

RESOLUTION ON SHARED GOVERNANCE
Commission on Faculty Affairs Resolution 2015-16B

Approved, Faculty Senate	September 15, 2015
Approved, Commission on Faculty Affairs	[date]
Approved, University Council	[date]
Endorsed, Staff Senate	[date]
Endorsed, Faculty Senate	[date]
Approved, President	[date]
Effective Date:	On Approval

WHEREAS, in 1966 the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), the American Council on Education (ACE), and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB) formulated a joint *Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities*, which addressed shared governance; and

WHEREAS, shared governance refers to the relations between governing boards (such as the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors), administrators, and faculty in terms of how institutional decisions are made, and sets out different areas of primary responsibility for each group; and

WHEREAS, the *Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities* declared that “the faculty has primary responsibility for such fundamental areas as curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction, research, faculty status, and those aspects of student life which relate to the educational process”; and

WHEREAS, each of Virginia Tech’s State Council of Higher Education in Virginia (SCHEV)-approved peers has a representative body of faculty members which is the primary decision-making body concerning academic matters and faculty affairs; and

WHEREAS, the only representative faculty body at Virginia Tech, the Faculty Senate, does not have a direct, formal role in governance as it applies to academic matters and faculty affairs; and

WHEREAS, the overwhelming respondents of faculty surveyed in spring 2015 indicated that a formal role for a representative faculty body in shared governance would promote academic excellence at Virginia Tech; and

WHEREAS, at Virginia Tech, the Faculty Senate represents the general faculty and serves as the body through which the will of the faculty as a whole can be determined; and

WHEREAS, shared governance at Virginia Tech involves students and staff in significant roles that this resolution does not change; and

WHEREAS, a formal mechanism of consultation with the Faculty Senate during policy formulation at the Commission level will improve the efficiency of university governance,

enhance the buy-in and accountability of the Faculty in areas in which they have primary responsibility, and ensure an appropriate formal role for the Faculty Senate; and

WHEREAS, at Virginia Tech the Commissions on Faculty Affairs, Undergraduate Studies and Policies, Graduate Studies and Policies, and Research typically deal with matters of “curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction, research, faculty status,” as identified in the *Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities* as areas of primary faculty responsibility; and

WHEREAS, the University Council bylaws, in Article II, Section 2, indicates that individual commission members are responsible for keeping their constituents and other governance bodies, including the Faculty Senate, informed of commission discussions and proposed policy changes, but includes no formal requirement for Faculty Senate input concerning proposed resolutions that fall within the area of primary faculty responsibility;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that article II.2 of the bylaws of the Virginia Tech University Council be amended as follows: [Current language *italicized*]

II.2 In preparing the case for a new policy or program, each Commission shall keep constituencies (and also, as appropriate, other Commissions, the Faculty Senate, the Staff Senate, the Graduate Student Assembly, and the Student Government Association) sufficiently well informed that relevant advice and counsel from outside the Commission proper can be brought to bear at the policy (program) formulation stage.

- a. For all Commissions, *it is the responsibility of individual Commission members, mainly by means of their cross-representational affiliations, to keep affiliated governance bodies and constituencies informed and to afford the opportunity for consultative referral.*
- b. Those Commissions that deal with issues for which the faculty have primary responsibility, that is, the Commission on Faculty Affairs, the Commission on Research, the Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies, and the Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies, shall consult with the Faculty Senate at the beginning of and during the process of developing resolutions.
- c. Upon first reading at the Commission, resolutions shall be referred to the Faculty Senate for the purpose of issuing a formal recommendation to the Commission, unless the Faculty Senate waives its right to do so (see subsection e. below). The Faculty Senate shall send its recommendation to the Commission within four weeks (counted while the University is in session). Any additional changes made to the resolution before its adoption by the Commission will be communicated to the Faculty Senate for consideration by the Senate in formulating its final recommendation to University Council. In addition, the Commission may request additional input from the Faculty Senate before the final version of the resolution is completed.
- d. The Commission will send the final version of the Resolution to the Faculty Senate upon approval. The Faculty Senate will send its final recommendation to University Council for consideration by Council. The Senate’s recommendation will become a permanent appendix to the Resolution not subject to revision or amendment by the Commission or by University Council.

e. Waivers of the Referral process in subsection c. above may be conditional or unconditional and may be issued at any time during the discussion of the Resolution by the Commission. Waivers become operative when submitted to the Commission chair by a Faculty Senate officer.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the resolution on shared governance be approved.