

DRAFT

Considering Shared Governance

**Presented to Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, and the Student Government Association,
and the University Cabinet
February 5, 2008**

ABSTRACT

General Statement

In August I pledged to share my perspective on the notion of shared governance at Minot State University, beginning with a discussion with each of the senates and the University Cabinet. At that time I suggested that however our campus community defines or practices shared governance, it is important that all of us come to a common understanding of what it means and how we engage in it. A common understanding of the definitions and practices are especially important right now as our campus continues to work toward our strategic goal and any accompanying changes to the campus.

I won't pretend to have any easy definition or even a set of practices that will assure us that our campus members that they may "share" in the myriad decisions and actions taking place here. There are many on campus who maintain that they are informed and able to participate well in decisions; there are others who believe that they have not been consulted, informed, or able to participate to the extent they would like in campus-wide decisions. Higher education in general, though, places high value on a general principle of shared governance, whereby campus constituencies, many as they are, can share in the governance of their respective institution. The fact that some on our own campus believe that they do share in our governance while others believe that they do not is cause enough for us to at least address the question: What is shared governance and how can we participate in it at Minot State University?

My purpose in this paper is to raise questions, consider various points of view, and then to encourage us collectively to develop a responsible, workable, accurate definition and set of processes to realize shared governance. I am also interested in seeking the senates' and cabinet's feedback on our shared governance: to make sure that everyone

understands how we make decisions and for everyone to give me and others their views on how our shared governance system can be improved.

Definitions

The term “shared governance” is used frequently and widely in higher education to denote a process in which campus constituencies participate in governance, communications, and deliberations of a university. The key terms of the expression, however, when taken literally, could suggest a range of definitions and practices. The verb share is defined as taking a part, partaking equally or jointly; it is also understood as an act of participating in, using, or experiencing something in common. The synonyms “share, participate, and partake” suggest a joint activity, such as: “taking an active part in activities or experiences with others.”

The term “governance,” means literally the “act, process, or power of governing, or the state of being governed.” The term “govern” means: “to make and administer the public policy and affairs of, or to exercise a determining influence on, or to exercise political authority or determining influence on” (see any dictionary, such as the [American Heritage Dictionary](#) for similar definitions).

Perspective on the Meaning

One can find a wide variety of definitions and practices at universities across the nation. Virginia State University, for instance, outlines a set of core values on shared governance that is based on: informed and inclusive decision-making; transparency and clarity of operations and decision-making; open lines of communication between and among all components and members of the VSU community; accountability; and mutual respect and trust.

Our own North Dakota University System acknowledges the value of shared decision making and charges each president, who exercises full authority over his/her university, with insuring “effective and broad-based participation in the decision-making process from faculty, staff, students, and others in those areas in which their interests are affected” (see attached Appendix, II).

An essay in the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) [Academe](#) notes that the history of shared governance shows: the “evolution of academic freedom and shared governance over the last century emphasizes that these traditions developed not as a means of establishing individual rights or privileges for faculty, but rather as a means of helping faculty collectively to serve the needs of society” (see, Neil W. Hamilton, in 2002, [Academe](#)) Other interpretations on the history of shared governance point to higher education’s diverse constituencies, multiple perspectives, and the growing needs to acknowledge the value all-inclusive systems, such as the “broad-based” participation

the NDUS as mentioned above, as contrasted to earlier models in which decisions were made solely by the administration without involvement of the campus constituencies. .

Stanley Fish, a professor of English at Berkeley, Johns Hopkins, and Duke from 1985 to 1998, and then the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Chicago, published an article titled “Mistaken Notions of Governance” in the March/April 2007 edition of Change. He claims that there is no “general model of governance,” that the presence and influence of multitude constituencies or “stakeholders,” as he reluctantly calls those groups interested in the governance of the modern university, make true egalitarian “shared” governance impractical and unworkable in the pure sense of the term.

Fish claims that “democracy is not an educational idea,” and that “democracy is not generally appropriate as a standard and benchmark in academic life” (Fish, 11). He maintains that our evaluation and assessment processes, by themselves, do not support democratic principles and egalitarianism. Our differences, he notes, in length of service, educational training, rank, and positions make for “unequal treatment.” He seems to suggest that shared governance is idealistic in its implication that each member of the organization carries an equal vote in decisions of all matters of the organization.

He cites comments from John Lombardi, the president of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, who maintains that for a university to improve, it must have direction. Lombardi claims that an “institution must consult...must listen, and it must respond to... advice from its many constituencies, but it must nonetheless act, and often it must act without complete consensus” (Fish, 12).

Fish refers to a line from the University of Arizona’s “Guidelines for Shared Governance.” The guidelines emphasize the “collective intelligence of the university community,” which depends on an “extensive sharing of information and a shared understanding that faculty representatives and administrators strive always for informed mutual support through shared governance dialogue.” More prone to accept the notion of “shared governance dialogue,” Fish admits that the sharing of information depends on telling everything. He doesn’t say that shared governance won’t work; he thinks that it will work for specific and well-defined educational needs, but not when it is considered as an end in itself for higher education.

AAUP maintains that the collective faculty primarily have a responsibility to be fully involved in budget, personnel decisions, and selection of administrators (see Appendix, IV). The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) refers to shared governance as a set of practices that depends on faculty and staff involvement in significant decisions about the operations of their organizations. Both the AAUP and AFT perspectives place a strong emphasis on participation and involvement.

The Higher Learning Commission (HLC), the regional accrediting agency that accredits Minot State University, acknowledges and defines its expectations in its current handbook the role of sound governance procedures. The HLC states in its definition of the first criterion for accreditation that the organization must have structures through

which decisions are made, responsibilities assigned, and accountability for end results established.” HLC acknowledges that “Shared governance has been a long-standing attribute of most colleges and universities in the United States” but it does not go as far as to state explicitly that shared governance is expected or required. HLC’s perspective is probably due in large part to HLC’s commitment to the primacy of the institutional missions in governance and practices. Some universities holding HLC accreditation have missions and organizational structures not well aligned with strict interpretations of shared governance (e.g., private, for profit organizations, denominational organizations).

Our own policies and statements from Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, and the Student Government Association acknowledge the responsibility to participate in the life of the organization. The Faculty Senate, for instance, notes that one of its responsibilities is: “To cooperate with the President in determining policies pertaining to faculty relations, organization of the University academic programs, and student participation in the control of student affairs.” Staff Senate makes explicit the need for communications, campus participation, and representations. The Student Government Association, in its statement on the web site, refers to itself as the “governing body” for the students. (see Appendix, III).

How then should Minot State University define and apply the notion of Shared Governance?

Knowing our responsibility to adhere to the policies of the North Dakota State Board of Higher Education, we should recognize as well the importance of describing and supporting processes on campus that do not violate SBHE policy but do nevertheless advance a concept of inclusiveness, respect, and participation. Our Vision 2013, our mission, and our stated core values emphasize these qualities and practices as central to our mission and purpose. Just as Stanley Fish maintains that our decisions cannot be relegated to a pervasive system of democratic voting, we must nevertheless foster an atmosphere on campus that depends on the active participation and involvement of all of its community members in what Arizona’s guidelines refer to as “shared governance dialogue.”

I would interpret this term to mean regular conversations, open forums, deliberate exchanges, debate, input, and clear explanations of processes, which I believe we have been practicing over the past four years.. There should be ample opportunities and forums and deliberations to assure members of our campus that our dialogue, in its many forms from senate meetings, departmental meetings, to University Cabinet deliberations, and even to regular open forums, is a genuine means of participating in the governance of Minot State.

Increased expectations for dialogue, institutional discussions, debate, and review bring as well demands for more time required for active participation and awareness of campus issues, topics, and discussions. The advent of more committees and task forces to make sure that higher education includes its “constituencies” in important decisions and

deliberations has made it at times impractical for everyone to remain actively involved. The need for regular and clear communications becomes even more pronounced in a system that recognizes a variety of constituencies.. Communication becomes even more problematic when we assume that all decisions must be communicated.

The associated problem with inclusive and wide-decision making processes is that we depend on people, who are already busy and involved in their own areas, to participate actively in campus deliberations. We also hear complaints about the many committees and increased demands that take time away from essential duties, such as teaching, advising, and other services to students. Staff senators, for example, sometimes feel uncomfortable leaving their areas to participate in the senate meetings. It is also difficult to engage our students in regular deliberations because of their many on-campus and off-campus commitments. These are real problems that make full campus deliberations and broad decision making difficult. One solution, which is periodically employed, would be to limit the number of committees and to rely more on the representative senates and less on task forces. But a full dependence on the senates does not assure faculty, staff, and students that their views are being represented well by their respective senates. There are many cases in which discussions at the senates are not necessarily conveyed to their constituencies.

More venues for dialogue about campus matters bring more comments and suggestions. At times there are some who believe that by expressing a point of view or an idea in an open forum will mean that institution will follow through with all ideas and suggestions. If an idea or suggestion is raised and not acted upon, I sometimes hear the speculation that apparently only the administrator's preconceived view is advanced. The concern, then, is that the dialogue is indeed a charade to reveal discussion but then to go ahead and make other autocratic decisions. If it is perceived as a charade, then the value and integrity of shared governance will be questioned.

The processes and the results of our shared governance deliberations should be clearly defined, the comments recorded, and the results published openly. Equally as important is the need for those individuals who believe their views or ideas have been ignored to go directly to their senates, administrator, or even the president to talk about the issue or idea. Our campus is small enough to allow that follow-up and continued dialogue. I can only assure you that I would never spend so much time or effort to promote this dialogue for any other reason than to hear and understand the views and ideas of our faculty, staff, and students. The comments and conversations at the forum play a significant role in the directions I decide to take. Most of the changes we have undertaken on this campus and the major decisions that have been made have resulted from campus-wide input.

An Example of a Major Decision and the Role of Shared Governance

A good example of the role of shared governance on our campus was our campus decision to move to a smoke-free campus in June 2006. That particular decision depended on inclusive processes, communication, and a clear process of shared

governance. Because it affected all our constituencies in one way or another, a full hearing and complete processes were essential.. The stages of that deliberation and shared governance dialogue included:

1. Students and faculty from nursing proposed that the campus becomes smoke free.
2. In proposing this step to President's Staff, the students and faculty were advised to conduct general written surveys to faculty, staff, and students, and to return with the results.
3. The surveys were conducted and the results indicated that a majority of those surveyed favored a smoke-free campus.
4. Upon return to President's Staff, the students and faculty were asked to make a presentation to the University Cabinet and prepare for presentations to each of the senates.
5. The students and faculty made presentations explaining the dangers of second-hand smoke and the advantages of moving to a smoke-free campus. In their presentations they proposed a process for the campus to a smoke-free campus policy.
6. Upon the return to the University Cabinet after the meetings with each of the senates, the faculty and students noted that each senate posed questions, suggestions, and ideas, but also expressed their general support to go smoke free.
7. The faculty and students revised their proposal based on the input they received, and suggested that the campus go smoke free in three years with designated smoking areas established on campus. During the three years the campus would assess the status of the smoking and consider going entirely smoke free at the conclusion of the three-year period.
8. The University Cabinet asked the students and faculty to return to each of the senates, explain the proposal, and seek each senate's general perspective on the decision. The Cabinet also asked each member of the Cabinet to go to his/her respective area and determine the support for the proposal.
9. Within a month, the faculty and students returned to the University Cabinet to report on their discussions with each senate and others. They reported that each senate unanimously supported a decision to move immediately to a smoke-free campus by June, and not to delay the move for three years. The initial proposal to move to a "tobacco-free campus" was modified by the Cabinet to become a smoke-free campus. There were campus members who objected to the proposal for a tobacco-free campus.
10. The University Cabinet heard reports from each of its members on the responses from the areas.
11. A motion was made to recommend accepting the proposal to move our campus to a smoke-free campus by June 1. The motion was unanimously approved.
12. The proposed implementation details (i.e., notification, signage, penalties, and smoke cessation plans) were developed by the nursing faculty and staff and then distributed to each senate for its deliberations. The implementation

details were accepted, with the exception of the various recommendations regarding enforcement. The initial proposals regarding enforcement and penalties appeared to be too severe to members of the senates and the Cabinet, and the enforcement processes were modified as a result.

13. The President's Staff reviewed proposal, considered the input, and the endorsements by the senates and Cabinet. Based on the campus deliberations and support of this proposal, I decided to approve the proposed action to have our campus to become smoke-free in June 2006, as was recommended by the campus.

Examples of Other Decisions involving broad and inclusive campus deliberations and involvement:

Other examples: the Higher Learning Commission processes, the campus master plan, strategic planning processes and development of Vision 2013, approval of new mission, values, core purpose, and vision statement; setting specific action plans, Swain renovation plans; international program development; Center of Excellence proposal; the formation of the Compensation Task Force and the approval of the respective annual compensation goals and processes; the relocating of offices in the Student Union and administration and the eventual renovation, including the Beaver Dam; the proposed Broadway monument sign; and the proposal to open 11th Avenue through the forums conducted by the architects, to name but a few.

Example of a decision that did not but should have followed shared-governance processes.

Due to the timing of various proposals and calls for decisions, shared-governance processes are sometimes not followed. There are other times in which an initiative/project will go forward without the consultation of the campus and senates.

My own perspective on our "shared governance"

I do not claim that our shared governance processes are ideal, but I also do not believe that they are unresponsive and unreliable. A large part of what we do here is to depend on our community's interest in the welfare of our university and to contribute meaningfully to our campus, our students, and our shared processes. I believe very strongly in transparency, openness, dialogue, debate, and the rights of all to express themselves freely and have plenty of opportunities to do so. I heard a political scientist, who was a keynote speaker at a conference years ago, tell the audience that our system of government encourages and respects dialogue, discourse, discord, and deliberations. He said that such a system is loud, boisterous, and free to express openly criticism and opinions. He also said that a system that is not characteristically open and inviting of dialogue and points of view, is then characteristically silent and secretive.

Our campus is not silent and it is not secretive, but fully deliberative. We have open forums that are well attended and engaging, we have senate deliberations that are

responsive and participatory, and we have information sharing that is regular and detailed, through emails, minutes, reports, and communications. Major proposals and any eventual changes and actions that have occurred on this campus have been openly communicated as initial topics, shared in reports, discussed at the senates and cabinets, and included on agendas for open forums. Comments and reactions are regularly invited and encouraged.

I believe that our senate actions and responsibilities, the University Cabinet, and our system for communication are responsible and effective measures to ensure inclusive and broad-based decision making. Does this mean that every decision and action is handled in the same deliberate way regardless of import and significance? No. If we were to spend all of our time on routine decisions seeking approval and deliberation, then we'd not be getting anywhere.

Minot State University's Current Characteristics of Shared Governance Dialogue

- Empowering the respective senates to listen to, seek input from, and participate in the dialogue about major organizational decisions
- Defining clearly the purview of each respective senate on the considerations related to the constituency.
- Building a climate of mutual respect, transparency, and the sharing of all institutional information.
- Dependence on the advice provided by the senates, the University Cabinet and the institutional officers.
- Involve the senate presidents and all deans, supervisors, and directors in the monthly University Cabinet deliberations.
- Agenda and minutes are published for the University Cabinet and distributed to all campus members (faculty, staff, and student leaders).
- Regular individual meetings with the senate presidents and the university president
- Regular open forums with faculty, staff, and student leaders to discuss major initiatives and topics.
- A monthly president's report sharing with all faculty, staff, student leaders, alumni board, Board of Regents, and Foundation board.
- Reports to the senates and participation in meetings.
- A weekly meeting occurs with President's Staff, which is comprised of the president, the vice presidents for academic affairs, administration and finance, student affairs, and advancement and the director of athletics. Each meeting includes a calendar review, updates from each of the members regarding issues and topics in their respective areas, a discussion of any immediate and pressing general institutional issues and then a consideration of old business and new business items suggested by the members.

General Shared Governance Process and Scenario:

1. A major institutional proposal or need affecting one or more of the major constituencies is raised.
2. The institutional vice presidents are consulted and involved. The vice presidents seek feedback and direction from their respective areas and direct reports.
3. The university president confers with the respective senate president.
4. The university president in cooperation with the senate president addresses the senate and seeks input, action, and appropriate guidance.
5. A report on the topic/issue appears in the president's monthly report.
6. If affecting the other senates and constituencies, the senate presidents are consulted, with subsequent meetings with the senate.
7. If the issue affects all constituencies and immediate debate and dialogue is required, a special open forum or a regular forum is called to seek input.
8. If necessary, the senate president calls a special meeting of his/her respective senate.
9. If necessary, the respective supervisors of academic and non-academic units hold meetings with their units.
10. The topic or issue, and potential solution, is discussed at the next monthly University Cabinet meeting, with a discussion, debate, and action on a proposed motion.
11. The President's Staff deliberates on the proposal or issue, and arrives at a recommendation.
12. The president considers all input and information, and makes a decision. If the decision differs from the University Cabinet or any of the senates, the President will arrange a special meeting and will provide in writing the rationale for the decision and action.

Problems with Shared Governance and General Scenarios

We don't have a perfect system, nor do I think there is a system that fulfills the idealistic expectations inherent in a pure view of shared governance. A few problems arise, however, that conflict with the processes defined for shared decision making. Here are a few:

Irregular Timing and Demands

One of the key problems we face is that calls for institutional actions and decisions come frequently and irregularly from the North Dakota University System, our internal constituencies, and from others who seek responses and decisions about myriad matters impacting our campus, from the mundane to the all-encompassing. For instance, the NDUS asked each institution in November to send a list of their priority legislative requirements within a short time frame around Thanksgiving. To comply to this sudden deadline but to involve others, we forwarded this survey list to each member of the University Cabinet to prioritize the items by level of importance. Not all of our cabinet

members were able to respond, but the responses we did receive, we compiled roughly to show the frequencies on our campus.

Making a Judgment as to the Significance of a Decision and Action

Another problem or question is that it is a judgment we must make whether an action or decision rises to the level needing shared deliberations. Weekly, if not daily, there are calls for a variety of decisions and actions, many of which require prompt reporting to the NDUS or others. This multiple layer of decisions and actions and the timing of those responses present to the president and the vice presidents questions as to what requires full institutional deliberation and which ones do not.

Campus Members who are not involved or informed

The decision to move our campus to a smoke-free one is a good example that shows that shared governance and “shared governance dialogue” can work. It is also a good example of what happens when some community members are not involved or avail themselves of the information provided to them. While there were and are still some people who opposed this move, the fact remained that there was ample opportunities for review, deliberation, and active participation. It is also informative because since that time, a few people have used this example as indicative of a campus that lacks shared governance and deliberation. One concerned member of our campus told me that the “smoking-court” decision, as he referred to it, revealed that our campus made this change and others without appropriate and inclusive consultation and processes. Obviously this individual and others who saw the smoke-free decision as an autocratic one had not availed themselves of their senate or departmental deliberations, read minutes, or followed the development of this process in published reports from my office. While there was considerable shared process and information sharing, a system cannot ensure that each and every one of its members are well informed or active in the deliberations, although each member is provided many opportunities to do so. There might be, however, ways we can improve our communications between our senate representatives and the members of their respect areas.

If some community members are not well informed or involved in the shared governance processes, there is the potential for misunderstanding, as was obvious with the few concerns expressed about the campus smoke-free decision.

Schedules and Demands

There are examples where our institutional officers must make decisions without ample time for deliberation and dialogue. Usually the vice president in charge of the area most affected will consult and recommend a course of action.

The timing of actions and decisions, too, do not align well with our own schedules and academic and fiscal-year calendars. Many faculty are generally not on contract in the summer and Faculty Senate meetings are not held. Staff Senate continues to meet, as

does the University Cabinet. Generally, if the decision is significant and impacts all constituencies and a decision must be reached during those off-times, the vice presidents consult with their direct reports and President's Staff members deliberate on the topic and issue. If the issue is significant enough to warrant broad discussions, the members of the University Cabinet are consulted and their advice sought as to how to move ahead. Again, the Cabinet includes all vice presidents, directors, deans, supervisors, and senate presidents.

If the decision is a major one and impacts all constituencies, a special forum will be called or any final action on the matter will be delayed until there can be a full-campus hearing and deliberation.

Rumor and Hearsay

Our campus is like all other campuses, and that is it has its share of people who share and hearsay that might either be reliable or not reliable. Unfortunately, people who rely on rumor as a means to understand campus decisions and actions often are not as well informed about what actually happened. The solution is easy for those who have strong concerns about actions and processes that are passed on by rumors. If there is indeed an interest to understand what actually happened, and that is to go directly to the person or persons implicated as responsible for the decision or action.

Disagreement with Decisions

Disagreement with a decision or the processes that led to the decision is not a problem. There will be others who do not agree with a decision or action. The problem arises if the person who disagrees was not given ample opportunity for input or involvement, or worse yet, if he or she has not been fully informed until after the decision is made. Disagreements occur based on a full knowledge of the deliberations and through the opportunities to express one's view freely; other disagreements are based on an incomplete knowledge of the situation.

Questions

I am seeking through our shared governance dialogue some guidance and advice about what we can do to improve our current processes. Here are a few questions that I would like to pose to the senates and to others as a basis for our continued effort to improve our inclusiveness and shared governance.

1. How do we involve those who are not interested in participating in shared governance?
2. Is there a way to improve our communications to inform more people about key decisions and actions? More, different, fewer?
3. Can the senate do a better job communicating and involving their constituencies? If so, how?

4. How do we deal with the irregular nature of our calendar and the regular demands throughout the year for campus deliberations and decisions?
5. What type of decisions and actions require full shared involvement? Major ones affecting all constituencies? Minor ones affecting some? Routine ones?
6. What are examples of decisions requiring full campus deliberation?
7. How can our current processes described above be improved?
8. With the academic and peer review role of Faculty Senate defined in its own constitution, are there other responsibilities that Faculty Senate should assume in broad-based campus governance?
9. The same question could be applied to Staff Senate and the Student Government Association. Are there other responsibilities that the staff and students should assume in a shared environment?
10. With the different roles of each senate, are there corresponding assumptions that one takes precedence over another during shared governance dialogue? Phrasing the question in less political terms, does the voice of faculty take precedent over the voice of staff and/or students?
11. Is “shared governance dialogue,” in the broad sense of the term meaning free and open expression involving all campus constituencies, adequate to ensure that all groups and constituencies have ample opportunity to participate in institutional discussions and then to seek specific support for issues and topics through the processes defined in the respective senate and institutional processes and policies? In other words, is there a reason to establish a new set of policies and governing processes to replace our current processes and established policies? If so, what?
12. In response to the observation noted in a survey conducted for the HLC self study, in which some respondents did not believe that decisions are transparent, is there a process we can follow that improves the extent to which our campus community is better involved or at least better informed about deliberations on all initiatives and actions? If so, what processes or steps could improve this sense about a need for transparency?
13. If there is a sense of a lack of transparency, can you provide specific examples of initiatives and actions that the campus was not involved in or aware of?
14. Some suggest that the individual senates are not the most effective means of involving or communicating to their respective constituencies. Are the senates expected to do more than just deliberate and take actions on specific areas in their purview? For instance with the Faculty Senate, do faculty see the senate as responsible for communicating decisions and involving each member of their respective constituencies through meetings, reports, and other ways? Are there additional means of communicating actions than through the distribution of minutes?
15. Should there be an official report summarizing all decisions and actions? If so, what actions and decisions should be included? Should such a report come from the senate presidents, the deans, directors, or the vice presidents, or others?
16. Others?

Next Steps

I believe it is important for the senates and the campus to answer pertinent questions, and in full deliberation, to arrive at a workable definition understood by all and a set of practices and processes that can guide the campus in the way it handles decisions and shared governance. In fact, I don't think it would hurt to distribute a brief, clearly bulleted or numbered list of steps all of us endorse in handling significant decisions and dialogue on campus.

Conclusion

This is an important topic, not only for us but for most other colleges and universities who are committed to broad-based and inclusive decision making that is attentive to multiple and diverse constituencies in their organizations. It is critical to our own processes because we have identified in our mission and vision our commitment to valuing diversity, valuing faculty and staff, devoting concerted attention to recognizing and listening to students, and building a campus atmosphere and processes where freedom of expression and active involvement in our processes is highly valued and supported. Imagine a place and climate without forums, debate, dialogue, and processes to ensure the representation of various constituencies.

Maybe our culture and that of others in higher education has become too complex and our constituencies too multifarious to rely on a singular and linear notion of fully shared decision making and governance. We are on one hand a complex business requiring us to balance the books, handle escalating utility costs, respond to other agencies and outside constituencies that see themselves as our customers, recruiting and evaluating "employees," meeting auditing and compliance demands, fund raising and seeking other revenue sources to supplement the notable declines in state support, paying our faculty and staff fair and competitive salaries, responding to the ever-present expectation for our role in economic development, and at the same time focusing on knowing our primary and most important responsibility in giving our students the highest quality teaching and learning that we can to ensure their success and growth as citizens.

Perhaps these complexities are what prompted the University of Arizona system to refer to shared governance as "shared governance dialogue." In Stanley Fish's article that I referenced, he does not say that shared governance cannot work. He does admit that it cannot be applied to higher education in a democratic ideal where all members of the community have an equal vote in all decisions.

In my own view, I think we need to review carefully our processes, make sure that everyone knows the processes, everyone understands his/her right--indeed obligation as a valued member of our community-- to be informed and actively engaged, and everyone understands and values his/her right to express freely and openly a viewpoint.

It is especially important that all of us engage in this review and make any necessary modifications to our current processes because right now our campus must respond directly to our assessment information showing how we're doing accomplishing our own

academic purposes and how we're responding to students' own expectations, our demographic information showing the declining population and resource allocation, and the intense competition for resources and students from other institutions within our state and in the world, which now can offer courses directly to our students through technology means and allowing those students to select another school other than Minot State.

As our strategic planning analyses and the accountability measures from the NDUS show, we have many strengths and we have many weaknesses. In many cases, such as our nursing scores, we outperform our state peers and our national peers, we are achieving great successes. In many cases, such as in other accountability measures compiled by the NDUS and in the NSSE results that George Kuh outlined in January, we are not comparing well with our ND university peers, our regional peers, and national peers. This is not to paint a rosy picture or necessarily a discouraging one, but my comments are only intended to paint a realistic one. Our challenges are many, and to address those challenges while still building on our notable strengths, we've got to continue to make changes and to make big decisions about how we operate and function. Some changes may appear superficial to some and significant to others. What is significant to all of us is the leadership the faculty take in raising the bar on academic excellence and expectations for learning from students. The major change all of us will face is to raise our expectations for our services and our learning we offer to students.

The Vision 2013 goal, strategies, and the current list of action plans demand that our campus makes change and many responsible and quality changes. To become a premier university in the great Great Plains, we'll need to make big changes impacting all of us. To get there, though, will require a process that involves responsibly and actively all of our constituencies in a shared dialogue, but more important in a system of shared governance that we believe in.

Thank you for your attention and for your anticipated participation in the dialogue about this important topic.

David Fuller
February 5, 2008

APPENDICES

I. Minot State University Mission and Value Statements

Mission

Minot State University is a regional, public institution located in the northwest region of North Dakota, serving students from Minot, the region, state, nation, and other countries. Undergraduate and graduate courses and programs are offered on campus and at a distance, through face-to-face, online, and alternative modes of delivery. Non-credit and professional training and experiences are offered to students and community members.

Committed to high academic standards and professional support for students, the university is dedicated to student success, engaged and life-long learning, advancement of knowledge, effective student service, and development of students of character. These commitments are grounded in effective and motivated teaching and learning, scholarship, and service. General studies and a variety of programs are offered in the arts and sciences, business, and education and health sciences. A wide range of student support services is provided to on-campus and off-campus students.

The university values critical and creative thinking, vitality of communities and cultures, stewardship of place, and the multicultural and global environment. The university honors and supports the dignity and rights of diverse individuals, freedom of expression, academic freedom, ethical and moral behavior, integrity, fairness, and honesty.

Minot State University is first and foremost dedicated to the success of all students: their growth and development as educated citizens, their confidence, and their life-long devotion to the common good and the welfare of others.

Core Values

MSU cares deeply about its students, their learning, and their growth. The university is proud of its values and long-term commitment to:

- Teaching and learning with excellence, integrity, and engagement
- Serving students and others respectfully and responsibly
- Following high ethical and moral principles
- Supporting the values of community and place, where all community members are valued and respected for their work, contributions, and freedom of expression.

Core Purpose

Minot State University helps people appreciate life and learning and contribute meaningfully to the lives of others.

II. Established Roles and Responsibilities: State Board of Higher Education

Presidents

1. The president is the chief executive officer of the institution and a member of the Chancellor's executive staff. The president reports and is responsible to the Chancellor for all matters concerning the institution and is an advisor to the Chancellor in matters of interinstitutional policy and administration.
2. The Board delegates to the president of each institution full authority and responsibility to administer the affairs of the institution in accordance with Board policies, plans, budgets, and standards, including the management and expenditure of all institutional funds, within budgetary and other limitations imposed by law or by the Board.
3. Each president shall:
 - a. Insure effective and broad-based participation in the decision-making process from faculty, staff, students, and others in those areas in which their interests are affected.
 - b. Develop and approve or recommend to the Chancellor and the Board, in consultation with appropriate committees or members of the institution such policies, plans, budgets, programs, and standards affecting the institution as deemed necessary, advisable or as required by the Board.
 - c. Make recommendations to the Chancellor concerning all requests for tenure.
 - d. Approve all personnel actions, except the award or change in tenure status, involving all faculty members and other institution employees.

- e. Approve all recommendations transmitted to the Chancellor and/or to the Board from the institution.
- f. Define the scope of authority of faculties, councils, committees and administrative officers of the institution.
- g. Establish a process for adoption and implementation of institution policies and procedures that includes: (1) the president's approval before a policy takes effect; and (2) authority for the president to adopt interim policies and procedures concerning matters for which legislative authority is delegated to campus legislative bodies. Adoption of an interim policy or procedure must include notice to the faculty senate or other legislative body prior to or at the time the policy or procedure takes effect. Not later than six months of its effective date, the president shall present the interim policy or procedure to the appropriate legislative body for review and its decision, subject to the president's approval or veto, concerning whether the policy or procedure should be adopted, revised or discontinued.
- h. Assume responsibility for the establishment of guidelines for student conduct which set forth prohibited conduct and provide for appropriate disciplinary procedures and sanctions for violation of institutional rules, consistent with standards of procedural fairness.
- i. Maintain good relations and effective communication with the Chancellor, the Board and other North Dakota institutions of higher education and cooperate with other NDUS institutions to improve academic offerings, expand access to higher education, promote faculty development, improve support services, reduce unnecessary duplication and enhance efficiency.
- j. Maintain good relations with the public by:
 - 1. Developing sound relationships between the institution and the community and region in which it is located and the public it serves,
 - 2. Establishing and administering a development program with alumni and other institutional supporters,
 - 3. Interpreting the institution and its mission to the public, and
 - 4. Developing effective communication with legislators and with other public policy makers in coordination with the Chancellor.
- k. Be accountable for all funds, property, equipment, and other facilities assigned or provided to the institution.
- l. Implement and enforce the provisions of N.D.C.C. sec. 15-10-17.1 regarding the conduct of students, staff, faculty, and visitors to the campus.
- m. Exercise such other authority and perform such other responsibilities as may be assigned by the Chancellor or the Board.
In exercising this authority and carrying out these responsibilities, a president shall strive at all times to conform to and advocate the Board's beliefs and core values.

Presidents are hired by and shall serve at the pleasure of the Board. Presidents shall have a written contract. The term of an initial contract may not exceed three years; the term of a subsequent contract or renewal may not exceed five years. The Board may, with written notice of one year prior to expiration of a contract term, terminate the contract without cause. The Board may dismiss a president for just cause during a contract term, following written notice of intent to do so and an opportunity for an evidentiary hearing. The Board may appoint a hearing officer to conduct the hearing and make findings of fact, conclusions of law and a recommendation to the Board, which shall then make its decision based on the hearing record

III. Established Roles and Responsibilities: Minot State University Senates

Minot State University Faculty Senate:

Section 5. The purpose of the Faculty Senate shall be:

- A. To examine any action taken by any committee, academic unit, or administrative office of the University which modifies policies or regulations of the University academic program.
- B. To act upon matters relating to curriculum and instruction, including Continuing Education, within the limits established by the Board.
- C. To cooperate with the President in determining policies pertaining to faculty relations, organization of the University academic programs, and student participation in the

control of student affairs.

D. To establish, to determine the method of personnel selection, to determine the functions, and to supervise and review the proceedings and recommendations of all Senate committees

Section 8. If the University President suspends or overrules action taken by the Faculty Senate, the President shall present his/her views and reasons to the Senate in writing, within fourteen days of the Senate action. If the President's rulings do not meet approval by a majority of the entire Senate, and no agreement has been reached within fourteen days of the presentation, the Senate and the University President have the right to present the matter in writing to the Chancellor. The University President's ruling or action shall be in force until a decision is made by the Chancellor.

Faculty Senate Constitution

Section 2. The President is the chief executive officer of the University. Acting directly or through the delegation of duties to the administrative staff, the President shall administer the non-academic affairs of the University. Acting directly or through the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Faculty Senate, and others, the President shall administer the academic affairs of the University. Academic affairs are those which directly involve classroom instruction, curriculum, and the awarding of degrees.

Section 3. Subject to Board policy, the faculty through the Faculty Senate has responsibility for all academic matters and for certain non-academic matters of the University. The faculty shall recommend: 1) any changes, deletions, or additions of courses for classroom instruction or of major, minor or their requirements for graduation, such as standards of grading; 2) any matters affecting faculty welfare; 3) any change in scheme of faculty organization or of chain-of command involving faculty; and 4) this Constitution and Bylaws and any subsequent changes.

Section 4. The chief duty of the faculty shall be to teach students and to maintain an environment conducive to the intellectual and personal development of individuals, and the advancement of the University community and society as a whole.

Minot State University Staff

Staff Senate Bylaws

1. Objectives and Purposes. Minot State University's Staff Senate shall be the representative body of the University's staff employees to serve the following objectives and purposes:
 - A. To gain a spirit of unity, pride, and cooperation by being recognized equally with Faculty Senate and Student Senate as participants in advising University administration.
 - B. To be an active communication link for meaningful information exchange between staff and administration relative to issues of mutual concern.
 - C. To provide open meetings to express, propose, represent, investigate, debate, and recommend action on issues, which upon majority approval bear the authority of a responsible voice in University affairs.
 - D. To provide an opportunity to be advisory in the administration of working and employment conditions and practices, including recognition, compensation, and other pertinent issues.
 - E. To involve democratically chosen staff representatives in the operation of the University and to increase awareness of interrelating problems and opportunities.
2. Advisory Status of the Senate, in fulfilling its stated objectives and purposes, the Senate shall be advisory to the President of the University.

Minot State University Students

The voice of the students here at Minot State University is the Student Government Association. The Minot State Student Government Association is the governing body for the students at MSU and functions much like the Student Council or Student Government at other schools. It consists of nine executive officers, twenty college senators from each college of study, Intramurals, and the Student Activities Committee. The Student Government Association is the chief law and policy making organization in the student body and most aspects of change here at MSU must be brought before the Student Government Association for approval, much like the way our federal government works (from the MSU Student Government Association web page).

IV. Selected Professional Organizations

American Association of University Professors

The AAUP [Committee on College and University Governance](#) composed its first statement on the subject in 1920, emphasizing the importance of faculty involvement in personnel decisions, selection of administrators, preparation of the budget, and determination of educational policies. Refinements were introduced in subsequent years, culminating in the development of the [1966 Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities](#).

This statement, with its call for shared responsibility among the different components of institutional government and its specification of areas of primary responsibility for governing boards, administrations, and faculties, remains the Association's central policy document relating to academic governance. It has been supplemented over the years by a series of derivative policy statements, including those on faculty governance and academic freedom, budgetary and salary matters, financial exigency, the selection, evaluation, and retention of administrators, college athletics, governance and collective bargaining, and the faculty status of college and university librarians.

American Federation of Teachers (AFT)

Shared governance is the set of practices under which college faculty and staff participate in significant decisions about the operation of their institutions. Colleges and universities are special types of institutions with a unique mission--the creation and dissemination of ideas. For that reason, they have created particular arrangements to best serve that mission. For example, academic tenure protects the status, academic freedom and independent voice of scholars and teachers. Shared governance, in turn, arose out of a recognition that:

- academic decision-making should be largely independent of short-term managerial and political considerations;
- faculty and professional staff are in the best position to shape and implement curriculum and research policy, to select academic colleagues and judge their work; and
- the perspective of all frontline personnel is invaluable in making sound decisions about allocating resources, setting goals, choosing top officers and guiding student life.

Broad participation in decision-making clearly increases the level of employee investment in the institution's success. As a result, organizational theorists for many years have recommended shared decision-making as central to improving productivity in all kinds of organizations. In higher education, there is a high turnover rate among top administrators; this means that faculty and staff are often more knowledgeable about the institutional history that is so valuable to institutional planning. Without that institutional history, institutions are apt to repeat past failures.

The AFT thus believes that shared governance should be structured to incorporate the views of faculty and staff at all levels of decision-making. The institution's administrators must provide participants with the time, encouragement and information necessary to be effective.

Shared governance is vital to the academic integrity of our colleges and universities, to prevent the pressures of commercialization from distorting the institution's educational mission or eroding standards and quality, and to uphold the ideals of academic freedom and democratic practice. Strengthening shared governance is the responsibility of all colleges and universities--and a priority of our union.

V. Accreditation

Higher Learning Commission

Criterion One: Core Component 1d

The organization's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the organization to fulfill its mission.

Beyond a common understanding of and support for the mission, the organization must have structures through which decisions are made, responsibilities assigned, and accountability for end results established. Shared governance has been a long-standing attribute of most colleges and universities in the United States. Whatever the governance and administrative structures, they need to enhance the organization's capacity to fulfill its mission.

Examples of Evidence

- *Board policies and practices document the board's focus on the organization's mission.*
- *The board enables the organization's chief administrative personnel to exercise effective leadership.*
- *The distribution of responsibilities as defined in governance structures, processes, and activities is understood and is implemented through delegated authority.*
- *People within the governance and administrative structures are committed to the mission and appropriately qualified to carry out their defined responsibilities.*
- *Faculty and other academic leaders share responsibility for the coherence of the curriculum and the integrity of academic processes.*
- *Effective communication facilitates governance processes and activities.*
- *The organization evaluates its structures and processes regularly and strengthens them as needed.*