

FACULTY GOVERNANCE AT GVSU: A SHARED GOVERNANCE TRADITION

The University Academic Senate, UAS, is the highest faculty governance body, which has authority to deal with any academic issue or faculty concern. The *modus operandi* of our shared governance process is such that governance policies are developed collaboratively by the UAS and the Provost. Other policies such as the ones approved by the Board of Trustees (BOT Policies) or the President's Cabinet (President's Cabinet Policies) complement the shared governance policies. At the level of each College and the University Libraries, there are governing bodies that serve as advisory bodies to the respective Deans. The advisory bodies develop policies, consistent with the policies and guidelines established by the UAS, for their various academic units.

The UAS meets on average once a month during the fall and winter semesters; these meetings are always on Fridays from 3:00-5:00 p.m. The Executive Committee of the Senate, ECS, serves as the clearing house for matters to be presented to UAS. As a clearing house, ECS discusses matters first and then makes recommendations that become business items for UAS. ECS meets once a week during the fall and winter semesters. All recommendations from faculty governance to the Provost and/or President, come from the UAS or in some cases from the ECS acting on behalf of the UAS.

We have a shared governance culture that is robust and is thriving because of the collaborative working relationship between students, faculty, staff and administrators. The principal objective of our shared governance tradition is to strike a balance between maximum participation in decision making with clear accountability. Two examples where shared governance is at its best are found in the creation of our SHORE system and the recent market adjustment of salaries proposed by the Faculty Salary and Budget Committee (FSBC).

One of the highlights of the work of the University Academic Senate (UAS) in the 2018-2019 academic year was an initiative to launch an online shared organizational reporting system that we are calling SHORE. This system was designed in partnership with the Provost's Office and was created with the help of Institutional Marketing. The SHORE system is not unlike the online SAIL system that is used to manage curriculum initiatives. Our goal is to continue using the [SHORE System](#) for 2019-2020. The system is used to manage the work of the standing committees and task forces of UAS and keeps a record of the various charges and memos that direct the work of UAS/ECS. SHORE provides any user with network access the ability to review the work of UAS committees and task forces, and it keeps a running record of our business from one academic year to the next. A short introduction can be reviewed by clicking this link: [Introduction to SHORE](#).

The recent market adjustment of salaries proposed by FSBC provides another example of the positive impact of shared governance. In its 2017-2018 Annual Salary Adjustment Request, FSBC reported that although the University is ranked in the top four among peers in Michigan as reported in the GVSU Accountability Report of 2015-2016, faculty salaries were below the mean of Michigan Public Universities. Given that we are widely recognized as excellent relative to our peers, FSBC recommended that faculty salaries should be at or above the mean of Michigan Public Universities. The Provost received this recommendation and, in her memo, dated January 3, 2018, she expressed support for the recommendation. This support culminated in a plan to implement a market adjustment of faculty salaries beginning in the 2018-2019 academic year.

This fall, you will be invited to participate in the university's sixth climate survey – *mgGVSU Climate Survey 2020*. I encourage you to participate in the climate survey and encourage your colleagues and students to participate too as our collective participation is necessary to make "Grand Valley a place to be". More information on the climate survey will be coming from the Vice President for Inclusion and Equity, Dr. Jesse Bernal.

More information on [faculty governance can be found by clicking here](#). If you have questions or feedback you would like to share on faculty governance, you can contact the representative from your college by [clicking here to identify your representative\(s\)](#). To see the link to the schedule of meetings for 2019-2020, [please click here](#).

Thank you for your continuous interest in faculty governance. I look forward to working with you and keeping you informed of our work throughout the course of the 2019-2020 academic year.