

**2012-13 FGCU Faculty Senate Annual Report  
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**Submitted by Senate Executive Leadership Team:**

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**Introduction**

The purpose of this report is to document the efforts and achievements of the FGCU Faculty Senate in the 2012-13 academic year and to provide context and reflection on the effectiveness of the Faculty Senate Governance System in the shared governance of the University.

**Background**

The Florida Gulf Coast University Faculty Senate was created as “a system of collegial faculty self-governance that ensure[s] the rights of faculty are supported and the responsibilities of faculty in fulfilling the mission of the university are met” ([Founding Faculty Senate Philosophy](#)). The Faculty Senate Governance System comprises the [Faculty Senate](#), the [Senate Executive Leadership](#) (officers of the Senate), all [standing teams](#) and [committees](#), and the [Senate Leadership Team](#) (SLT, composed of the facilitators of standing teams).

As outlined in the [Faculty Senate Governance Document](#), the “Faculty Senate is the decision-making body for FGCU faculty governance. The standing teams make recommendations to the Senate, which has final authority. The Senate may enact resolutions on any matter affecting the academic mission of the University, and speaks for the faculty on matters of concern. It is the responsibility of the senators to communicate with and get feedback from the constituents in their unit. The means of communication [are] determined by the senate representatives in each unit.

“The Faculty Senate engages in collegial dialog with the President of the University, the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs and others in positions of administrative leadership in order to pursue and refine the mission of the University. Collaborative and shared leadership among all university constituents is critical to creating a campus environment conducive to advancing student achievement. Fairness, mutual respect, continuous improvement, an informed faculty, and collegial decision-making are the hallmarks of the governance structure.”

All agendas, approved minutes and supporting documentation of the Faculty Senate are available [here](#).

**Standing Teams and Committees**

*Standing Teams*: The Standing Teams of the Faculty Senate are responsible for direct oversight of key areas of faculty responsibility and involvement. These include curriculum, program review, grants and research activities, institutional and faculty

affairs, and other domains related to curriculum, instruction, and faculty governance. The composition and scope of team responsibilities are described in the [Faculty Senate Bylaws](#). Teams receive and/or identify agenda items from three primary sources: the team's elected faculty membership, the Faculty Senate Executive Leadership (either acting as a relay for concerns from the faculty at large or conveying action from the Faculty Senate), and ex-officio administrative members of the committee.

Each Team documents its workload and progress on a Work Plan that tracks goals, action steps, timeline, membership responsibilities and the final status of or accomplishments related to each goal. Appendix 1 compiles this year's Work Plans for standing teams and details the associated goals and results.

*Standing Committees:* Additionally, [standing committees](#) of the Faculty Senate provide peer review of competitive or selective grant, sabbatical, and excellence awards administered through the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and/or implemented as part of Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Administration and the United Faculty of Florida-FGCU chapter.

*Structural instabilities in Faculty Governance System:* Though each year the Faculty Senate Teams, Councils and Committees review their bylaws and propose necessary adjustments to reflect any evolution of workload or flow, there is increasingly evidence that a more deep-set review of team structure and responsibility may be in order. As the university has grown and evolved, certain processes and work that teams and committees were originally created to perform or contribute to have shifted in both quality and quantity. In some cases, the current team structure may not be optimally configured to match the way faculty formally participate in critical faculty activities, particularly those related to academic program review and the review and support of FGCU centers and institutes. To remain effective and to be respectful of the energy faculty are committing to these processes, the Senate system would be well served by a strategic review of how the team structure is functioning and how it might be optimized beyond annual bylaws tweaks.

### **Leadership Initiatives**

In addition to its regular business handled through Standing Teams and Committees, the Faculty Senate this year focused on three Leadership Initiatives coordinated by the Faculty Senate Executive Leadership:

1. *Shared Governance.* The Shared Governance Leadership Initiative carried forward from the 2011-12, when a process to define what shared governance means at FGCU was initiated by Faculty Senate Leadership. Continuing on work that [began last year](#), the four-party work group met through the Fall and ultimately agreed upon a [statement of definition and principles of shared governance at FGCU](#), a statement which built off a similar document developed and approved by the Advisory Council of Faculty Senates of the State University System of Florida. This statement was subsequently presented to the Board of Trustees by President Bradshaw, who also [distributed the document and affirmed it as a consensus statement](#) to the campus

community early in the Spring semester.

This document will not automatically address or correct those areas of governance and decision-making in which the institution still has room to improve. But Faculty Senate leadership invested time and energy in this effort so that, for the first time in its history, FGCU has a commonly agreed upon statement of what shared governance means and looks like in principle. This is singularly important, because with this agreement, faculty (indeed, all stakeholders) can – and Senate Leadership encourages faculty to – now revisit the governance processes at the unit, department, and program level to do two things: reaffirm those places where things are working, and identify where there are opportunities and needs for improvement based on the document’s vision of meaningful shared governance.

The Faculty Senate Executive Leadership has an opportunity at the beginning of the coming academic year to build upon the shared governance initiative by reaching out to Faculty Governance Teams in the colleges to help facilitate the identification of areas where college, department, or program level processes may need to improve to align with the definition and principles of meaningful shared governance outlined in the consensus document.

Finally, Faculty Senate will continue to have a role to play in the development of an official University policy on shared governance reflecting the content of the consensus document. Such a policy is part of the larger compliance regime associated with FGCU’s accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

See pages 12-15 below for additional discussion of shared governance.

2. *Re-administration of the Survey of Faculty Perceptions of Chairs’ and Deans’ Performance.* This initiative carried forward work begun in 2011-12 working jointly with our partners in the administration to refine and implement a version of a survey developed by the Faculty Senate’s Faculty Affairs Team and adopted by the Senate in Spring 2011. This year’s re-administration of the survey represents a significant accomplishment insofar as it further establishes the role of the survey in a broader 360-degree review and assessment culture.

Given the considerable work of the tripartite group established in 2011-12, this year’s work largely involved oversight and reaffirmation of decisions already made. The main question before the group when it met in Fall 2012 was whether or not to substantially alter the instruments, and the group agreed to maintain the current form of the survey in order to allow multiple administration to generate data from a stable instrument.

The primary thrust of new work and progress was with respect to academic advisors’ ability to provide feedback on their direct supervisors. A direct supervisor of academic advisors and an academic advisor were added to the working group to advise on the question of whether and how to expand the survey to include the

development and administration of an instrument for gathering feedback on academic advisors' perceptions about their direct supervisors. Ultimately, advisors themselves elected not to proceed with this effort, preferring to wait for the results of (at the time) an ongoing process in Faculty Senate regarding enfranchising academic advisors as sitting Senators (see page 7 below). Given that academic advisors may now serve on Faculty Senate, future Senate leadership teams may wish to consider reopening the matter of advisors' providing feedback in the survey on their direct supervisors.

In this year's survey, of the faculty eligible to participate, the survey had a 38% overall participation rate, down from 46% last year. The two most commonly (though anecdotally) cited reasons for this low (and lowered) response rate are:

- Disengagement/demoralization: though not universal, there are powerful perceptions dispersed widely and with some amount of depth among faculty that FGCU's climate and culture are ailing; many processes meant to engage faculty in the elicitation of data, feedback, and other forms of information that might remediate cultural or climatological problems are perceived, not as parts of broader remediation efforts, but as exercises designed to satisfy the optics of inclusivity and shared decision-making. This effect on faculty response to formal data-seeking activities might be described, in the words of Faculty Senate's Select [Panel on Enrollment Growth and Academic Quality](#), as giving rise to a certain "forum and feedback fatigue."
- Lack of uniform application and use of survey results: faculty feedback suggests that participation rates may in part be correlated to how meaningfully the survey results are perceived to be used to improve the quality of academic supervision on campus. Administrative comments in Senate and other forums indicate that the survey data are part of conversations and processes related to the supervisor of academic supervisors and deans, but no clear or formally articulated process has been described to or shared with all faculty that would indicate regularized implementation of the data from the survey of faculty perceptions of chairs' and deans' performance in the professional development of chairs and deans themselves. In light of no coordinated, institutional, and reliable effort to inculcate the data from the survey into verifiable processes of professional development and support for academic supervisors and deans, the declining faculty response rate may well measure at least in part insufficient faculty belief that their participation in this survey process is worth the time and effort.

Whatever the cause, the low response rate undoubtedly imperils the effectiveness of the data and, perhaps, even the long-term sustainability of the enterprise. If the survey of faculty perceptions of chairs and deans cannot even muster a slim majority of faculty participation, this consistently low response rate may be seen as justification by administration to ignore or even further downplay the results, and by the Faculty Senate Executive Team, which must provide the leadership required on the faculty side to make the survey happen, as not worth the effort.

3. *The Faculty Senate Select Panel on Growth and Quality*: The final initiative involved the creation of an ad hoc Panel on Growth and Quality. It [was convened](#) to undertake and engage faculty in a focused exploration of the dominant issues related to enrollment growth and academic quality within the budgetary, political, and economic realities of the foreseeable horizon in Florida public higher education. Distinct from a decision-making or policy-recommending body, the Panel focused on researching and framing faculty perspectives on growth and quality within the relevant economic, political, and institutional contexts associated with public higher education in Florida. The specific charge to the panel was twofold:
1. To conceptualize and facilitate the collection of relevant faculty perspectives on University growth and academic quality. Reduced to its purist form, this charge if stated in the form of a question is: what should FGCU be growing into as an institution, and how?
  2. To synthesize those perspectives into a focused report reflecting the dominant majority and minority perspectives and contexts. By focusing on growth and quality, the Faculty Select Panel has the latitude to foreground questions not only about the comparative merits and impacts of varying rates of student enrollment growth and growth targets related to academic quality from a faculty perspective, but also underlying questions about what standards of quality or excellence we aspire to, what academic quality looks like at an institutional level, and what resources, conditions, and capacities are necessary for lasting educational excellence.

In other words, “growth” is (and was in the Panel’s work) seen as a concept that encompasses both the quantitative – headcounts and enrollment targets – as well as the qualitative – ideas about improvement of educational quality and academic excellence.

Though the Panel’s work was shared widely across campus, its primary audience was and is other FGCU faculty, particularly those faculty representatives serving in Faculty Senate and on its Teams and Committees with responsibilities related to academic quality and resource allocation, and/or those faculty serving on the University Planning and Budget Council and its constituent Committees – in short, those faculty who are most closely and directly involved in the planning, budget, and curriculum, instruction, and assessment processes for the University. The select nature of the Panel’s membership emphasized a mix of institutional memory, content knowledge in both budget/planning and process facilitation, and the members’ professional recognition among their peers. Members:

Margaret Banyan, Associate Professor of Public Policy, College of Arts and Sciences  
Cecil Carter, Associate Professor of Education, College of Education  
Stephen Drew, Professor of Management, Lutgert College of Business

Amanda Evans, Assistant Professor of Social Work, College of Health Professions and Social Work  
Win Everham, Professor of Marine and Ecological Sciences, College of Arts and Sciences  
Sim Komisar, Associate Professor of Environmental Engineering, Whitaker College of Engineering

The Panel was facilitated by Faculty Senate President Douglas Harrison.

The Panel's report was submitted to and unanimously adopted by the Faculty Senate in March 2013. The report with appendices is available [here](#) and [here](#), respectively. It has been shared widely among all faculty, administrative leadership, including the PBC and committees, as well as staff and student government leaders and members of the University Board of Trustees.

### **Other Initiatives and Efforts**

The Faculty Senate also responded to other issues as they emerged.

- In response to calls from state politicians, policy makers, and other leaders for sweeping changes to higher education, including the potential for differential tuition based upon academic majors as described in the report of Governor Rick Scott's Blue Ribbon Panel on Higher Education Report, the Faculty Senate debated and adopted [a resolution](#) opposing such a plan. The resolution was circulated widely to state leaders, including the governor, the chair of the SUS BOG, the Chancellor of the SUS, and on campus as well, including with the University BOT.
- In matters of university governance, the Faculty Senate debated concerns raised by faculty regarding the universal criminal history background checks, with mandatory fingerprinting, for all employees and adopted [a resolution](#) opposing the policy developed for this purpose. This resolution was subsequently reaffirmed in light of administrative revisions that the Senate deemed insufficiently responsive to original concerns raised by the resolution.
- Faculty Senate leadership helped coordinate a faculty-led response to a request by administration for faculty perspectives on faculty office space allocation and its implications (the response included [a report](#) with [appendices](#)). This work grew out of the plans to enclose the Merwin Hall colonnade to create faculty offices.
- The Faculty Senate also adopted [a resolution](#) expressing concern and calling for a collaborative process on and off campus to address the loss of state money to support Lee Tran Bus Route 60 to campus.
- In response to a [Faculty Senate Faculty Affairs Team report](#) (supporting documentation [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)) on the status of policies and practices related to uncompensated instructional activities on campus, the Senate adopted [a](#)

[resolution](#) calling for the establishment of uniform assignment, recognition, and compensation for faculty members that engage in instructional activities that are presently uncompensated. This resolution was communicated to the University President and President of the local chapter of the United Faculty of Florida.

In both this issue and the fingerprinting issue, UFF and Senate worked closely together to represent different aspects of faculty voice and interests that fall to each entity in the FGCU governance model. This relationship continues to develop well and grow productively. At the same time, these two issues brought to the surface a certain degree of operational unclarity among some Faculty Senators about how and when Senate polices its side of the line separating those matters that are within the domain of the Faculty Governance System and those that belong to UFF (some senators expressed views that in ceding primary advocacy on fingerprinting to UFF, Senate lost its ability to play a more shaping role in the process). For the most part, Senate and UFF worked effectively to respect each others' rights and responsibilities and deal as transparently as possible with those issues and moments when there might appear to have been uncertainty. Going forward, Senate will need to continue to strive to be as clear as possible with itself and with UFF when Senate elects, as it did with both the fingerprinting and uncompensated instructional activities issues, to formally express faculty positions, concerns, and desires for certain actions to be undertaken by UFF in its role as the faculty representative for terms and conditions of employment.

- Also with respect to governance, the Faculty Senate approved a number of [bylaws change](#) as part of the Senate's annual process of ensuring the Faculty Governance System remains responsive to the evolving needs and processes of the University.
- As was done last year, the Faculty Senate Executive Leadership this year provided letters from the Senate President documenting the service of each Senator, Senate Alternate, Team and Committee Facilitator, and members of Senate Teams and Committees and the Planning and Budget Council and committees (as well as other non-Senate University-wide committees involving faculty representation), an effort that has been periodically in use over the years. Over 150 letters were distributed. The workplan that was adopted last year and is still in use in the Senate Leadership Team made this process more efficient and manageable, particularly with the able support of the Faculty Senate Administrative Assistant, Ashlyn Gibbs.
- In response to multiple comments and anecdotal feedback from a variety of stakeholders in the Faculty Governance System, the Faculty Senate Executive Team initiated a collaborative process to explore ways to enfranchise in Faculty Senate those academic advisors within the Division of Academic Affairs. After seeking and receiving Senate's authorization to pursue this initiative, Senate Executive Team conferred with a committee of representatives from the academic advisors. With leadership from the Senate Parliamentarian, Arie Van Duijn, this

group developed a plan for modified the Faculty Governance Document to enfranchise advisors. Taking into account the feedback on the options for enfranchisement as judged by advisors, Senate Executive presented what it deemed the best option to Senate, and Senate [adopted this recommendation unanimously](#). Advisors are now eligible to serve in Senate beginning 2013-14. Senate leadership strongly encourages the units to also formally allow and create electoral provisions by which advisors to be elected to Senate teams and councils as well.

- Related to curriculum, the Senate provided leadership and coordination with administration to address faculty input to changes to the General Education program mandated by the legislature, to the emerging Quality Enhancement Plan, and to a request for guidance from the Office of Undergraduate Studies regarding curriculum development within that office.
- Related to assessment, the Senate Executive Team, working with the chair of the Program Review Team and the Office of Planning and Institutional Performance (as well as with the Strategic Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Committee of the PBC) provided faculty advice and recommendations on how to revise and combine three institutional policies regarding assessment and institutional effectiveness into a single comprehensive policy statement. This new policy reflects the work of the Outcomes and Assessment Task Force and its report of 2012 and significantly simplifies and aligns the assessment processes in which faculty are regularly involved.
- Finally, the senate sponsored or participated in several events:
  - Senate co-sponsored the annual promotion workshop with the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.
  - Senate hosted a joint breakfast with Student Government leaders, President Bradshaw, and Faculty Senate.
  - Senate leadership and senior faculty members participated in a breakfast with select members of the Board of Governors who were at FGCU for the BOG meeting in Fall 2012.

### **Senate Strategic Planning**

This year, for the first time since 2009, the Senate underwent an intensive phase of Strategic Planning. This work began in the fall and involved an iterative process by which Senators first identified key issues and themes in a special strategic planning forum (see Appendix 2). Then those issues and themes were sorted and recirculated among Senators and prioritized after feedback from faculty in the colleges. The results of that feedback were distilled into a [series of tables](#) that tracked the level of investment registered by the faculty collectively as reported through Senate representation.

On the basis of those tables, the Faculty Senate Executive Team identified the key themes that appeared to surface as most widely indicated as important and urgent to be addressed at the Senate level (as opposed the unit or program/department level). Those issues were:

- The evaluations of supervisors and leadership up to and including the President and Provost
- The Faculty role in the process for chairs and deans selections
- Addressing the impact of class size and enrollment growth
- Role of adjuncts, and role of faculty in relation to adjuncts.

Presented with these items, the Senate added two more that were not part of the iterative strategic planning process but arose over the course of the subsequent conversations on the Senate floor:

- Addressing and clarifying the role and workload of instructors.
- Addressing the dissatisfaction among faculty about how faculty voice is received in decision making, what shared governance actually means, and how it can be better implemented to the satisfaction of all

The Senate directed the Senate Executive Team to confer on and report back to Senate with proposed strategies for responding to each item. Accordingly the Senate Executive Team deliberated on these directives and brought the following responses and recommendations to the Senate.

1. *Regarding the issue of evaluating supervisors and leadership up to and including the president and the provost:* It was the judgment of the Senate Executive Team (SET) that the current system by which faculty provide feedback on the performance of chairs and deans shows signs of promise and potential as a model to inform any potential expansion of the survey to include senior leadership – SET thinks the current model is useful both in terms of the structure and conceptualization of the instrument itself but also the collaborative process by which this instrument and survey approach was achieved.

However, SET also recognized that two full cycles have only just been completed in the new model after nearly six years of no formal faculty input on the performance of academic supervision. Before recommending any formal move to expand the survey beyond its current scope, the SET took the position that the current faculty survey of academic supervision establish itself for at least two full cycles. Accordingly, the SET recommended that in the Fall of 2013, the Faculty Affairs Team formally undertake a review of the past two years of surveys of faculty perceptions of chairs and deans and the response to this survey, from a faculty perspective, and report back to the Senate on the effectiveness of this survey and the ways that the data appear to be used or not in the professional development of academic supervisors and leadership in the units. Such a report should provide the Senate with more concrete information on which to make a decision about how it may wish to proceed on this score in the future.

2. *Regarding the faculty role in and process for selection and roles of chairs and deans.* The SET took the position that is the primary responsibility of the administration, as the hiring authority for chairs and deans, to articulate a common vision and process for how to involve the faculty in the units in the selection of academic leaders. Therefore, the Senate President formally requested of the Provost that the administration develop and communicate to the faculty the administration's vision and plan for how all faculty can expect to be involved in the selection of chairs and deans across the institution. The Provost indicated such direction would be forthcoming by the academic year's end for chairs, and subsequent to that, more information related to the deans.
3. *Regarding the charge to address impact of class size and enrollment growth:* The SET took the position that the report and recommendations of the Select Panel on Growth and Quality (see page 5 above) covers a deep and wide scope of issues related to growth and academic quality and amply covers your directive on this issue.
4. *Regarding the role of adjuncts, and role of faculty in relation to adjuncts:* The SET recommended that this issue be addressed through a Leadership Initiative of the Faculty Senate in the coming year, and jointly include representatives from administration since the matter engages significant areas of overlapping interest among faculty and administration.
5. *Regarding the role of instructors:* The SET sought more detailed feedback from Senate on its intent and meaning in raising this issue. After receiving that feedback (see Appendix 3), the SET recommended that the instructors across campus be directly polled about concerns, issues, and recommendations they see arising from their role among the faculty and on the basis of that feedback, the Senate establish a task force to make recommendations to the administration on how to better respond to the needs and emerging concerns related to the instructor role.
6. *Regarding the charge to propose ways to address "dissatisfaction among faculty about how faculty voice is received in decision making, what shared governance actually means, and how it can be better implemented to the satisfaction of all."* The SET took the following positions: the matter of what shared governance means in a definitional sense has been addressed by the completion of the Shared Governance Initiative. Additionally, the Senate President can and should meet with the faculty governance leaders of each unit to discuss the shared governance document and how faculty can lean forward on the basis of this commonly adopted statement and improve the exercise of our rights and fulfillment of our responsibilities in the governance of the institution.

## **Ongoing Issues Carrying Forward**

In addition to the items that remain ongoing from the Strategic Planning discussion above, the following issues, dynamics, themes, and initiatives will require additional attention, energy, and focus from Senate Leadership in the coming year:

1. *Panel on Growth and Quality Recommendations:* By adopting the Panel's report, the Senate also formally indicated its intention to consider action on some or all of the Panel's 10 recommendations. There is a range of potential ways forward based on the actions recommended in the report. Some involve work within the Faculty Governance System itself (i.e. defining what the faculty officially mean by academic quality). Others require collaborative efforts not unlike the Shared Governance Initiative (i.e. working to propose a more focused statement of university mission and vision). The Senate will need to be clear and timely in its decisions about what recommendations it wishes to operationalize in AY 2013-14, either as Leadership Initiatives or as other formal efforts.
2. *Effective Representation:* Over the past two years, Senate has achieved a marked degree of success in improving the quality of representation by Senators to the faculty in the units. This includes regularly updating the unit faculty on the main points of Senate business, communicating back to Senate or the PBC faculty representatives (through the SPBAC) issues of concern or opportunity that require action or input, and meeting regularly as college Senate delegations to prioritize representational goals for each college faculty. These enormously important markers of a cultural shift toward more engagement and involvement among Senators in the life of faculty governance, and for these gains to take root and flourish, it will require things including but not limited to the following:
  - a. Senators who carry over from one year to the next inculcating best practices with new Senators.
  - b. Senators continuing to plan a regularized means of sharing meeting summaries from Senate to faculty in each unit after each Senate meeting.
  - c. Senators regularly communicating requests for input and feedback on pending business to faculty in the units.
  - d. Continuing regular caucus meetings of Senate delegations at the end of Senate meetings (at least twice a semester).
  - e. The Faculty Senate president visiting each college faculty meeting of the new year to explain the general aims and [structure](#) of governance and sharing the Senate's goals and initiatives for the year.
  - f. The Faculty Senate holding an orientation that will (re)introduce Senators to "Senate and University Governance 101." Senate Leadership Team and other interested faculty should have the opportunity attend as well.
  - g. The Senate Planning and Budget Advisory Council working to develop to a clear and regularized way to communicate on a non-exception basis with faculty, either through Faculty Senate or other means (or a combination of both), about key issues and developments coming out of the Planning and Budget Council system. Such an approach communicating with faculty mirrors the work in Faculty Senate of regularly updating faculty on Senate business.

3. *Undergraduate Studies curriculum oversight:* The faculty's responsibility to the curriculum is our most important formal role in the life of the institution. Therefore, the faculty must be vigilant and responsive to the emerging needs of the newly formed Office of Undergraduate Studies and its request for faculty guidance in how to review and develop curriculum needs within this office. A group of faculty leaders in curriculum, student, and faculty affairs is currently meeting to formulate proposals that the Senate will have to consider and act on early in the coming year 2013-14.
4. *Performance based funding:* The emergence in the state legislature of mandated performance based funding models will require faculty through Faculty Senate to continue to engage the question of how to best understand the impact of these new models on the academic dimension of the university. The Senate may well wish to consider undertaking a more sustained and engaged response to these developments in 2013-14.
5. *Other structural and cultural dynamics:* The Senate Executive Team sees a palpable and growing concern among a significant portion of the faculty who interact with the Faculty Governance System about the health and stability of shared governance at FGCU. Among a not-insignificant portion of these faculty, there is a real perception that despite gains in defining shared governance and reaffirming its key principles through the [Shared Governance Initiative](#), and despite the elaborate system of the [Planning and Budget Council](#) and its satellite committees and their four-party representational structure, the everyday practice of shared governance is serially and at some level systematically suboptimal and that faculty perspectives are often insufficiently prioritized in the final decisions about planning, budgeting, and resource allocation.

Much conversation and energy have been devoted to this topic in Senate over the past two years (at least). The persistence – indeed the intensification – of skepticism among faculty about the administration's commitment to shared governance raises significant questions that are not solely the domain of the Faculty Senate but nevertheless strike at the heart of Senate Governance System's ability to function effectively. At the center of the current climate of distrust among many faculty regarding the legitimacy of shared governance at FGCU involves, it would seem, a disjunction in faculty and administrative understandings of what it means to share the decision-making of an institution of higher learning among major stakeholders.

In shared-governance discussions at FGCU, it is not uncommon for administrators to point out that shared governance does not work only when faculty or any other stakeholder always gets their way. To highlight this dimension of shared governance in this way is to emphasize the ultimate exercise of administrative authority as determinative in decision making, particularly those decisions related to budget and resource allocation – the source of the most institutional power.

When decision-making processes and/or their results are criticized by faculty for disregarding or not sufficiently valuing faculty perspectives in the final outcome of a decision, the administrative response to these criticisms often points to the formal feedback-solicitation mechanisms made available for faculty (among others stakeholders as applicable) prior to a decision being made. Among other things, the assumption here seems to be that governance is shared when opportunities for stakeholders to register their perspectives have been made. In this view, faculty feedback is one of several input factors (and not necessarily a predominate or superseding one) that shapes a final decision for which administrative entities are formally and solely responsible in their executive capacity (in some cases, the results of any given decision-making process themselves are also offered as evidence to counter criticism of administrative unilateralism; it is also often true in these cases that there is not necessarily widespread agreement among many faculty engaged in governance work that the results pointed to by administration do in fact indicate what the administration thinks they indicate in terms of a shared governance success).

At the same time, the faculty perspective in these matters often points out that it is not enough for processes to simply solicit and register the presence of stakeholder voices, especially if the decisions themselves do not demonstrably indicate a willingness or ability on the part of the most powerful stakeholder (usually the administration) to surrender meaningful portions of power or prerogative. This dynamic can seriously undermine the validity and integrity of – and trust in – the overall system. “Sharing” implies, if not absolute equality of power among all stakeholders in a decision, at least that major stakeholders have a reliable opportunity to exert a roughly equivalent level of impact on the final outcome of a decision process. Even when a stakeholder group may have the desire and technically have the power to make a decision on its own (against the will of other stakeholders), the commitments and claims of shared governance ought to require that, not infrequently, the final decision – and not just the process by which it was reached – will reflect the perspectives of less powerful stakeholder groups in more than marginal or tertiary ways. The final decision should, in other words, reflect some of the core values and demonstrate responsiveness to the foundational concerns of less powerful stakeholder groups – which is to say, those stakeholders without access to large budgets or other significant portions of material resources, or the formal supervision of people. When shared governance becomes defined in fact or practice by giving less powerful stakeholders the opportunity to register their views before a decision is made, shared governance is reduced to the entity with the most power listening to all sides and then sharing the final governance decision to everyone else.

The central issue in this dynamic seems to come down to when and how administration decides to share, discuss, and seek input from faculty (or not) on decision processes that rightfully originate within senior administrative leadership roles (i.e. the President’s office and cabinet). There appears to be a persistent and perhaps fundamental difference of opinion between many faculty in the Faculty

Governance System and senior administrative leadership regarding the optimal time to bring faculty into shared governance processes.

Faculty commonly take the position that decision-making processes work best when faculty and other stakeholders have the opportunity to participate in the formative discussion of various options and possibilities for a particular decision before the decision is made in part or whole, or before significant amounts of work toward the final decision have been completed. In the past several semesters, when faculty indicate what in their view is a failure of shared governance, they would often appear to be indicating instances in which faculty were brought into a process after administration had already taken a firm, clear, and final, or close-to-final, position and presented that position or decision to other stakeholders for a limited response-period before being finalized. Waiting to bring faculty into a decision-making process until it has already reached a fairly advanced state of development has the effect (sometimes real, sometimes perceived, sometimes both) of placing the responding stakeholder in an inherently reactive, and so weaker, position in the sharing of governance. It also undermines the weaker group's trust that the more powerful stakeholder has a meaningful, abiding interest in sharing decision-making powers.

In this regard, it is instructive to examine those cases when shared governance has seemed to work alongside those instances when, given faculty responses formally and informally, it has not. The former category might be said to include (but not be limited to):

- The campus' response to Gen Ed legislation.
- The development of a new Quality Enhancement Plan.
- The transition to Canvas Learning Management System.
- The development of textbook affordability policies and practices.
- The conversion of the Merwin Hall plaza into faculty offices.

The less successful cases might be said to include (but not be limited to):

- The revision of the background-check regulation and the development and implementation of the companion policy requiring mandatory fingerprinting of all employees.
- The conversion of Griffin Hall academic offices into support staff space.
- The decision to related to Lee Tran.
- The new technology security policy changes.

One key difference that separates the successes from the failures: the successful instances share a close connection to the curriculum or aspects of faculty work that directly impinge on our ability to oversee and deliver the curriculum effectively. Contrastingly, the unsuccessful examples might be said to involve issues that could be perceived administratively as at a greater distance from the oversight of the curriculum (and the constellation of activities and decisions that

affect this work) that is so central to faculty's participation in university governance.

One might surmise from this difference that the FGCU culture is fairly good at recognizing and respecting faculty's role as the custodians of the curriculum. At least part of the success in those processes that are widely viewed as successful involved faculty being brought into the decision-making process early by administration, and given meaningful, formalized roles in generating ideas, information, research, and data that visibly and verifiably determined large parts of the final decision made by administration. It is the structure of decision-making processes that make these examples successful, and not the degree of happiness with final outcome among faculty, who remain, as ever, of many minds on most issues.

Conversely, one might also surmise that the FGCU culture is less habituated to recognizing that what might to some seem to be purely "administrative" decisions nevertheless and often in fact both have significant secondary impacts on faculty roles and responsibilities, and can be improved by meaningful faculty input in the formative stages of decision making. This is the difference between asking faculty to react to a policy draft or a decision plan or process, versus consulting faculty from the beginning, before policy language or action plans have been developed, and then making in light of that response.

At the heart of shared governance is the systematic, formal, and regularized process of extending to all major stakeholder groups the power and responsibility to make real and meaningful contributions to decision-making. This sharing of decision-making power and responsibility is one of the signal features that distinguishes the operations and values of the university as a cultural institution from private sector profit-taking entities of similar size or complexity or social importance. If FGCU is to continue to move forward constructively and collaboratively in the next phase of its development, it will be singularly important for the university's commitment to the students whom faculty educate that Faculty Senate continue to seek and find ways to build on those instances of shared decision making that work and to address those instances of unevenness that persist in the shared governance processes of the university.

#### **AY 2013-14**

At its last meeting of the year, the Faculty Senate elected its slate of officers to the Executive Leadership positions. Officers elected are:

Shawn Felton (CHPSW), President  
Billy Gunnells (CAS), Vice President  
Anna Carlin (Library), Secretary  
Arie Van Duijn (CHPSW), Parliamentarian

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1: 2012-13 FGCU Faculty Senate Leadership Team Workplans, April 2013

Appendix 2: Strategic Planning Phase 1 Forum Summary, September 2012

Appendix 3: Faculty Feedback on Role of Instructors, March 2013