2016 Shared Governance Four Year Report and Survey Results

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What are the goals of Shared Governance?

Shared Governance at the University of Florida is endorsed by the University Faculty

Senate, the UF Board of Trustees and the UF president. Shared Governance in the

academic mission of the university is defined as "collaborative participation of

administrators, faculty, staff and students in the decision and policy making process."

The five core principles of Shared Governance are mutuality, collegiality, and

collaboration; transparency; representative participation; mutual accountability; and

clarity of roles. Procedures to ensure faculty collaboration in strategic planning, setting

budget and resource allocation priorities, and resolving differences between faculty and

administration are to be implemented at all levels of the University.

Historical Perspective

The process of Shared Governance in IFAS began in earnest in 2006 with a draft of the IFAS Constitution. The IFAS Constitution, ratified in 2008 and amended in 2014, serves as the defining framework of IFAS Shared Governance. Governance is shared between the administration of IFAS and the faculty as represented by the IFAS Faculty Assembly and its committees. As outlined by the constitution, the IFAS Faculty Assembly has the authority to determine certain matters, to make recommendations on certain matters and to consult on certain matters with the Senior Vice President and IFAS deans prior to their implementation.

Effectiveness

In an effort to ensure the effectiveness of Shared Governance at the IFAS and department or academic unit levels, ongoing evaluations of Shared Governance are outlined in the IFAS Constitution. A Shared Governance Review Committee was appointed to assess the effectiveness of shared governance in IFAS. That committee, working with the IFAS Program Development and Evaluation Center (PDEC) developed an online survey instrument to assess the feelings of faculty and administrators on the effectiveness of shared governance. The survey was subsequently delivered to the IFAS faculty during the Spring semester of 2016 (May-June) using the online Qualtrics survey system.

Delivery

Requests for participation were sent out twice by the SVP office to all IFAS faculty and administration. The survey consisted of 43 questions and utilized branching logic. Depending on the responses, a participant received anywhere from 5 to the full 43 questions. If a respondent answered negatively to a question (e.g., slightly effective or not effective at all), they were given the opportunity to give their opinion as to why they gave that answer. The survey was started by 308 individuals and completed by 293 responders. The number of responders in each category was 93 County Faculty, 113 On-campus Faculty, 13 Chair or Director, 6 Other, 44 Off-campus Faculty, 9 IFAS Admin and 15 DED or CED. Of the responders, 28 indicated they were a current member of the IFAS Faculty Assembly, 32 said they were past members, while the majority, 186, indicated they were non-members. Of Florida's 67 counties, 41 had at least one respondent, and all RECs were represented with at least one respondent.

This report will not address all the questions in the survey, but rather touch on some of the more significant ones. As not all respondents received all questions, the response rates will be presented as percentages (%) and total respondents (n=x). The complete results of the survey can be found on the IFAS Faculty Assembly website (http:// http://faculty.ifas.ufl.edu).

Response

In a question that focused on how participants would rate shared governance in UF/IFAS, 2% responded *extremely effective*, 38% *very effective*, 52% *moderately effective*, 8% *slightly effective* and 2% said *not effective at all* (n=64). Administrators and

unit leaders were asked a similar question on how they thought their faculty would describe shared governance in UF/IFAS. The results were comparable to the faculty response with 3% responding *extremely effective*, 8% *very effective*, 69% *moderately effective*, 14% *slightly effective* and 6% *not effective at all* (n=36). Both groups of responders indicated that they thought shared governance was working, but there was room for improvement.

When asked about current level of engagement within their academic unit or Extension district, most faculty responded positively. The level of engagement for the combined responses for *very engaged* and *somewhat engaged* was 87% (see Table 1). This positive response rate was slightly higher than what was recorded when asked about level of engagement at the University level, where the combined responses for *very engaged* and *somewhat engaged* were 63%.

Table 1

Answer	Response	%
Very engaged	104	49%
Somewhat engaged	81	38%
Neither engaged nor disengaged	18	8%
Somewhat disengaged	8	4%
Very disengaged	3	1%
Total	**214**	

One the keys to successful Shared Governance is participation at the unit/department level. When surveyed on how often their academic unit conducted faculty meetings, a majority (55%) said they held meetings monthly (see Table 2). A potential concern is that 45% did not conduct faculty meetings at a frequency outlined in their unit bylaws. This inconsistency between bylaws and actual meetings is an area where improvements can be made. Regularly scheduled meetings (e.g., monthly,

quarterly) are key to the process of Shared Governance. If changes are made to the frequency of meetings, a unit's bylaws should be updated to reflect the new schedule. Faculty should also have some mechanism to set agenda items at these meetings, encouraging participation and expression.

Table 2

Answer	Response	%
Once a month	116	55%
Every other month	24	11%
Once a quarter	25	12%
Two or three times a year	35	17%
Less than twice a year	10	5%
Total 210	**210**	

Most faculty who responded to the survey have participated on a UF, IFAS and/or unit level task force or committee (77%). Additionally, while serving on these committees, 73% felt their opinions were heard and valued. While several respondents had mixed feelings about their experiences an overwhelming 87% would serve on a task force/committee again.

The next series of questions focused on the awareness that the faculty and administrators had concerning IFAS Faculty Assembly and its function. When asked how familiar they were with the UF/IFAS Faculty Assembly, only 19% said they were very familiar (see Table 3), with 81% (the remainder) only partially aware or even completely unaware of the function of the Assembly and the voice it provides. Of the 209 respondents who answered the question on whether or not they knew their unit or department Faculty Assembly member, only 60% said they aware of their representative.

Table 3

Answer	Response	%
Never heard of it until this survey	12	6%
Somewhat familiar	99	47%
Sounds familiar but don't know much about it	59	28%
Very familiar	39	19%
Total	**209**	

Despite the low level of understanding with the role of the Assembly, individual committees within the Assembly (CALS Curriculum, Infrastructure and Resources, Professional Welfare, and Tenure, Permanent Status & Promotion) were all ranked as *extremely* or *very important*. In a follow up question respondents ranked these same committees as *very* or *moderately effective*. Despite the somewhat nebulous understanding of the Faculty Assembly as whole, the individual committees were viewed favorably by the majority of respondents.

The most common way faculty received information about the Assembly was from their faculty representative (58%) (see Table 4). Thus the best way for Shared Governance to reach a wider audience is to increase the frequency of faculty meetings as well as to familiarize the faculty with their unit/department representative. In a question that asked faculty members *in the last four years have you contacted your unit/department representative*, only 18% said they had.

Table 4

Answer	Response	%
I don't receive any information about the UF/IFAS Faculty Assembly	60	29%
My faculty representative reports back to the unit	119	58%
Other (please explain)	23	11%
I monitor the faculty assembly website and/or read the minutes	14	7%
I attend the meetings in person or watch them online	3	1%
Total	**219**	

One of the last areas of the survey examined the 5 fundamental principles of shared governance defined by the University. The question asked responders to rate the five fundamental principles of shared governance that should be embodied in the policies and procedures of each academic unit. These include mutuality, collegiality, and collaboration; transparency; representative participation; mutual accountability; and clarity of roles. Approximately 75% of the responders answered positively (e.g., *always* or *most of the time*) to these five areas when referring to their colleagues. They responded only slightly less positively for IFAS as an institution. This indicates in general a favorable work environment.

As only negative responses for any given question prompted a request for comments, the number of descriptive comments from these follow up questions represent the feedback from 10-15% of responders. Examples of follow up questions asked to survey takers were: "With regard to academic policy, at which level of shared governance are you dissatisfied?"; "With regard to curriculum, at which level of shared governance are you dissatisfied?"; "With regard to tenure and promotion policy, at which level of shared governance are you dissatisfied?"; "With regard to faculty welfare, at which level of shared governance are you dissatisfied?"; "With regard to planning,

budget and resource allocation, at which level of shared governance are you dissatisfied?" and "With regard to scholarship, at which level of shared governance are you dissatisfied?" In most cases the responders point to IFAS administration as the source of their dissatisfaction. Problems with curricula were attributed to the department and CALS. The root causes of dissatisfaction were not significantly different from each other due to the low number of responses for these questions. One recurring theme among responders was a feeling that Shared Governance should provide a bottom/up model of management, though it was felt that the current atmosphere was a top/down management style. Faculty expressed the need to be heard and to feel that their time and effort was appreciated.

Recommendations

The overall tone of the Shared Governance survey was positive. For the most part, faculty feel engaged and involved with Shared Governance. One area that the survey exposed as a potential area of improvement was communication at the unit level. Assembly members should be encouraged to give status reports at their monthly faculty meetings. Units not having regular faculty meeting should be encouraged to do so. There is an opportunity to improve understanding of the unit, and thus faculty, with the workings of the Assembly and what to expect from representatives. The survey showed that only 60% of responders were aware of their representative, which is a clear indication that more work can be done at the unit level.

To address the impression that the current Shared Governance environment is top/down management model (rather than bottom/up), the administration could continue

to involve Assembly members in decision making by including representatives on advisory committees. For example, the increased budget transparency of recent years through the IRC, and the formation of the Dean of Research Advisory Group that includes an Assembly representative are all ways that the Faculty Assembly can be more involved in the Shared Governance process.

The institution of Shared Governance is an ever-evolving process. Ultimately its success is founded on the continuing cooperation of faculty and administration, working together to build a better institution.