

To: The University Senate

From: Concerned Senators: Birgit Kaufmann, David Koltick, Oana Malis

Subject: Opposition to an Attempt at Restructuring/Dissolution of the Purdue University Senate

Reference: www.purdue.edu/provost/faculty/initiatives/senate.php
<https://www.purdue.edu/provost/faculty/documents/rationale-for-restructure.pdf>
AAUP statement on government of colleges and universities
<https://www.aaup.org/report/statement-government-colleges-and-universities>
Shared Governance: A Practical Approach to Reshaping Professional Nursing Practice©2006 HCPro, Inc..

Disposition: University Senate for Discussion and Adoption

Rationale: A self-constituted Shared Governance Task Force has proposed restructuring the Purdue University Senate.

The task force has stated, “Shared governance does not mean shared decision-making.” This fundamental distortion of the meaning of shared governance and the fact that it appears to be a starting point of the task force undermine its credibility.

The task force has maligned the Senate by making numerous unsubstantiated and inflammatory assertions. The statements of the task force appear to manifest animus against the University Senate.

The starting place for discussions of Shared Governance should be the AAUP statement on government of colleges and universities and specifically its associated FAQ on Shared Governance, including:

Shared governance refers to the joint responsibility of faculty, administrations, and governing boards to govern colleges and universities. Differences in the weight of each group's voice on a particular issue should be determined by the extent of its responsibility for and expertise on that issue.... The role of the faculty is to have primary responsibility for such fundamental areas as curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction, research, faculty status, and aspects of student life which relate to the educational process. The responsibility for faculty status includes appointments, reappointments, decisions not to reappoint, promotions, the granting of tenure,

and dismissal. The faculty should also have a role in decision-making outside of their immediate areas of primary responsibility, including long-term planning, budgeting, and the selection, evaluation and retention of administrators.... Faculty have special training and knowledge that make them distinctly qualified to exercise decision-making authority in their areas of expertise.... Even though the president and board may possess final authority, they should routinely concur with faculty recommendations made in areas of faculty responsibility and should reject faculty decisions in those areas only in rare instances and for compelling reasons which should be stated in detail. In short, when it comes to academic matters, a faculty decision should normally be the final decision.”

There has been an apparent breach of trust that exists at numerous levels:

- (1) There is an attempt to institutionalize a governance structure that usurps the fundamental educational authority of the faculty.
- (2) There is the incorrect assumption that the undergraduate student body is not adequately represented by Purdue Student Government.
- (3) There is the incorrect assumption that the graduate student body is not adequately represented by Purdue Graduate Student Government.
- (4) There is a false narrative that with the changes proposed in the Task Force Rationale for Restructure document there will be more inclusiveness in governance, whereas instead shared governance will, in fact, be highly restricted, and there will be a more authoritarian environment.
- (5) There is an apparent attempt to go around the Senate and appeal directly to the Board of Trustees to restructure the Senate.

Proposal:

Because the faculty are the point of service for both the educational and research goals of the University, and because the Senate represents the faculty and has the general power and responsibility to adopt policies, regulations, and procedures intended to achieve the educational objectives and the general welfare of those involved in these educational processes.

(1) The Senate disavows any efforts to dissolve the Senate or to reduce its authority over areas of primary responsibility of the faculty.

(2) The Senate regards the stated objectives of the task force to be opposed to the principles of shared governance and therefore strongly urges the Office of the Provost to end its sponsorship (provision of a website, infrastructure, etc.) of the task force.