

Philosophy and Practice of Shared Governance

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Shared governance is an important system within which the University accomplishes its mission with strong alignment around and commitment to institutional, mission-driven direction and priorities. The University community believes that Mount St. Joseph University is an educational community based on continuous inquiry and dialogue. Shared governance promotes this dialogue to the degree that it creates an environment of effective communication, trust, faith, equity, respect, and justice. Shared governance, therefore, fosters academic freedom, respect for the individual, mutual accountability, collegiality, subsidiarity, and decisions made in the best interest of Mount St. Joseph University.

Shared governance:

- recognizes that the history of the College of Mount St. Joseph serves as a prelude and inspiration to the future of Mount St. Joseph University
 - is guided by gospel values of service, compassion, and charity
 - abides by principles of justice, fairness and equity recognizing its obligation to society, the Sisters of Charity and to the Catholic church
- is consistent with the values of the mission of Mount St. Joseph University
 - includes a set of checks and balances to ensure that the institution remains mission-focused
 - provides for active engagement to share responsibility for identifying and aligning mission-driven outcomes and priorities
 - provides a model of civility and a sense of shared purpose
- makes decisions in the best interest of Mount St. Joseph University, not necessarily always through consensus, but through collaborative processes
 - invites participation by all its members
 - provides a structure for interactions that build trust and confidence between constituencies
 - effectively utilizes a committee structure to enhance shared governance
 - strives for common understanding to facilitate alignment
 - is marked by a culture of transparency and open communication
 - provides for a shared set of metrics to measure success
 - is committed to jointly considering difficult issues and developing strategic directions
 - embraces conflict as a creative tension in the exploration of truth

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- anticipates and responds to changes and needs (both internal and external to the community)
 - works to develop better solutions for competitive advantage
 - calls forth effective leadership from all parts of the University community
 - promotes leadership that motivates and inspires
 - develops succession plans for all leadership positions from all parts of the University community
 - assesses its own effectiveness and makes appropriate changes

- respects the diversity of the University community and the dignity of each person
 - listens and responds
 - works toward reconciliation in relationships

To meet its educational goals and accomplish its mission, Mount St. Joseph University is committed to furthering joint planning and effort by the Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, staff, and students, as well as other segments of the community. The ideal is that the interests of all are considered and that the broadest possible exchange of information occurs and results in effective planning and implementation of the University's educational objectives. The goal of shared governance is not necessarily consensus on all issues, but, instead, the best possible decisions and directions for Mount St. Joseph University.

The primary responsibilities of the Board of Trustees, the President and administrative officers, faculty, staff, committees and other constituent groups are articulated in the Employee Handbook. The powers of review or final decision related to these primary responsibilities are lodged in the Sisters of Charity Leadership or Corporation Board, the Board of Trustees, and/or delegated to the President and administration. In exceptional circumstances, when the Board or President cannot concur with a recommendation, the reasons for this action are communicated as appropriate.

Joint planning and effort by all components of Mount St. Joseph University occur in established and in *ad hoc* bodies. Established bodies for faculty participation include the academic departments, standing committees of faculty assembly and university-wide committees, Faculty Assembly, and representation on committees of the Board of Trustees per their determination. Established bodies for administrative/professional and support staff participation include the administrative and support departments, university-wide committees, Staff Assembly, and representation on committees of the Board of Trustees per their determination. The established body for student participation is the Student Government Association and selected university-wide committees.

The responsibilities exercised by these bodies, as explicated in the Employee and Student Handbooks, are respected and defended by all components of the University, and the decisions of these bodies are shared with all other areas of the University as appropriate.

The shared governance model is a process of collaborative decision-making at all levels and across all functions of the organization. Mount St. Joseph University utilizes committees as essential components of this governance structure. Each committee has a specific charge and is composed of persons from different divisions and departments as appropriate. Since committee work is such an integral element of University governance, committee work will be

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addressed in the performance appraisal as appropriate. The level of governance and decision-making responsibility and authority for institutional matters is set out in the appropriate sections of the Employee Handbook and illustrated on the Mount St. Joseph University Decision Grid.

In each matter for decision, constituent groups shall have differing levels of responsibility. There are five levels of governance responsibility represented on the grid. Shared governance suggests that these levels be exercised in the order articulated unless circumstances warrant an expedited process. In such cases, Steps 1 and 2 may be streamlined.

Step 1 – Consultation – Constituencies impacted by a decision are provided with the opportunity to offer input, ideas, and suggestions at the outset and as necessary during the decision-making process.

Step 2 – Offers Recommendation – constituencies as designated offer recommendations to decision-making body after appropriate consultation with those impacted.

Step 3 – Makes Decision – the constituency designated as the decision-making authority makes the decision, taking into account the recommendation(s) brought forward in Step 2, and is responsible for determining and implementing any communication plan required in Step 5 once the decision is considered final.

Step 4 – Final Approval – the constituency as designated renders final approval.

Step 5 – Informed of Decision – All impacted constituencies will be informed of the decision.

Step 6 – Hears Appeal of Decision – the constituency hears appeals of a decision only in instances as determined by formal University policy and procedure.

Shared governance is based on a culture of open communication among the Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, staff, and committees and requires all constituencies to be transparent with each other.