



PA State System of Higher Education Board of Governors

Effective: February 4, 2021

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Policy 2021-01: *Faculty Council*

Adopted: February 4, 2021

A. Purpose and Scope

Emerging from recommendations made in October 2020 by the Board's Commission on Faculty Shared Governance (the Commission), this policy codifies the creation of a system-level Faculty Council that operates as an advisory body to the chancellor, the System Leadership Group (SLG), Executive Leadership Group (ELG), and Board of Governors (through the faculty liaison). In so doing, the Faculty Council engages in strategic conversations not only for discussion of system-level issues pertaining to academics, budget and planning, and students, but also to inform system-level decisions affecting the general welfare of the System. The Faculty Council maintains a systemwide communications network to provide for efficient transmission of relevant information to and from faculty.

The guiding principles—developed by the Commission to guide its work in developing a shared governance model to inform system-level issues—are that shared governance:

1. Requires an investment of the time necessary to build relationships that foster mutual accountability, respect, and trust;
2. Provides a forum for engagement;
3. Requires mutual commitment to a collaborative policy development process;
4. Respects university-level shared governance/processes;
5. Reflects processes/structures/ practices that are understandable, accepted, transparent, and sustainable;
6. Augments, but does not supplant, the existing shared governance role of the collective bargaining unit;
7. Establishes common ground that builds morale and collaboration—acknowledging the successes and failures of the past to inform decision making about the future;
8. Creates a supportive environment that allows for healthy tension in which sharing of different perspectives and ideas enables problem solving;
9. Depends upon timely and effective communication with active sharing of reliable information; and,
10. Requires periodic assessment to gauge effectiveness.

B. Definitions

- **Executive Leadership Group (ELG)** – The ELG is a systemwide group created, defined, and chaired by the chancellor to assist in the management of the System.

- **System Leadership Group (SLG)** – The SLG is a systemwide group created, defined, and chaired by the chancellor that assists the ELG in its efforts to guide system-level strategy.

C. Policy

1. Roles and Responsibilities

- Charter** - The Faculty Council shall maintain a charter that reflects the guiding principles set forth by the Commission and the shared values articulated in the charter for the ELG, including a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The charter would address the general operations of the Council including but not limited to member elections and terms, term limits, and meeting frequency. The charter is subject to approval by the chancellor and chair of the Board of Governors.
- Faculty Liaison** – The Faculty Council shall elect a faculty liaison to the Board of Governors and determine the term of office with term limits as set forth in its charter. The non-voting Faculty Liaison shall be included in all meetings of the Board of Governors except when a clear conflict of interest is identified by the Chair of the Board.
- Advisory Authority** – The Faculty Council may provide guidance and input on system-level policy and issues for consideration by the SLG, ELG, the chancellor, and the Board of Governors while respecting university-level shared governance/ processes and existing shared governance roles, and where such advisory authority does not conflict with the role of the collective bargaining unit.
- Communication** – Members of the Faculty Council serve as conduits to their respective university faculty to disseminate and discuss system-level issues of concern and provide an important two-way communication role for faculty—supporting timely and proactive input regarding system-level issues.

2. Composition and Structure

- Every State System university shall be equally represented on the Faculty Council, each with one member and one alternate.
- Faculty Council members and alternates shall be elected from each university by a process determined locally and guided by the Faculty Council's charter.
- The Faculty Council may organize its members into advisory sub-groups/ committees—as deemed necessary by the Faculty Council—to help focus discussions aligned to the matrix of issues developed by the Commission.
- The chancellor may designate no more than three senior leaders from the Office of the chancellor to serve as non-voting, ex-officio members of the Faculty Council to foster ongoing engagement on issues and provide contextual information in real-time. The Faculty Council may also request to meet with other system staff and/or meet without any system staff on occasion.

3. **Structural Alignment** – To promote timely, open, and continual dialogue across the sectors of leadership at the system level, the Faculty Council is included in the SLG as an advisory group that provides input to the chancellor and university presidents. This relationship allows for the diversity of faculty voices to be included at the system level through dialog with other advisory groups (e.g., Chief Academic Officers) that are part of the SLG. The Faculty Council's engagement within the SLG shall be structured to prevent conflicts of interest. Additionally, the Faculty Council's perspective on system-level issues may be conveyed to the Board of Governors through the Faculty Liaison to the Board, who is selected by the Council.
4. **Policy Review** – This policy and the system-level shared governance model shall be periodically reviewed by the Board of Governors to evaluate the efficacy of its structure and operation and to make modifications as needed to foster faculty shared governance at the system level.

D. Effective Date

Immediately