

Shared Governance at ASU

A Proposal from the University Academic Council

Executive Summary

Shared governance at Arizona State University is codified in state law, Arizona Board of Regents policies, and the University's own Constitution and bylaws for the Academic Assembly. Recent changes in the University's academic and administrative structures and operations have stressed the University's shared governance system. This proposal from the University Academic Council represents an effort to create structures that align more closely with the administrative operation of the University. By so doing, the Council hopes to strengthen the role of shared governance in the development and operation of the University.

The proposal contains two major components—one that represents the unanimous view of the Council involving the need for shared governance structures at every level of the academic organization and one that offers two major options for the creation of a single University Senate.

The Council proposes that the Academic Assembly be maintained as the official organization of tenured and tenure-track faculty, academic professionals, full-time contract faculty, faculty emeriti, and others designated in Article IA of the Academic Constitution. Consistent with state law and Board of Regents policy, the Council proposes that a University Senate of elected representatives of the Assembly be created to propose on all matters of educational policy, faculty grievance, faculty personnel, financial affairs, university support services, and all other matters affecting the faculty and academic professional role in the university. The Council believes that shared governance must also operate at the department and college levels and that representative governance bodies be established at these levels. Despite the diminution of the campus as an administrative unit, the campuses retain significant and distinctive roles in the mission of the University, and the Council proposes that campus representative bodies of Academic Assembly members be established to address campus issues and provide campus perspectives to the University Senate. The Council recommends that these campus bodies be composed of the representatives to the University Senate, but accepts that Assembly members on the campus and in departments and campuses may create their own representative structures.

The Council offers two options for the creation of a University Senate, one that uses departments as the basic representative unit and the other that uses colleges as the basic representative unit. Using departments as the basic representative unit produces a more direct communication between the Senate and Assembly members and emanates from the belief that Assembly members have the right to be represented in the Senate through their home department. The result is a Senate that ranges from 112 to 140 members, depending on which representation formula is adopted. The second option stems from the recognition that ASU has become college-centric with respect to a significant portion of academic programs and policies and that strong links between college governance bodies and the University Senate will strengthen shared governance at both levels. The result is a smaller University Senate, closer to 70 members.

Under either proposal, the Council recommends that the University Senate meet monthly during the academic year from August through May, with electronic video/audio links in meeting sites at each campus. The Council also proposes that the Assembly members of each campus be represented by an elected president-elect, president, and past president and that those officers from the campuses form the University Academic Council, a steering committee for the Senate and the core of the University Senate Executive Committee, which would include the UAC members along with chairs of the Senate's university-wide committees with certain other ex-officio members as needed.

Proposal for Shared Governance Structures

Introduction

This proposal for a shared government structure at ASU identifies the bases and scope of shared governance at ASU; posits a system of shared governance at the department, college, campus, and university levels; and offers options by which to organize a University Senate. Any part of this document, save for state law and Board of Regents policy, is open for debate and consideration. However, the Academic Council and President Crow firmly believe that the Academic Assembly will be served best by having a single University Senate composed of elected representatives from all campuses, colleges, and other academic units.

Definitions

Academic Dean (herein referred to simply as dean)

The executive academic officer of a college or school.

College

An academic unit headed by a dean, typically identified as either a college or school. While a college or school may be freestanding, without subdivisions of departments, more often a college is an aggregation of departments defined by some overarching academic commonality.

Department

The term most commonly used to refer to an academic unit, i.e., a sub-unit of a college under the supervision of a chair who reports to a dean. Because of new organizational patterns in the university, such units are also sometimes called schools or divisions. The term “department” may also refer to divisions or schools. A department typically offers degrees and course work in a field of study, has assigned faculty and staff, and has a separate identification in the University’s operating budget.

The Bases for Shared Governance

Shared governance at Arizona State University has a long and distinguished history, rooted in state law, the policies of the Arizona Board of Regents, and the constitution and bylaws of the Academic Assembly. Arizona Revised Statutes 15-1601 guarantees that university faculty “. . . shall share responsibility for academic and educational activities and matters related to faculty personnel, . . . participate in the governance of their respective universities and . . . actively participate in the development of university policy.”

In turn, the Arizona Board of Regents states in Section 6-201 of its policy manual, “It is the policy of the Board . . . to involve the faculty in the formulation of educational policy and the governance of the universities.” Further,

The Board recognizes that Arizona universities have long adhered to the honorable tradition of academic freedom in teaching, research and service and reaffirms that the process of faculty participation and consultation in matters of academic policy is a valuable tradition that must be preserved. The faculties of the respective universities have a correlative duty to share in the responsibilities and obligations of governance and administration.

For its part, Arizona State University established an Academic Assembly, composed of all faculty and other specified members of the university community, specifying that the Assembly, normally operating through its representative body, the Academic Senate,

shall have the power, subject to the authority of the Board of Regents, and to the limitations hereinafter provided, to propose on all matters of educational policy,

faculty grievance, faculty personnel, financial affairs, university support services, and all other matters affecting the faculty and academic professional role in the university, its branch campuses which are not separately accredited, research parks, and other facilities.

As Arizona State University has grown to be one university in many places, the challenges to enable faculty participation in the governance and administration have also increased. The newly adopted structure for the university centralizes many administrative functions and offices while adopting a college-centric approach to academic functions and units. While specifying that ASU is “not a system with separate campuses and not one main campus with branch campuses,” the campus nonetheless has been endowed with a unique identity and mission and remains a focal point for faculty work.

Shared Governance Proposal — Consensus Component

This section of the proposal contains elements of shared governance on which there is a consensus among members of the University Academic Council and for which the Council believes there is strong support among the respective Senates and membership of the Academic Assembly.

For the faculty to fulfill its responsibilities and obligations of governance and administration, structures must be put in place at each level of policy-making, beginning with the most local level of the academic unit, extending to the school and college level, encompassing the campus level, and finally involving the university level itself. To that end, the University Academic Council recommends the following:

1. that the Academic Assembly be maintained as the official organization of tenured and tenure-track faculty, academic professionals, full-time contract faculty, faculty emeriti, and others designated in Article IA of the Academic Constitution.
2. that each degree-granting academic unit, whether free-standing or part of a school or college, provide a mechanism or structure by which the members of the Academic Assembly within that unit may directly or through elected representatives provide input and advice on all matters of educational policy, faculty grievance, faculty personnel, financial affairs, unit support services, and all other matters affecting them.
3. that schools or colleges consisting of multiple degree-granting academic units and headed by deans or other administrative officers, who in turn set policies and make decisions affecting the Academic Assembly members of the various units, establish a body of elected representatives from and by the Assembly membership in order to offer input and advice on all matters of educational policy, faculty grievance, faculty personnel, financial affairs, school/college support services, and all other matters affecting Assembly members.
- 4a. that each campus establish a campus body of representatives elected from and by the Academic Assembly membership of the campus in order to offer input and advice on all matters of educational policy, faculty grievance, faculty personnel, financial affairs, school/college support services, and all other matters affecting Assembly members.
- 4b. that each campus elect a president to serve a three-year rotation as president-elect, president, and past president of the Assembly members of the campus.
- 5a. that a University Senate be established as the representative body of the Academic Assembly of Arizona State University with the authority to advise and propose on all matters of educational policy, faculty grievance, faculty personnel, financial affairs, university support services, and all other matters affecting the faculty and academic professional role in the university, its campuses, research parks, and other facilities.

5b. that the University Senate meet monthly during the academic year from August through May, with electronic video/audio links to sites at each campus to permit senators on any given campus to participate fully from their own campus in the University Senate meeting.

5c. that a University Academic Council made up of the presidents, presidents-elect, and past presidents elected by the Assembly members of the separate campuses serve as the Steering Committee of the University Senate and form the core of a Senate Executive Committee, which would add chairs of university-wide Senate committees and other ex-officio members as needed.

5d. that the University Academic Council recommend a committee structure to serve the Assembly, proposing which committees have a University-wide focus and membership and which operate at a campus level or other levels of the University system.

Shared Governance Proposal — Options Component

The composition of a representative body for the Academic Assembly presents the familiar dilemma of what should constitute the basic representational unit, in our case, Academic Assembly members, academic units, colleges, or campuses. The decision is complicated by the fact that the Tempe campus is home to only 43% of the colleges, about 57% of the departments, but nearly 80% of the Academic Assembly membership. Moreover, colleges and dean-led schools range from single units, like the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication, to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences on the Tempe campus, with its 26 different departments and numerous other academic programs and centers. Any system of representation in the Senate must accommodate these facts. The familiar solution is to have a bicameral body, one providing proportional representation of the membership and the other established with equal representation from among some geographical grouping of member units. However, the Council believes a bicameral system for University level shared governance would be unwieldy.

The Council also believes that representation in a University Senate based on a strict proportionality basis is untenable. Some departments are 20 times larger than others. Having one department with 20 times the representation of another might be fair, but it seems untenable given our size and unnecessary given the advisory nature of shared governance.

This section of the proposal presents two different models for a University Senate, both of which deviate from the status quo, which is separate senates for each campus with no university-wide Senate. Effectively, then, there are three options: (0) doing nothing, sticking with the status quo, an option rejected by the Council but which remains a valid option before the Academic Assembly; (1) adopting a model in which the department is the basic unit of representation in determining the make-up of a single University Senate; (2) adopting a model in which the college is the basic unit of representation in determining the make-up of a single University Senate. Both models build upon the consensus components presented in the previous section, namely, that representative bodies for shared governance will operate simultaneously at department, college, and campus levels, in addition to the University Senate.

Understanding how either of these two models will operate is facilitated by the data presented in Table A. The academic organization of ASU is experiencing considerable fluidity, and the numbers in these tables were based on 2006-2007 data. Consequently, some leeway should be permitted in the precision of the data. However, the Council believes that the numbers are sufficiently reliable to make an informed choice between the two options presented here.

Option 1: Each department is represented in a University Senate

Option 1 is grounded in the belief that members of the Academic Assembly have the right to be represented in the University Senate through their home department. Not only is that a right, but it

is the most direct and effective way to establish a two-way communication between the Senate and the members of the Academic Assembly. In this view, to deny Senate membership to the Assembly members of a particular department is simply wrong.

The Tempe and Downtown Phoenix Campus Senate operates with this model. In fact, that Senate is a model of how a multi-campus University Senate would operate. Each department is represented in the Senate, yet both campuses have their elected officers. The much smaller Downtown campus convenes its own Governance Council of the elected campus leaders and the senators from its departments to address campus issues and offer a campus perspective to university issues while serving on committees of the two campuses and attending the meetings of the single Senate.

There are variations in this model, depending on how much one wishes to address the issue of proportionality. Option 1A in Table A allocates each department one representative. Option 1B permits an additional representative for any department with 40 or more Assembly members. Option 1C provides one senator for every 40 Assembly members in the department. Other options are possible. The current Tempe/Downtown Senate also has college senators-at-large, something not attempted in this proposal, but which remains an option.

These Option 1 models envision a University Senate that has direct ties to Assembly members through their home departments. To do otherwise is to disconnect Assembly members from the university body that represents them. At the same time, these models assume that robust shared governance will be established at department, college, and campus levels. Representatives to the college and department governance bodies may or may not serve in the University Senate, but Option 1 leaves this as a matter for the campuses, colleges, and departments to work out.

Option 2: Senate Representation is based on Dean-led Colleges and Schools

Option 2 is based on the recognition that the reorganization of ASU has made colleges the foci of the academic community. This greater independence of the colleges in establishing and operating academic programs and their greater responsibility and control over those matters affecting the members of the Academic Assembly make them a critical component in shared governance and a logical and effective basis for representation in a University Senate. Coordination and communication would be more effective in a model in which individuals serving in the University Senate will come from the set of representatives serving in college representative bodies.

Option 2 establishes dean-led colleges and schools as the representational unit for a University Senate. It does this not only because of the increased latitude given the deans for running their own academic enterprise but because it is a way to reduce the Senate to a more manageable size, which might facilitate its effective operation. Option 2 addresses proportionality in the following way (top row gives size of college; middle row specifies number of senators allocated to that size unit; bottom row specifies how many colleges are that size):

Size of Unit	3-49	50-99	100-149	150-199	200-299	300-399	400-499	500-649	650-799	800-949	950-1099	1100-1299
Reps	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Units	7	8	1	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1

The method of selecting senators from the colleges can be left to the Assembly membership or governance bodies of those units. However, senators must be elected representatives, whether that election originally occurred for representation in a college governance body or directly for the University Senate. The last column in Table A reveals that Option 2 produces a Senate of 69 members rather than the 112 to 140 of Option 1.

Table A
Counts of Colleges, Departments, Academic Assembly Members, and University Senate Members for Each Campus and for Each Proposal

Campus	Colleges ^a	Depts ^c	Faculty & APs ^d	1A ^e Reprs ^f	1B ^g Reprs ^f	1C ^h Reprs ^f	2 Reprs ^f
Tempe	9 ^b 42.9%	57 57.0%	2224 78.9%	60 53.6%	78 60.0%	88 62.9%	41 59.4%
West	4 19.0%	19 19.0%	239 8.5%	22 19.6%	22 16.9%	22 15.7%	10 14.5%
Polytechnic	4 19.0%	15 15.0%	158 5.6%	18 16.1%	18 13.8%	18 12.9%	9 13.0%
Downtown	4 19.0%	9 9.0%	199 7.1%	12 10.7%	12 9.2%	12 8.6%	9 13.0%
Total	21	100	2820	112	130	140	69

Notes

- a. The Emeritus College and University Libraries are not included in this count. The Emeritus College currently numbers ~275 and University Libraries has 59 Assembly members. Representation for the Emeritus College could range anywhere from 1 to 5, depending on how these rules for representation are applied. The University Libraries would have one senator in Option 1A and 2 in all other options.
- b. The office of the Vice President for Research is included here as a college and as a single department on the Tempe campus. It houses the various Biodesign centers and includes 43 faculty and 94 academic professionals.
- c. Departments are degree-granting academic units that are home to Academic Assembly members. Only departments with 4 or more members are included in this count.
- d. All faculty and APs are counted, regardless of whether their lines are in departments that were included in the department count.
- e. Option 1A assigns one representative to each department regardless of size.
- f. Reprs refers to representatives in the Senate and includes both senators and the three elected campus officials (president, president-elect, past president).
- g. Option 1B mimics 1A except that one additional senator is added to any department having 40 or more Assembly members.
- h. Option 1C follows 1A except that one additional senator is allocated to a department for every 40 Assembly members it contains.