)	1 (3.8%)	13 (86.7%)	4 (23.5%)	4 (23.5%)

[a] Faculty were more likely than other employee groups to report that they knew how to become a member of a committee (χ^2=60.40, df=20, p<.001).

Overall, 40.3% of employees reported that they definitely did not know how to become a member of a shared governance committee. Approximately two-thirds of respondents reported at least some degree of uncertainty. Faculty and administration were the only employee groups in which a majority of respondents indicated that they knew how to become a part of the shared governance system. Echoing a point made in the focus groups, the system may benefit from a greater degree of transparency regarding how new committee members are selected.

Table 20: Interest in Getting Involved

Would you be interested in getting involved in a shared governance committee? (N=137)	Admin n (%)	Classified n (%)	Faculty n (%)	IEA/NEA n (%)	Pro/Tech n (%)	Super/Con n (%)
Definitely yes[a]	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.8%)	5 (20.0%)	1 (6.7%)	5 (21.7%)	3 (17.6%)
Mostly yes	1 (50.0%)	6 (10.9%)	11 (44.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (13.0%)	4 (23.5%)
Not sure	1 (50.0%)	24 (43.6%)	6 (24.0%)	0 (0.0%)	8 (34.8%)	3 (17.6%)
Mostly no	0 (0.0%)	8 (14.5%)	3 (12.0%)	2 (13.3%)	3 (13.0%)	5 (29.4%)
Definitely no	0 (0.0%)	16 (29.1%)	0 (0.0%)	12 (80.0%)	4 (17.4%)	2 (11.8%)

[a] Classified staff and IEA/NEA were less likely to express interest than other groups (χ^2=64.13, df=20, p<.001).

Overall, it appears that the largest proportion of employees (40.1%) were not interested in getting involved with shared governance. However, 29.1% overall were interested. Classified employees and IEA/NEA were less likely to express an interest than other employee groups. It would appear desirable to provide additional avenues for involvement for those employees who desire it.

Table 21: Bringing an Issue to a Committee's Attention

Do you know how to bring an issue to a committee's attention? (N=138)	Admin n (%)	Classified n (%)	Faculty n (%)	IEA/NEA n (%)	Pro/Tech n (%)	Super/Con n (%)
Definitely yes[a]	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.8%)	6 (23.1%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (4.5%)	3 (17.6%)
Mostly yes	2 (100.0%)	8 (14.3%)	11 (42.3%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (9.1%)	3 (17.6%)
Not sure	0 (0.0%)	9 (16.1%)	2 (7.7%)	1 (6.7%)	4 (18.2%)	3 (17.6%)
Mostly no	0 (0.0%)	12 (21.4%)	6 (23.1%)	2 (13.3%)	4 (18.2%)	3 (17.6%)
Definitely no	0 (0.0%)	26 (46.4%)	1 (3.8%)	12 (80.0%)	11 (50.0%)	5 (29.4%)

[a] Faculty, Super/Con, and Administration were more aware of how to bring issues to a committee's attention (χ^2=53.17, df=20, p<.001).

Almost sixty percent (59.5%) of respondents reported that they did not know how to bring an issue to a committee's attention. Pro/Tech and IEA/NEA expressed the least confidence; only among Administration and Faculty did a majority of respondents say that they did know how to forward an issue to a committee. The shared governance system is complex; even current committee members indicated that the system can be difficult to navigate. However, if one of the goals of the shared governance system is to provide a voice for all employees, some additional work would be warranted to ensure that employees know how to use the voice that the system provides.

Table 22: Awareness of Committees' Work

Are you aware of what the committees are working on? (N=137)	Admin n (%)	Classified n (%)	Faculty n (%)	IEA/NEA n (%)	Pro/Tech n (%)	Super/Con n (%)
Definitely yes[a]	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (3.8%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (4.5%)	0 (0.0%)
Mostly yes	2 (100.0%)	1 (1.8%)	7 (26.9%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (9.1%)	2 (11.8%)
Not sure	0 (0.0%)	6 (10.7%)	9 (34.6%)	1 (7.1%)	2 (9.1%)	2 (11.8%)
Mostly no	0 (0.0%)	17 (30.4%)	7 (26.9%)	1 (7.1%)	6 (27.3%)	4 (23.5%)
Definitely no	0 (0.0%)	32 (57.1%)	2 (7.7%)	12 (85.7%)	11 (50.0%)	9 (52.9%)

[a] Faculty and Administration were more likely than other employee groups to report that they knew what committees were working on (χ^2=58.99, df=20, p<.001).

Overall, only 11.7% of respondents reported that they were aware of what the shared governance committees were working on. In all groups except for Faculty and Administration, a clear majority of respondents indicated that they did not know what the committees were working on. The results presented above suggest that many employees may not be terribly interested in getting involved with the governance system; in the committee focus groups, some members indicated that they only sought out information when it interested them. It may nonetheless be desirable to make committees' results and recommendations more accessible to employees, thereby allowing employees to make the informed choice about which issues interest them.

Table 23: Voice

Do you feel like your employee group has a voice on campus? (N=138)	Admin n (%)	Classified n (%)	Faculty n (%)	IEA/NEA n (%)	Pro/Tech n (%)	Super/Con n (%)
Definitely yes[a]	0 (0.0%)	4 (7.1%)	8 (30.8%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (13.6%)	0 (0.0%)
Mostly yes	1 (50.0%)	9 (16.1%)	13 (50.0%)	0 (0.0%)	9 (40.9%)	7 (41.2%)
Not sure	0 (0.0%)	15 (26.8%)	2 (7.7%)	3 (20.0%)	7 (31.8%)	1 (5.9%)
Mostly no	1 (50.0%)	12 (21.4%)	3 (11.5%)	1 (6.7%)	2 (9.1%)	3 (17.6%)
Definitely no	0 (0.0%)	16 (28.6%)	0 (0.0%)	11 (73.3%)	1 (4.5%)	6 (35.3%)

[a] Faculty were far more likely than other employee groups to report that they have a voice on campus, followed by Pro/Tech and Administration (χ^2=65.33, df=20, p<.001).

Respondents appeared to be split as to whether their group had a voice on campus: approximately 40% responded positively, an additional 40% responded negatively, and the remaining 20% were not sure. Faculty were far more likely than other groups to indicate that their group had a voice (80.8% responded positively). None of the IEA/NEA respondents indicated that they felt their group had a voice on campus; in fact, almost three-quarters of the IEA/NEA respondents reported that their group definitely did not have a voice.

Table 24: Prior Involvement in Shared Governance

Have you been involved in shared governance in the past? (N=136)	Admin n (%)	Classified n (%)	Faculty n (%)	IEA/NEA n (%)	Pro/Tech n (%)	Super/Con n (%)
Have been on committee(s)[a]	1 (50.0%)	5 (8.9%)	19 (73.1%)	3 (23.1%)	6 (28.6%)	7 (38.9%)
Have not attempted	1 (50.0%)	48 (85.7%)	4 (15.4%)	9 (69.2%)	14 (66.7%)	10 (55.6%)
Have tried, but didn't get on	0 (0.0%)	3 (5.4%)	3 (11.5%)	1 (7.7%)	1 (4.8%)	1 (5.6%)

[a] Faculty were more likely than other employee groups to report that they had participated on committees in the past; Classified staff were least likely to report having participated in shared governance (χ^2=40.82, df=10, p<.001).

Overall, 30.1% of respondents reported having been involved in shared governance in the past; 63.2% reported that they had not attempted to participate, while 6.6% reported that they tried to get on a committee, but were not selected. It is encouraging that a relatively small proportion of respondents reported failing to get on a committee; if this proportion were higher, it might indicate a degree of frustration and perceived inequity in the system. However, it would be more encouraging if a larger proportion of employees had participated in the system at some point during their tenure with Harper College. It is important to note that Faculty, as a group, were far more likely to have participated in shared governance (73.1% report having participated); it is just as important to realize that this proportion may well be overstated, because there is a fair bit of confusion about the boundaries of shared governance. For example, employees have asked whether hiring committees are considered part of shared governance; faculty may be especially likely to regard contractual committees (tenure committees, etc.) as part of shared governance.

Table 25: Overall Satisfaction

Overall, are you satisfied with the shared governance system at Harper? (N=137)	Admin n (%)	Classified n (%)	Faculty n (%)	IEA/NEA n (%)	Pro/Tech n (%)	Super/Con n (%)
Very satisfied[a]	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.8%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (4.5%)	0 (0.0%)
Satisfied	0 (0.0%)	6 (10.9%)	10 (38.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (16.7%)
Not sure	0 (0.0%)	41 (74.5%)	9 (34.6%)	9 (64.3%)	18 (81.8%)	11 (61.1%)
Dissatisfied	1 (50.0%)	6 (10.9%)	5 (19.2%)	1 (7.1%)	2 (9.1%)	2 (11.1%)
Very dissatisfied	1 (50.0%)	1 (1.8%)	2 (7.7%)	4 (28.6%)	1 (4.5%)	2 (11.1%)

[a] Faculty were more likely than other employee groups to report that they were satisfied with shared governance; Administrators and IEA/NEA were more likely than other groups to report being dissatisfied (χ^2=45.07, df=20, p<.001).

Overall, relatively few employees (15.4%) reported being satisfied with the shared governance system. Although 20.4% reported some level of dissatisfaction, the majority (64.2%) said they were not sure. Comparing these results with those from current committee members, the level of dissatisfaction appears comparable (20.4% dissatisfied among non-members, 19.1% among members), but members were far more likely to report being satisfied, while non-members were more likely to say they were not sure. This is understandable: most non-members have not had much contact with the shared governance system. It may be telling, though, that among those expressing an opinion, satisfaction and dissatisfaction appeared equally likely. Faculty, who were the group most likely to have had prior shared governance experience, were also the group most likely to express satisfaction with the system.

Finally, employees were asked how they would like to be kept informed of what the shared governance committees are working on. The most common communication channels cited were email and the HIP page (mentioned by 41 and 39 respondents, respectively); some respondents expressed a preference for hardcopy memos (8 respondents) and postings on the bulleting board (6 respondents).

Summary

In spring 2004, a multi-method research process was utilized to evaluate Harper College's shared governance system. Focus groups were conducted with the shared governance committees; committee members completed a brief survey; and a survey was also administered to all employees who were not committee members. The goal of the assessment was to identify the strengths and improvement opportunities of the shared governance system by obtaining feedback from participants as well as those represented by the system. Response rates were good (90% for the committee focus groups; 59.8% for the member survey; and, 24.6 for the non-member survey); the process gives confidence that all employees had the opportunity to participate and provide their input.

The impression gleaned from the process is that the shared governance system is an important part of Harper's culture, perceived as necessary as a means of giving employees a voice, but that some incremental changes can be made in the spirit of continuous improvement. Perhaps the biggest apparent flaw in the shared governance system is simply that most employees are unaware of its operation: employees who were not committee members were largely unaware of the issues committees are addressing;

even committee members reported being unaware of what other committees are working on. Committees may be able to work more effectively with a better knowledge of the context (i.e., what other committees are addressing), and employees may feel that the system is serving them better when they know what the system is actually doing. Therefore, some improvements in communication may be warranted. Suggestions for improving communication include: having more frequent meetings of committee chairs; having one committee serve as a central "clearinghouse" to assign issues to the various committees; creating more subcommittees with overlapping membership; and, posting committees' decisions/recommendations on the HIP page. The most common suggestions for improving employee awareness of the shared governance system were to post information on the HIP page and to send out email notifications; some employees did note that they would prefer hardcopy memos.

Judging from the results of both the focus groups and the committee survey, it appears that members of Assembly committees were less satisfied with the system than members of Academic and Programmatic committees. This held true across a range of topics. Given that the Assembly structure is newer than the rest of the system, it is not at all surprising that there would be some "growing pains." The feedback from the members of the Assembly committees suggests that the Assembly committees, more often than the others, tend to suffer from a vague charge, a lack of clarity about the decisions/recommendations they are being asked to make, and a lack of feedback after a decision/recommendation has been made (that is, they do not know if their recommendation is being implemented, why or why not). Members of the other committees appear largely satisfied with the process and their roles in it. It may be time, however, to revisit the charge and structure of the Assembly committee structure. The specifics of how the charge and structure should be modified are beyond the scope of this investigation; the recommendation would be to convene a meeting of the chairs of these committees and discuss the scope of the updates and how best to proceed.

The other concrete improvement opportunity comes in the form of a formal orientation program for new committee members and new committee chairs. There are many forms that this orientation might take. A relatively brief training session may be sufficient for new committee members; new chairs may benefit from a co-chair system, in which the outgoing chair would act as a mentor and provide some continuity.

Among employees who were not members of any shared governance committee, it appears that faculty were the most satisfied with the shared governance system. Faculty were more likely to express an interest in shared governance, more likely to be aware of the issues committees were addressing, more likely to feel they had a voice in the process, and also more likely to have participated on a committee in the past[4]. Classified

---

[4] It is important to be aware that there is significant confusion regarding the shared governance committees. This investigation was designed to focus on the Academic, Assembly, and Programmatic committees only; however, there are many other committees (notably contractual committees and search committees) on campus, and many employees believe these committees to be a part of shared governance as well. It is possible that some faculty members have responded based on their experience with these other committees, rather than the shared governance structure.

staff and IEA/NEA were generally less likely to feel that they had a voice in the system, less likely to be aware of the issues, but also less likely to express an interest.

An issue that came up both with non-members and with members was the notion that the process by which people are selected to serve on shared governance committees needs to be more transparent. If one of the goals of the shared governance system is to provide employees an avenue for participation, that avenue needs to be made clear. One suggestion was that committees should post their agenda for the upcoming year, to allow employees to select the committee whose work most interests them. Another was that the criteria for being selected for service should be made clear, and timely feedback should be provided to those not selected. Another suggestion was simply to update the committee rosters on the HIP page (one employee reported that the rosters were out-of-date, including some members who no longer work at Harper).

In summary, it appears that the Academic and Programmatic committees are working reasonably well: their members reported being satisfied with the process, and with the clarity of their charge. The system may be improved in the short-term by reexamining the charges and reporting structure of the Assembly committees. Committee members were also in favor of instituting an orientation program for new members and chairs, of a co-chair system to allow for continuity in leadership, and for increasing the level of communication between committees. To increase communication, most members appeared to favor a more organic approach (i.e., creating subcommittees with overlapping membership, so relevant information can be shared seamlessly; or, increasing the communication between committee chairs so the chairs could bring information back to their committees).

Faculty were most likely to perceive that the current system gives them a voice; other employees groups were somewhat less optimistic. Employees as a whole were not terribly satisfied with the system, but this is likely attributable to a lack of awareness. Effort should be made to involve all employee groups, especially those (Classified and IEA/NEA) that currently feel the least included. Committee information should be shared (via the HIP page or email, and via hardcopy for some groups) in a manner that is more accessible and dynamic (more current, as well as more engaging). In order for them to feel as if the system is giving them voice, employees need to see that the committees are addressing issues important to them; they need to know how to interface with the system, to bring up issues that are not being addressed; and, they need to know how to participate formally in the system if they desire. All of these goals should be attainable by reworking and updating the shared governance information on the HIP page, and by emails (and some targeted memoranda) telling employees how to find the new information.

With the addition of some incremental changes like those outlined above, the shared governance system at Harper can continue to evolve and serve the needs of all employees and the institution as a whole.

Appendix A

Responses to Open-Ended Questions
Focus Group Protocol
Survey Instruments

Responses to Open-Ended Questions

Committee Member Survey

Case ID *Comments*

2 One major problem regarding committee member selection: It's vague how members are chosen. Also, I think some search committees should include different employee groups (some already do), and allow people to volunteer.

3 Need clarity on the scope of Shared Governance. For example, search committees are they part of Shared Governance, if they are who's ultimately decision maker on hiring?

4 Better communication between committees would be helpful. Often don't have a clue who is doing what. Placement on committees should be more transparent.

5 Selection of committee members onto committees needs to be fine tuned a bit. In my division, we had an opening on a committee that was supposed to be filled with a faculty member from our division. A faculty member from another division was placed onto this committee instead. Our division has lacked a representative to speak for us all year. This is not inclusive or respectful.

6 We did not talk about committee assignments and the frustration of employees who want to, volunteer to, but are not chosen to serve. This is a problem. We did not talk about how the oversight committee does not always get back to committees on changes to the committee structure or represented groups. This void has slowed work of committees especially where people need to be appointed. There is also a problem on some committees where people pick their replacements when they cannot make meetings for a year. This does not allow other volunteers interested in a committee to get volunteers interested in a committee to get appointed when vacancies occur due to teaching schedule changes.

7 Committees don't communicate. Therefore, the "sharing" in shared governance is muted. This is unfortunate. Committee membership is more "assigned" than voluntary. This is not my understanding of this process and should not be driven by any employee group.

10 Communication is the main issue. How does everyone find out what issues are being debated?

11 Committee appointments for faculty are too political-should be more democratic.

21 I feel like I'm in a criminal trial - what with a "transcript".

22 It may be with education, the present system is fine. I think there needs to be much more education about this.

23 I have been at Harper for almost 9 years and prior to being on this committee had no idea what the system was about. I've been on committee for the 2nd year now.

24 I'd love to see more communication between committees.

28 Many of us feel shared governance has been eroding in recent years and that true shared governance (shared responsibility = shared power) needs to be re-established.

29 I feel this committee works really well together and has a varied (diverse) group of members. Everyone's opinion carries equal weight.

30 Taking into consideration a few bumps in the road, I think the system works.

32 New committee members who are primarily charged with booking acts. Need more help with securing contracts, visuals, marketing and materials, copy for promotional pieces, etc. Committee members must feel like their suggestions or recommendations are listened to because of time put in.

34 Regarding when committees should be formed: - formed in spring in order to be offering by fall.

37 I was placed on this committee by position. I had no idea of the scope until I found it on the HIP page. Participation should be part of new employee orientation.

38	Some departments are too big and lose hands on. It is easy to say it's not my responsibility if you're too large. Too many people in charge. Media Services has three managers and only 3 full time people.
41	The committee structure needs to change but it is not clear how.
59	1) It seems like we have lots of spools of thread, but not a fabric with a strong tight weave. 2) Too many committees - many without clearly defined outcomes or goals for a meeting. 3) Suggest more ad hocracy. Assessment and Testing - bigger than testing - need it related to Learner/Graduate assessment as a total. Need an Institutional Effectiveness committee that drives others.
65	The committee chair is the one that does all the work. We seem to be (the members) a front for it functioning, i.e. committee chair and one other member has to do the smoking policy. Chair had it all done by the time the member met with the chair. Since Harper is a top down org in terms of committees, these shared governance operates under the guise of having a voice but really doesn't.
66	1) Committee structure information at faculty senate, employee groups for new employees. 2) Input or feedback needed from the administration regarding proposals. 3) Structures communication and consistency important for the shared governance to be successful.
67	Hard to find out how to get on a committee.
69	It would help to have more information about what the committee does and it's goals prior to attending the 1st meeting. I have learned more about the committee and its desires, but am unsure about the ultimate goal. Clarification on the entire committee process would be helpful also.
70	I feel there needs to be more shared information between committees.
71	Thanks for looking at this process. It needs to be improved.
86	Interesting discussion.
90	Committees should be able to recommend representation as appropriate.
93	Move Facilities to Programmatic Committees. Learning Communities should be a sub-committee of Teaching And Learning.
94	Create task force for Graduation. Rename Assembly Committees into one category called Institutional Committees. Combine Assembly and Oversight making one group.
95	Potential movement from one category to another should come from the specific committees.
97	Academic, Assembly, Programmatic (all) (Oversight Committee). The system should stay as it is.
98	Conclusions drawn from our focus group (prior to seeing this survey) were that there needs to be better communication between committees, new members need to be oriented, and that members for fall need to be assigned by late spring so that teaching schedules can be selected.
99	1. More training for chairs, 2. Have chairs become "The Assembly" so they can share more about what is going on, 3. Disband Assembly and Programmatic Committees and just call them College Committees linked to a V.P. area (for good communication flow).
101	Shared governance should remain as the organizational foundation of all higher-education institutions.
104	Committees, in general, should know their charge and the rules by which they rule.
116	Thanks, Joe!
120	Our committee should be merged with another committee, e.g. Cultural Arts.
129	Governance is between administration and faculty and faculty does not want to give up or share their power with the other groups on campus.
130	I am a new member of this committee as well as relatively new to Harper College. My main concern with respect to this committee is a resistance to communicate with other committees, especially the Academic Technology Planning Committee. I think one or two joint meetings would be very beneficial.
131	There is misunderstanding about roles and functioning. Some chairs don't do a good job (past experience). Constituencies are often not represented. Someone said it well today, "committees have a quest for meaning"

136	This committee is definitely in trouble with regard to charge and dynamics.
140	Committees should be formed/members elected in spring but become active in fall.
142	I think chair person for the committee I am on should be selected in the Spring, but begin the term in the Fall
143	Not a policy making committee.
146	Overall, I think the idea of shared governance is good for Harper. My impression is that we are doing our best with the limited amount of time we have to work on committees. Some of us are on 2 of the above committees in addition to departmental committees and task forces. It can spread one quite thin. We need adjunct representation on shared governance committees. (good focus group - thanks).
150	Be Patient - this is an institution that has experienced a huge turnover, at faculty and administrative levels. The system works when everyone know how it works.
156	The Focus study seemed well planned, I anticipate that it will be effective.

Non-Member Survey

Case ID Comments, concerns, other issues:

1	Committees do not have end date goal, so often times, do not complete. Membership is political.
14	For employee benefits for Classified Staff - the amount of sick days and vacation days should continue to increase with years of service. Why do Pro-Techs get more days than Classified Staff? Look into adding benefits for Classified Staff as incentives to boost morale.
16	I simply have not made time to be informed about shared governance.
19	How do you get your name removed from the list so you don't get all the emails telling you what's on the Bulletin Board or HIP Page, or updating you on "Construction, watch our progress". These interfere with work, as they interrupt what you're working on, stop your ability to type and take up unnecessary space on the server. There are a lot of us who take the time to read the HIP Page or Bulletin Board so we have already seen this info. It's a waste of time.
25	Currently I am the recorder/minute taker for the Curriculum Committee and the Teaching and Learning Comm. (Programmatic Comm.)
29	I've been employed at Harper less than six months so have not become acquainted with a lot of areas outside my own position!
42	My name was put in a couple of months ago to fill a vacancy on the College Assembly. I am assuming someone else was picked, because I have heard nothing. A response either way would have been appropriate.
49	Since the union issue on classified staff representation, we have no voice or help on issues.
58	It seems ideas are acted upon in a rash manner with no or minimal input from faculty. Faculty are expert educators - not administration. We need to be included in discussions that impact programs, not just told what we should do. In the end it is the faculty who must figure out implementation and in many cases, clean up the mess! Change is necessary - but not just for the sake of change.
61	Process for selection to committees should be made more transparent.
67	Shared governance as we knew it is gone. Too much dictatorial decision making from administrators without consulting faculty who are experts in the field.
77	This process is critical to the mission of Harper College.
78	Determination of selection unknown. Information of committee work limited. Bias of particular employee group on certain committee. Value of membership if not truly considered on evaluation criteria or recognizability.
79	Concern over President Breuder's negation of committee decisions (i.e. sabbatical leave)!

80	Committee openings are not coming, and I couldn't get into the very few that came up last semester. I can't see how this (non-participation) could be factored in the evaluation of an employee!
83	No voice - no care
100	The document on HIP is about four or five years old and has members that no longer work at Harper. I would like to be involved in a committee.
104	Harper is a top down hierarchy. The only meaningful employee input is through contractual committees.
106	I don't know much about the Shared Governance System, and I don't think I'm alone. Maybe if the college did a better job of explaining what the system is and more importantly, how the system affects the average employee, more employees would be aware of the system and participate.
111	Committee members need to be a real part of changes and recommendations. I have seen the implementations take place outside the committees and then brought to the committee.
112	I will look into shared governance committees later. I have no idea how they impact me here.
118	I find it ineffective to have membership from employees who feel no need to attend meetings using their committee membership for professional folder building or blocking action within the committee.
119	The faculty here at Harper seem to think they run this place! They do, for their benefit only.
120	I'm not sure what role the committees play in decision-making at Harper.
122	Had no idea about smoking issue, until I read *InsideHarper!* today!
123	Thank you for the concern.
131	Member nominating is as much a mystery as how people are selected. Re:Q7 - I have been on a committee in the past, but not at Harper.
133	I am not sure that the information resulting from meetings is available, but we are very busy and don't take time to seek this out.

A Look at Shared Governance at Harper College
Focus Group Protocol

Estimated Duration: 1¼ hours

I.   **Warm up and Introductions** (5 – 10 minutes)
   a. **Moderator**: Work in the Office of Research, member of the College Assembly, new to the College since July '03, experience in conducting focus groups, gathering opinions and reporting in an objective and unbiased way. Here today on behalf of College Assembly
   b. **Goal**: to gather information that will allow us to evaluate the shared governance system here at Harper, see what's working and where there's room for improvement
   c. **Procedures**: we want to understand your perspective on the shared governance system
       i. no right or wrong answers, just want your candid opinion
      ii. no need for consensus
     iii. all participate equally
      iv. please speak one at a time so I can capture what you're saying
       v. we don't have a lot of time today, so please be sensitive to that
      vi. at the end of today's session, I'll be asking you to complete a short survey to get at some more detailed issues
   d. **Introductions**: please state your name; where you work; what employee group you represent in this committee (sign-in sheet)
II. **Philosophy of Shared Governance** (15 minutes)
   a. What does the concept of governance mean to you, in the context of Harper College?
   b. What about the concept of *shared* governance?
   c. What do you see as the underlying goal of the shared governance system at Harper?
III. **Committee Process** (45 minutes)
   a. How is the communication between committees? Are you aware of what the other committees are doing? Does communication between this committee and the Oversight Committee need to be improved?
   b. Do you feel as if this committee is fulfilling its charge? What needs to happen for this committee to work more effectively?
   c. In terms of your participation on this committee, do you feel as if you are representing a constituency, or representing your own opinion on issues?
   d. How does this committee reach consensus? How often are there dissenting opinions, and how are the dissenting opinions recognized?
   e. When this committee makes decisions, is the communication process clear? For example, what happens to the PARs after they're sent? Do you get feedback as to whether your recommendations are implemented or not?

Prepared by the Office of Research   *February 27, 2004*

   f. Are there issues that need to be addressed in terms of procedures, division of labor, accountability, inclusion?

   g. Is the current committee structure the best way to work? Is too much time spent in meetings? Should there be fewer standing committees, and more ad hoc task forces?

IV. **Conclusion** (5 minutes)

   a. That's all the prepared questions I have for today. Anything else to share?

   b. Please complete this brief survey and leave it with me at the door

   c. If anything else comes to mind, give me a call or e-mail (share contact info)

   d. We'll be following the same process with the other committees, so you'll be hearing more about this. Thanks very much. My colleagues in the College Assembly and I appreciate your help.

Survey of Committee Members

Shared Governance Survey

We are interested in gathering your opinion about the Shared Governance system at Harper. Your responses below will be averaged with the responses of other committee members by the Office of Research in an effort to find out what we're doing well and where we have room to improve. We're really looking for your impressions, so if in doubt go with your first response. Use the back of this form to share any other thoughts you may have about the Shared Governance system; we'd also like to hear specifically about how you got involved with this committee. Please be as candid as possible—the more candid you are, the more likely it is that the analysis will capture the real strengths and weaknesses of the system.

	Definitely no	Mostly no	Not sure	Mostly yes	Definitely yes
Do you feel that Harper employees know the process of how to become a member of a committee?	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
Do you feel that Harper employees know how to bring an issue to a committee's attention?	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
Are you aware of what other committees are doing?	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
Do you feel as if issues are being addressed by this committee?	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
Do you feel like the employee group you represent has a voice because of your participation on this committee?	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
Are you familiar with your committee's data sheet?	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
Do you feel your committee makes an important contribution to policies at Harper?	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
Would it be helpful to have a formal orientation for new committee members and new chairs?	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

	Definitely poor	Mostly poor	Not sure	Mostly good	Definitely good
How would you rate the communication between committees?	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

	Too narrow	Appropriate	Too broad	Don't know
Is your committee's official charge (based on the data sheet) too narrow, too broad, or appropriate?	❏	❏	❏	❏

Should your committee be a: ❏ Permanent standing committee
❏ Short term or periodic task force
❏ Other: _____

Is your committee: (refer to the list on reverse)	*Should* your committee be:
❏ Academic	❏ Academic
❏ Assembly	❏ Assembly
❏ Programmatic	❏ Programmatic
	❏ Not sure

Should committees be formed in the:	Should new committee chairs be elected in:
❏ Spring	❏ Spring
❏ Fall	❏ Fall
	❏ Not sure

	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Not sure	Satisfied	Very satisfied
Overall, are you satisfied with the shared governance system at Harper?	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

Office of Research   *Spring 2004*

From Governance/Current Committee Information on the HIP page:

"It must be noted that there are three kinds of institutional committees:

"ACADEMIC COMMITTEES
- *Academic Standards*
- *Assessment And Testing*
- *Curriculum*
- *Instructional Technology*

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEES
- *College Assembly*
- *Facilities*
- *Human Resources*
- *Institutional Planning Review*
- *Institutional Technology Planning*
- *Student Life*
- *Wellness*
- *Diversity*

PROGRAMMATIC COMMITTEES
- *Cultural Arts*
- *Graduation*
- *Honors Phi Theta Kappa*
- *International Studies And Programs*
- *Learning Communities*
- *Marketing*
- *Teaching And Learning*

"It should also be noted what committees the roster does not include: college divisional committees, contract committees, board committees, and committees established by each separate constituency, the Faculty Senate, the Professional-Technical Union, and the IEA/NEA. Each of these will also have their own Data Sheets and Rosters, as appropriate."

Comments, concerns, other issues?

Survey of Non-Members

Harper College — SHARED GOVERNANCE SURVEY

As part of a standard review process, we are gathering information on Harper's shared governance system and how well it is meeting everyone's needs. As part of the review, we would like to gain the perspective of all Harper employees who are not current members of any shared governance committee.

Note: the shared governance system refers to the committees listed on the HIP page (http://hip/gov/gov_system.asp); it does **not** refer to any contractual committee (e.g., Tenure Committee, etc.). If you have questions about shared governance committees, please refer to the HIP page for more information.

Please respond to the questions below and return this survey to the Office of Research via campus mail (mail code: OFC/RES). Your responses below will be averaged with those of other employees in an effort to find out where the the system is strong, and where it can improve.

If you have questions, please call the Office of Research at X6950. Thank you for your participation!

	Definitely no	Mostly no	Not sure	Mostly yes	Definitely yes
1. Do you know how to become a member of a shared governance committee?	○	○	○	○	○
2. Would you be interested in getting involved in a shared governance committee?	○	○	○	○	○
3. Do you know how to bring an issue to a committee's attention?	○	○	○	○	○
4. Are you aware of what the committees are working on?	○	○	○	○	○
5. Do you feel like your employee group (e.g., Faculty, Pro/Tech, Super/Con, Classified, ICOPS, IEA/NEA) has a voice on campus?	○	○	○	○	○
6. Do you feel as if the shared governance system is effective in giving your employee group a voice?	○	○	○	○	○

7. Have you been involved in shared governance in the past? Mark **ONE** response.

- ○ a. Have been on committee(s)
- ○ b. Have not attempted
- ○ c. Have tried, but didn't get on

8. Overall, how satisfied are you with the shared governance system at Harper?

- ○ a. Very dissatisfied
- ○ b. Dissatisfied
- ○ c. Not sure
- ○ d. Satisfied
- ○ e. Very satisfied

How would you like to be kept informed of what shared governance committees are working on? (e.g., email, HIP page, memo, bulletin board, etc.)

Comments, concerns, other issues? (use other side if needed)

---

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦

PN04-425
Spring 2004