

Faculty Senate  
June 6, 2016

### Question for Administrators

With the creation of the new PSU Board of Trustees, the Faculty Senate Steering Committee researched best practices for faculty in shared governance at public universities. In a March 2015 Statement to the Board (see below), Steering recommended that faculty members with relevant expertise serve as members of all sub-committees of the new PSU Board in keeping with long practice at the University of California and other institutions, a practice that is supported by the findings of the 2009 report of the Association of Governing Boards, excerpted below.

It is hard to imagine a well-informed academic affairs, finance, or student affairs committee without the membership of faculty. The value of faculty service on board committees was noted by many respondents, particularly chief academic officers. *Faculty, Governing Boards, and Institutional Governance, Association of Governing Boards, 2009*

Questions to the President:

Have you asked the Board to formally consider the March 2015 recommendation of the Senate Steering Committee?

If not, why?

When can the Senate expect a reply from the Board?

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### **Statement by the Presiding Officer, PSU Faculty Senate - March 12, 2015\***

To the PSU Board of Trustees

Good afternoon.

PSU Board Chair Peter Nickerson asked me if he could come before the Faculty Senate to open communication between the Board and the faculty. He came in January and gave a great speech. How do I know? First, no one left. Second, his speech brought questions about communication between the faculty and the Board. It was a learning moment for the Senate.

Peter's remarks opened the questions that all university boards must answer:

What is shared governance on their campus ?

What are the roles of the president, faculty, and the Board in it ?

I want to share an answer by a college president, Steven Bahls, written for board members & faculty in *Trusteeship*, the magazine of the Association of Governing Boards which will devote a session to shared governance at its national meeting that some of you will attend next month.

Bahls asks three questions:

1. What is shared governance?
2. How should it work?
3. What is the payoff?

<http://agb.org/trusteeship/2014/3/how-make-shared-governance-work-some-best-practice>

His answers

1. Shared governance is a partnership. It links president, faculty, and the board in a broad institutional vision that AGB calls integral leadership. Faculty and board members play different roles: the board has fiduciary responsibility (revenues, bonding); the faculty set academic policy (admissions, degree requirements, hiring) and are responsible for academic quality. To be effective, they must work in tandem. Writing as a president, Bahls calls on boards to put faculty leaders at the table for key decisions and to learn directly from faculty how they do research, teaching, and service.

2. How should shared governance work?

Bahls suggests an ongoing process of dialog and deliberation among partners. He urges boards, presidents, and faculty to meet outside board meetings, to allow for a full and open exchange of ideas away from the spotlight. While universities honor the principle that people agree to disagree, in practice, they need time to share talk to agree on the purposes and priorities of the university.

3. What is the payoff?

For Bahls, the payoff is to increase social capital between board members and faculty. Social capital is the value one receives from who you know, your networks. Here it refers to place-based knowledge: what you know about the university from each other. That's key because universities are learning organizations as well as teaching organizations. When partners learn, things change fast. To know each other, Bahls invites board members to hear faculty report on their research, scholarship, and teaching. And he encourages faculty to learn from board members. This builds trust which he sees as critical for moving from a shared governance to a shared responsibility model.

Can PSU learn from Bahls? Yes!

Having a campus board creates opportunity for partnerships and processes that couldn't happen with the statewide OUS (OSBHE) board that it replaced.

For example, the PSU Task Force on Academic Quality that I spoke of to you in June 2014 is at work on a report to guide discussion of PSU's comparator universities. Who are we like? Who might we like to be? How can we get there? The Task Force will share it with the Board and ask for your feedback

Another possibility: The Oregon State Board of Higher Education had the custom of having coffee with faculty before all its meetings in order to discuss issues of the day. A campus board could start a chain of conversations about the continuing concerns of faculty and students at PSU: how to balance access and quality by directing resources to teaching and

advising, how to recruit and retain strong faculty, and how to facilitate work/life balance for faculty and staff.

Continuing conversations are building blocks for trust, but building trust requires more than talk alone. Partners must share ongoing work.

On other campuses, board members and faculty join hands in discussions of plans and policies. At the University of California, faculty and staff sit on all 10 standing committees serving as advisory members to the Regents. They have expertise and insider knowledge that is needed for thoughtful deliberation. In many cases, they wrote the books or articles that inform the substance of policies or procedures for decision-making.

<http://regents.universityofcalifornia.edu/about/committees.html>

**Based on the experience of faculty on other campuses, PSU Senators are discussing a Resolution for faculty engagement on Board committees.**

We feel that it is best practice that faculty partner with the Board in discussions and deliberations that inform policy that bears on the educational mission.

Shared governance is perennially a work in progress in which working partnerships build knowledge and trust needed for decisions that all must own. I and other PSU faculty look forward to working with you.

Bob Liebman, Presiding Officer, PSU Faculty Senate

\*This version is shortened & slightly revised. Hyperlinks added