

## **Joint Agreement on Shared Governance, Consultative Decision-Making and Communication**

We, the faculty of the College of Liberal Arts, CLA student representatives, the President, and the board leadership of Willamette University, seek to improve the process of shared governance and the related communication and consultative decision making processes that support an inclusive, responsive, and effective university community.

We start from the assumption that all members of the Willamette community, including the board, faculty, administrators, staff, and students, share a common commitment to advancing Willamette as an institution and improving the experience of our students. We respect the variety of personal experiences and professional expertise we bring to our work, and seek to benefit from collaborative engagement with one another in the shared governance of the university.

We share a commitment to three guiding principles:

1. **Consultative and Transparent Decision Making.** All decision-making processes should be clear. Decision-makers (when not prohibited by confidentiality concerns) commit to consulting in a timely fashion with relevant stakeholders or representative advisory bodies (faculty, students, administrators, staff, alumni, and community partners as appropriate) throughout the decision-making process that directly impact the programs or activities in which the stakeholders are involved.
2. **Responsibility and Accountability.** We are committed to clearly specifying the respective authorities, responsibilities, and accountabilities of the trustees, administrators, staff, faculty, and students. We recognize the primary responsibility that each stakeholder has over certain areas (for example: faculty over matters of academic integrity, including curriculum and faculty evaluation) and we recognize the need for excellent communication and coordination between stakeholders as part of effective shared governance.
3. **Equity.** We are committed to approaching all decisions with an equity lens and to work jointly to improve services and resources to better support our increasingly diverse community (students, faculty, staff, administrators, and trustees) to fully experience and fully contribute to an inclusive community.

We seek to put these principles into practice with the following eleven actions:

1. **Strengthening faculty governance and effective shared governance.** The CLA faculty is committed to engaging positively and productively in the process of reforming our system of shared governance so as to make the university's decision-making processes more transparent, inclusive, deliberative, and effective. We accept responsibility for our role in governance and commit to the following:
  - a. Restructuring our governance structure in line with best practices, and in such a way that will enable the faculty to participate effectively and efficiently in university business.
  - b. Conducting CLA business in a manner that will both model and foster a university-wide culture of transparent decision-making marked by candid conversations across differences of opinion and genuine consultation with relevant stakeholders.
  - c. Generously listening and negotiating in the development and articulation of our shared vision and in the process of collaboration that is an ongoing part of effective shared governance.
  
2. **Greater stakeholder involvement in administrative decision-making.** The newly-formed University Council will replace Administrative Council and will be expanded to include faculty and student membership. This university-wide committee will meet monthly to actively listen and consult on upcoming issues that impact various stakeholders on the campus. When appropriate, members will seek outside input from their stakeholders and report back to those stakeholders on decisions. Initially CLA faculty representation will include the sitting chairs of Academic Council, Budget Advisory Committee, and Faculty Council. The designation of faculty members will be adjusted to align with recommendations from the Task Force on Faculty Governance after a vote of the faculty. Student membership will include two student representatives confirmed by ASWU. In addition one faculty and one student representative will be added to College Council (a coordinating body to foster collaboration and alignment across units for CLA).
  
3. **Inclusion of faculty, student, and staff feedback in performance reviews of the President and senior administrators.** The chair of the Board of Trustees, as part of the President's annual review process, will engage faculty representatives and student representatives to the board and the College of Liberal Arts committee to provide feedback and input as part of the President's annual review process. Faculty and student representatives will be provided relevant materials that may include board goals and priorities for the President and other specific areas of consideration in the review. Faculty and student representatives will be asked to gather representative feedback from their peers (in a manner consistent with board confidentiality standards) and deliver consolidated responses that identify the key areas of demonstrated strength and suggested areas for improvement.

The president evaluates senior administrators (the President's direct reports) with a 360 evaluation in their fourth year of service and every five years after the initial review. These review processes will include opportunity for feedback from faculty, students, administrators, and other relevant staff.

4. **Increased and genuine faculty and student involvement in Board of Trustees deliberations.** The leadership of the Willamette Board of Trustees recognizes the value of full participation and involvement of faculty and student representatives in the work of the board and its committees. The board will ensure that all new faculty and student representatives to the board are offered full orientation and that chairs of the board and its committees encourage full engagement and participation in meetings. During the 2016-17 fiscal year, the board's trusteeship committee will also review and discuss AAUP and AGB guidelines regarding faculty and student involvement to identify potential areas for improvements or application of best practices. The committee will also explore the potential to extend the length of faculty terms to provide better opportunities of engagement.

Board deliberation is consensus-based and much of the work takes place in committees. Faculty and student representatives to the Board of Trustees and its committees commit to serve as active participants and representatives including full engagement in meetings and deliberations, sharing information, consulting with and providing feedback from their respective stakeholders. Faculty and student representatives will sit on every committee of the Board of Trustees with the exception of the Audit and Trusteeship committees. Current committees include CLA, Endowment, Advancement, Financial Affairs, and Facilities and Technology.

In the interest of improving communication between the faculty and the board, the board leadership has agreed to an annual meeting with faculty leadership (including CLA, AGSM and College of Law) outside of board meetings.

5. **Stakeholder input on the Senior Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs (VPASA) position.** We have agreed to the following to help ensure that the VPASA position accomplishes its goals and supports advancement of Willamette's mission, values, and commitment to consultative decision-making and effective shared governance. We understand that the VPASA position responds to the board's direction to the President to reduce the number of direct reports in order to facilitate his key role in the upcoming comprehensive campaign. We recognize that the VPASA is responsible for coordinating decisions among the three colleges and student life. We also understand that the CLA has hired a new Dean whose position was designed to fit this newly reconfigured administrative structure. The CLA Dean will report functionally to the VPASA, will report directly to the President on personnel matters, and will serve on the College and University Councils. The President will maintain a standing open door policy for one-on-one meetings with the all Deans and Vice Presidents and will have periodic formal check-ins with each of the Deans.

It will be important to put in place robust mechanisms for ensuring that VPASA-level decisions that impact CLA will be arrived at in meaningfully inclusive, deliberative, and transparent ways. We agree that many of the other actions in this document provide for direct stakeholder engagement and feedback to the President and foster improved engagement of stakeholders in governance and that the following will be done to further these goals in the establishment of this position:

- a. **Stakeholder input on the position description.** The search for VPASA will launch on October 1, 2016 to provide sufficient opportunities for input from faculty, students, administrators, and staff of all three colleges regarding university-wide functions. At the beginning of the 2016-17 academic year, the President's office will engage leadership of each stakeholder group to garner and provide feedback on the position. The working group encourages that the description and search criteria include preference for a candidate who would be appointable as a tenured faculty member, a demonstrated commitment to advancing Willamette's mission and strategic priorities, and a track record of effective consultative decision-making, stakeholder engagement, and excellent multi-stakeholder communication skills.
  - b. **Stakeholder participation on the search committee.** The search committee will include broad representation of stakeholders including faculty from all three schools, administrators, staff, students, and trustees. The Chair of the Board of Trustees will designate the chair and members of the search committee. The Chair intends to include: four CLA faculty members, a faculty member each from Law and Atkinson, two students, a Dean, two staff (at least one from Campus Life) and two trustees (one of whom will serve as the search committee chair). The search committee will recommend final candidates to the President who will make the final selection.
  - c. **360 degree review of VPASA.** As stated in #3 above, the VPASA will have a review that includes faculty, student, staff, and administrator's feedback in their fourth year.
  - d. **Assessment of the VPASA position.** (e.g. how it can be optimized and the effectiveness of consultation processes). An assessment of the VPASA position will be conducted as part of the assessment of the shared governance and communication structures described below.
6. **The workgroup reviewed actions, commitments, and plans for Willamette Academy and agreed that the following commitments and action in progress addressed the considerations outlined in the Faculty Proposal:**
- a. The university has established a steering committee charged with advising on and helping ensure programing for the end of the Salem-Keizer School year, the summer term, designing and conducting a search for an executive director and advising the new executive director to help them address needs of the program and the community. The steering committee is chaired by CLA Faculty and includes students, trustees, administrators, staff, and community members. The steering committee has begun the process to engage WA parents in providing feedback for the executive director search and will invite parents to serve on the search committee.

- b. The steering committee, administration, and CLA faculty members have arranged for the program to run successfully through the end of the Salem-Keizer school year and to offer a modified summer program in 2016.
  - c. All current Willamette Academy and Project Promise students will be invited to enroll in the 2016-17 program. Students who are not meeting the academy's existing eligibility standards will be provided an opportunity and assistance to improve their standing through a performance plan in the fall to meet the standards.
  - d. Once hired, the new executive director will consult with all stakeholders, review the Willamette Academy Task Force recommendations and other materials, will engage with the steering committee in an initial advisory capacity, and will make recommendations for the WA program to ensure its advancement of mission, quality, and sustainability. The working group encourages the executive director to engage stakeholders from all three of Willamette's colleges to support and participate with Willamette Academy.
  - e. The President has committed the proceeds of the diversity endowment (approximately \$70,000 per year) and the in-kind use of space and university services as on-going commitments to support Willamette Academy. In addition, the President has committed \$100,000 for the 2016-17 academic year to cover this year's fundraising shortfall and an additional \$100,000 for the 2017-18 academic year from University reserves to help the new executive director, university Advancement, and program advisors and supporters have more time to build successful programs and fundraising success.
7. **Greater community consultation on Title IX implementation.** The Title IX coordinator will organize an open meeting in the fall 2016 with students, faculty, staff, and the President to educate the community on changes to Title IX and address concerns such as support for student and faculty advocates. The university has added two faculty and two student representatives to the Title IX Advisory Committee to utilize the expertise and interests of faculty, survivors, and other community stakeholders and to provide ongoing channels for stakeholder consultation. Title IX practices will be designed in accordance with nationally-recognized best practices.
8. **Engagement with the Board of Trustees and the President to find alternative solutions to the current board resolution regarding the number and configuration of FTE lines at the College of Liberal Arts.** The Chair of the Board of Trustees has invited faculty leadership to make recommendations of alternative solutions as part of the 2017-18 budget process. As requested, the board will provide budget guidelines including student-faculty ratios, spending parameters for faculty salaries, and other factors that alternative solutions need to meet. The CLA Dean and faculty leadership will determine the appropriate faculty committees and representatives to develop recommendations regarding faculty configuration within these parameters. Further, board leadership and the President encourage faculty representatives to participate fully in discussions and deliberations of the Financial Affairs Committee and the board on this topic.

9. **Regular and scheduled consultation and interaction with faculty.** The President will commence a standing monthly forum (one option for which would be on the first Tuesday of each month from 11:15-12:45 p.m.). The forum will serve as an opportunity for the President and other key administrators to alert the CLA faculty about policy decisions or institutional challenges that are on the horizon, and to solicit faculty input on how to best proceed on those matters. The fora should also include time for an open Q&A/discussion. Student representatives to faculty committees will be invited to attend the fora.

Recommended topics for the fall 2016 fora include:

- a. Update on Willamette Academy
- b. Future plans for enriching support for first generation students and students of color
- c. Development of a grievance policy for contingent faculty and staff,
- d. Future of the Zena property.

Topics for the fora can be suggested by faculty and administrator to the CLA Dean who will recommend a prioritization of topics for each forum to the President.

10. **Consultation with students regarding their goals for greater interaction with faculty and administration, and greater input in the decision-making process.** The President has agreed to include a student representative on the newly-formed University Council and the College Council (see #2 above). The students agree to select representatives to faculty and university committees and encourage full participation. The faculty agree to orient new students to committees and to make space for student voices on those committees. The President and faculty leadership are happy to attend ASWU meetings when invited. The new CLA Dean and the new VP of Campus Life will meet with student leaders in the fall of 2016 to explore additional opportunities to facilitate strong working relationships with students, to gain an understanding of priority student issues, and to establish check-ins to reflect on progress and opportunities for improvement. ASWU will work with student groups, Campus Life, and faculty to identify ways to broaden its engagement and to ensure broad student representation on committees and in fora.
11. **Proactive consultation with faculty regarding administrative organization.** The President will provide a briefing at a fall 2016 faculty meeting that clearly articulates his vision and intent regarding administrative restructuring and how it advances Willamette's mission, strategic plan, upcoming campaign, and best practices of higher education administration. An updated shared governance and decision-making chart will be created that clearly identifies the roles of stakeholders (faculty, students, administration, trustees) and specifically identifies consultative and decision-making positions and committees and the decision-making calendar. It should include links to relevant information and contacts.

## **Assessment**

To assess and potentially improve the combined outcomes and impact of the adjustments to shared governance, and communication structures envisioned in this document and in related processes (the Faculty Governance Task Force, the VPASA position, etc.), the University Council, with inclusion of Board of Trustees leadership, will conduct a progress assessment that includes faculty, students, staff, administrators, and trustees will be conducted by the end of fall semester 2018.

---

This joint agreement is recommended by the Working Group on Shared Governance, Consultative Decision-Making and Communication, on May 27, 2016.

### **Working Group Members:**

*Karen Arabas - CLA Faculty Representative to the Board*  
*Becca Brownlee '16 - Outgoing ASWU President*  
*Mark Conliffe – Faculty Associate Dean for Curriculum*  
*Emma Coddington - AAUP Representative*  
*Seth Cotlar - Chair, Faculty Council*  
*Eric Friedenwald-Fishman - Chair, College of Liberal Arts Committee*  
*Liz Gill '17 - Incoming ASWU President*  
*Sarah Kirk – Faculty Associate Dean for Faculty Development*  
*Ross Kovac '18 - Student*  
*Alika Masei '17 - Student*  
*Melissa Michaux - Governance Structure Task Force*  
*Frann Michel – AAUP Representative*  
*James Miley - Chair, Academic Council*  
*Scott Nadelson - AAUP Representative*  
*Laura Taylor - Chair, Budget Advisory Committee*  
*Steve Thorsett – President, Willamette University*  
*Steve Wynne - Chair, Board of Trustees*