



---

Some Branches Were More Equal than Others

Author(s): Richard Veit

Source: *Academe*, Vol. 91, No. 6 (Nov. - Dec., 2005), pp. 42-45

Published by: [American Association of University Professors](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40252865>

Accessed: 11/07/2013 09:21

---

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

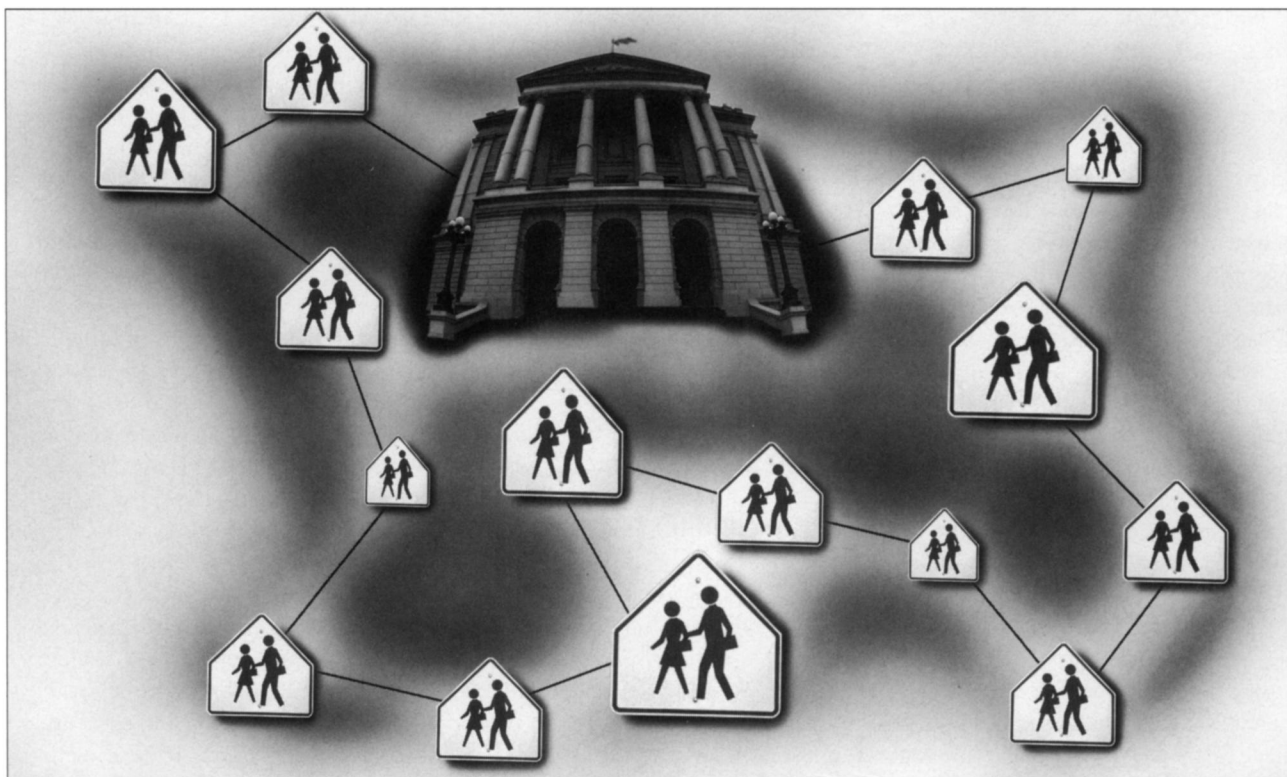


*American Association of University Professors* is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Academe*.

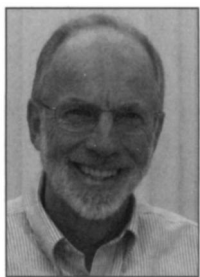
<http://www.jstor.org>

# Some Branches Were More Equal Than Others

One state university system found that when faculty members from flagship and branch campuses started talking to each other, they could work out fair governance standards for all.



BY RICHARD VEIT



*Richard Veit is professor of English at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington.*

**M**ost American colleges and universities profess commitment to the principles of shared governance, but the degree to which those lofty ideals are actually applied varies considerably from institution to institution. That disparity became apparent to me during the two terms I served as chair of the Faculty Assembly of the University of North Carolina—the representative body that brings together faculty delegates from the university’s sixteen campuses. Shared governance was thriving on most of our campuses, including the large research schools such as Chapel Hill and North Carolina State, but I soon learned that it was considerably less robust at some of the smaller schools in our system.

## Standards of Shared Governance

*The following document was adopted by the Faculty Assembly of the University of North Carolina in April 2005. It applies to the sixteen campuses in the university system.*

Some faculty members complained that administrators routinely made curricular decisions on their campuses without any faculty consultation. Some first heard about changes to tenure policies only after the changes had been ratified by their institution's board of trustees. Some lamented that the recommendations of grievance and appeals panels were regularly ignored. Many of these complaints came from the system's five historically black campuses, which have a long history of top-down governance.<sup>1</sup>

The Faculty Assembly has little authority over the individual campuses that make up our state university system. If the faculty senates on the sixteen campuses can be compared to the parliaments of national governments, then the assembly is the United Nations—a forum that permits members to consult with one another, share information, and seek to sway opinion but not to exercise direct control over the internal affairs of any of its member states.

As assembly chair, I approached senior administrators of the university's central administration for help in bringing more participatory governance to our smaller schools. The administrators sympathized but hesitated to intervene, perhaps because, as one administrator put it, "cultural traditions" were involved. This argument did not persuade delegates, especially not those from the historically black campuses, who were the most vocal in calling for more participatory governance.

### Minimum Standards

Lacking power to intervene directly, the assembly used its more indirect tools. We proposed to gather and share information to help faculty determine if their situation was atypical and whether to demand from administrators the same rights enjoyed by faculty on other system campuses. The assembly also had the authority to formulate a statement on the standards of shared governance we expected to be in place on all sixteen campuses. Although it would not be legally binding on any administration, such a document, we reasoned, could have considerable moral force. We put the proposal to the assembly delegates, who authorized a survey of system campuses. After the faculty officers of all sixteen campuses completed a lengthy questionnaire, we posted the results on the assembly Web site.

We asked fifty questions touching on the autonomy of the senate (Who determines the representatives? Does the chair get released time? Is the budget adequate? Can the senate amend its bylaws?); the faculty's role in academic policy making (Who determines tenure and promotion policy, graduation requirements, the establishment of new departments and majors, and grade-appeal procedures? Who selects faculty members of committees?); and the role of administration (Do senior administrators appear before the senate when asked to answer questions? Does the chancellor typically sustain recommendations of faculty tenure, hearings, and grievance committees? Does the faculty participate meaningfully in the selection of academic administrators? Does the faculty evaluate administrators?). Many questions in our survey were adapted from a survey tool the AAUP developed called "Evaluation of Shared Governance" (see the governance section of the AAUP's Web site, [www.aaup.org](http://www.aaup.org)).

### Preamble

A strong tradition of shared governance is essential to the excellence of any institution of higher learning. This principle is embodied in Section 502D(2) of the *Code of the Board of Governors*, which makes it the responsibility of the chancellor of each constituent institution of the University of North Carolina to ensure that the institution's faculty has the means to give effective advice with respect to questions of academic policy and institutional governance, with particular emphasis upon matters of curriculum, degree requirements, instructional standards, and grading criteria, and that the appropriate means of giving such advice is through an elected faculty senate or council and an elected chair of the faculty. To the end that chancellors may more effectively carry out this responsibility, the Faculty Assembly commends the following statement of essential standards of governance.

### Definitions

As used in this document, the following terms have the meanings indicated.

1. "Faculty" includes all persons holding full-time tenure-track appointments in the institution and such other faculty members and librarians as may have been accorded voting privileges in faculty elections.
2. "Faculty senate" means the elective body, by whatever nomenclature, empowered by the faculty to exercise its legislative powers.
3. "Chair of the faculty" means the faculty member, by whatever nomenclature, elected by the faculty at large or by the faculty senate as the chief faculty officer and spokesperson.

### The Faculty Senate

1. The faculty senate must hold regularly scheduled meetings throughout the academic year.
2. With few exceptions, voting membership of the senate must be limited to elected faculty representatives.
3. Members of the senate must represent the academic units of the institution and must be elected directly by the faculty of those units.
4. While it is the chancellor's prerogative to preside over the senate, it is preferable and customary for the chancellor to delegate this privilege to the chair of the faculty, especially for those portions of meetings during which the senate is deliberating on questions of academic policy and institutional governance.
5. The officers of the senate must be elected by the membership of that body or by the faculty at large.
6. The structure, method of election, and powers of the senate must be specified in a document approved by and amendable by the faculty at large or its designated representatives.
7. Procedures for the operation of the senate must be established by reference to recognized authorities such as *Roberts' Rules of Order* or in published bylaws adopted by the senate.
8. The senate must be given adequate resources to ensure effective governance, including (a) an adequate budget;

(b) reasonable authority over its budget; (c) adequate office space; and (d) adequate secretarial support.

### The Chair of the Faculty

1. There must be a chair of the faculty who is elected either by the faculty at large or by the faculty senate. The chair of the faculty shall be the chief spokesperson for the faculty.

2. The chair of the faculty must be allowed reassigned time commensurate with the duties of the office.

### Faculty Governance Responsibilities

1. The legislative and consultative powers of the faculty must be codified in a published governance document approved by and amendable by the faculty or [its] elected representatives.

2. The university's curriculum is the responsibility of the faculty. The faculty, acting as a committee of the whole or through representatives elected by the faculty or designated pursuant to procedures established by faculty legislation, must give approval to academic policies prior to their implementation, including but not limited to the following: (a) graduation requirements; (b) the undergraduate curriculum; (c) the establishment, merger, or discontinuation of departments, schools, and colleges; (d) the establishment of new degree programs (including online programs); (e) the establishment of or substantive changes to majors; (f) the elimination or consolidation of degree programs; (g) the establishment of individual new courses; (h) admissions policies; (i) attendance and grading policies; (j) grade-appeal procedures; (k) drop-add policies; (l) course-repeat policies; (m) policies for honors programs; and (n) honor-code policies.

3. The curriculum leading to and policies with respect to the award of graduate and professional degrees must be established by the faculties of the schools or colleges that admit and certify candidates for those degrees.

4. The faculty, through its designated representatives, must be consulted on any proposal to adopt or amend campus policies of reappointment, tenure, and promotion, and of post-tenure review. It is expected that any such proposals will be initiated by the faculty, and that full opportunity for faculty analysis and discussion will be allowed before any modifications in such proposals are adopted.

5. The faculty, through its designated representatives, must be afforded full opportunity to review and approve faculty handbooks, academic policy manuals, and any institutional policy statements that affect the faculty's teaching, research, or conditions of employment.

6. For joint committees on which the faculty is represented: (a) faculty representation must appropriately reflect the degree of the faculty's stake in the issue or area the committee is charged with addressing; and (b) the faculty members of joint committees must be selected in consultation with the elected faculty leadership or by processes approved by the senate.

7. The granting of honorary degrees is a prerogative of the faculty. All nominees for honorary degrees must be approved by the faculty or its designated representatives before final approval by the board of trustees.

### Administration-Faculty Collegiality

1. A collegial, candid, and cooperative relationship should exist between the administration and the faculty. When requested,

As expected, results varied considerably from campus to campus. Typical of the spread was the response to the final question: "In your opinion, on a scale of 1 (most authoritarian) to 5 (most collegial), how do the faculty on your campus regard the relationship between administration and faculty?" The responses: two 5s, six 4s, four 3s, three 2s, and one 1.

The survey confirmed that some of our campuses needed help in gaining governance rights that most of us took for granted. We began to formulate a statement on shared governance that would spell out minimum standards. A draft was circulated among assembly delegates and sent to the campuses for feedback. We received many suggestions that we ultimately incorporated into the statement.

We titled the document *Standards of Shared Governance*, and its preamble began with the affirmation, "A strong tradition of shared governance is essential to the excellence of any institution of higher learning." The document in-

---

Some of our campuses needed help in gaining governance rights that most of us took for granted.

---

cluded sections on faculty senates, faculty governance responsibilities, and administration-faculty collegiality.

Each section included a series of "must" statements such as, "Members of the senate must represent the academic units of the institution and must be elected directly by the faculty of those units." The con-

tributions of English and law professors were apparent in wording that aimed for both clarity and precision. For example, the section on faculty responsibilities stated, "The university's curriculum is the responsibility of the faculty. The faculty, acting as a committee of the whole or through representatives elected by the faculty or designated pursuant to procedures established by faculty legislation, must give approval to academic policies prior to their implementation, including but not limited to the following." Fourteen specific prerogatives were then listed, from "graduation requirements" to "the elimination or consolidation of degree programs" to "course-repeat policies."

### Compliance Issues

During the drafting and review stage, only one area proved seriously controversial: the section on compliance. All agreed on how the section should begin: "It is the responsibility of the faculty of each campus to advocate, seek, and monitor the campus's adherence to the *Standards of Shared Governance*. When a campus is not in compliance with one or more standards, faculty should seek resolution through processes at the campus level."

But what should happen if the faculty's best local efforts failed to achieve results? One group wanted to authorize the assembly to appoint an investigating panel modeled on the AAUP committees that investigate alleged violations of governance. A careful process would allow facts to be set forth and would provide the local administration both incentive and opportunity to bring its practices into compliance. As an ultimate step, if all else failed, the assembly could vote to sanction the noncompliant administration. Like AAUP sanction, the action would have no legal force but could be expected to generate media coverage that administrators would find unwelcome and might go to some lengths to avoid.

Others disagreed strongly, however, and argued that such steps went well beyond the assembly's charter and interfered with local campus prerogatives. In cases of noncompliance, they preferred that the assembly limit itself to forwarding campus complaints to the UNC president. The more activist group countered that leaving the matter to administrators would not necessarily result in change that satisfied the faculty.

After considerable deliberation, we arrived at compromise language: "However, when the faculty's sustained efforts to secure compliance have not been successful, the faculty, through its senate or the chair of the faculty, is encouraged to consult with the officers of the Faculty Assembly, who will bring the matter to the attention of the president and work with all parties to achieve a resolution."

Following its approval by the assembly's Governance Committee, a final draft of the policy was brought before the assembly in April and received unanimous approval and considerable praise. The chair forwarded copies to all system chancellors and senates, and the UNC academic vice president commended the document to the chief academic officers of the sixteen campuses. We hope that the statement will prove both a bulwark to preserve good governance where it currently exists and an effective stimulus where change is needed. ✍

### Note

1. The sixteen campuses that make up the University of North Carolina system include two major research universities, three other doctoral-granting universities, nine comprehensive universities (including the five historically black institutions and one Native American campus), a designated undergraduate university, and the specialized School of the Arts, which enrolls high school students through graduate students.

administrators should appear before the senate and respond to questions.

2. It is expected that senior administrators will uphold the decisions of the senate in areas in which the faculty has primary responsibility, such as curriculum and tenure and promotion policies.

3. The chancellor and other senior administrators should consult in a timely way and seek meaningful faculty input on issues in which the faculty has an appropriate interest but not primary responsibility, including but not limited to the following: (a) the university mission, emphases, and goals; (b) budget; (c) campus master plan or strategic plan; (d) building construction; (e) enrollment growth; (f) tuition policy; (g) student discipline; (h) intercollegiate athletics; (i) faculty and staff benefits; (j) and libraries and other research facilities.

4. The chancellor should effectively advocate the principles of shared governance to the board of trustees.

5. The chancellor should typically sustain the recommendations of faculty tenure, hearings, and grievance committees. When the chancellor acts against the recommendations of such committees, the chancellor should meet with the committee or otherwise adequately communicate the reasons for not sustaining its recommendations.

6. The board of trustees should exercise due respect for the governance prerogatives of the faculty.

7. The faculty should participate meaningfully in the selection of academic administrators through membership on search or hiring committees and the opportunity to meet and comment on "short listed" candidates before hiring decisions are made.

8. The faculty of each college, school, or department should be consulted in the appointment or reappointment of the dean or department chair either through majority membership on the search or evaluation committee or by direct consultation with the appointing administrator either in person or by other means approved by the faculty senate.

9. The term of appointment of academic deans and department chairs should not exceed five years. If appointed for an indefinite term, an academic dean or department chair should be formally evaluated for continuation in office not less frequently than every five years.

10. The chancellor or provost, in consultation with the faculty senate, should establish effective procedures that enable members of the faculty having voting privileges to regularly evaluate the performance of senior administrators. This evaluation should be in addition to and independent of the mandated periodic evaluation of administrators by the chancellor or the board of trustees.

### Compliance

It is the responsibility of the faculty of each campus to advocate, seek, and monitor the campus's adherence to the *Standards of Shared Governance*. When a campus is not in compliance with one or more standards, faculty should seek resolution through processes at the campus level. However, when the faculty's sustained efforts to secure compliance have not been successful, the faculty, through its senate or the chair of the faculty, is encouraged to consult with the officers of the Faculty Assembly, who will bring the matter to the attention of the president and work with all parties to achieve a resolution.