



# Statement on Shared Governance for The College at Brockport

## **Definition of Shared Governance:**

As defined by SUNY, “In a shared governance system, faculty, professional staff, administration, governing boards, and students participate in the development of policies and in decision making that affects the institution.”<sup>1</sup> At The College at Brockport, our shared governance bodies include College Senate, Brockport Student Government (BSG), College Council, and College Administration. Together, we see shared governance as the means by which we most effectively and sustainably implement the priorities of the College, as established in our Strategic Plan.<sup>2</sup> The values of community, excellence, engagement, and transformation are central to the College’s collective commitment to the highest quality public higher education and integral to our shared governance system.

## **The Characteristics of Shared Governance for the College at Brockport**

- 1. Trust.** Trust within and among the various constituencies depends on and is reflective of the broader culture and the effective working relationships among individuals and offices at the College. Trust is the single most important barometer of the effectiveness of a shared governance system, as it often reflects the extent to which the expectations for governance are being met.
- 2. Transparency.** Transparency in decision-making allows the College community to see the interests involved in any major campus decision, to understand its origin, the problems it attempts to solve, and the predicted results for the new policy or practice. Transparency both supports the development of trust and sustains it during crises.
- 3. Effective Communication.** Effective communication within and among the various campus constituencies must be timely, allowing for collaboration in decision-making to the extent possible for the most critically informed, inclusive, creatively considered, and sustainable resolution of discrete issues. One of the most critical tools of effective communication is the art of listening to what others say: seeking to understand what they believe to be true, learning from others’ insights, inquiries, experiences and expertise.
- 4. Consultation.** Fully informed, collaborative decision-making through shared governance requires timely consultation. Constituent group representatives are brought into the consultative processes at the earliest relevant point in the development of initiatives. In addition, consultation respects the fundamental rule that representatives are chosen (in one of several ways)<sup>3</sup> by the group they represent.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.suny.edu/about/shared-governance/>

<sup>2</sup> [Building a Better Brockport](#)

<sup>3</sup> At The College at Brockport, executive committee members of shared governance groups are best placed to ensure fair representation of their interests, and each group is empowered to determine the best practice for representation.

5. **Inclusiveness.** We seek to make visible our respect for differences in ideas, in approaches to knowledge, and in experience within the diverse society we share and serve. Shared governance serves the community best when the voices engaged in decision-making reflect our diversity to the extent possible.

6. **Honesty and Integrity.** Shared governance requires sharing as much information as possible without compromising confidentiality. Such disclosures need to be honest, direct and relevant. Personal, professional and institutional integrity must be maintained at all times.

### **Guiding Principles for Shared Governance for The College at Brockport**

1. The College at Brockport will employ its shared governance practices and procedures, as defined by College policies, governance group bylaws, etc., for the development of new policies as well as the review of existing policies.

2. Shared Governance is at its heart representative, and broad consultation with appropriate constituent groups is fundamental to the decision-making process.

3. The College at Brockport administration will routinely engage different constituent representatives at an appropriate time in a decision-making process. In most cases, this is at the earliest possible point.

4. The constituent governance groups at the College commit themselves to provide considered and timely responses to proposed initiatives through regular procedures or ad hoc appointments as needed.

5. Constituent groups nominate those who serve as their representatives, according to their respective practices and procedures. There are a number of different means by which this can be accomplished, giving other groups an opportunity for choice, but the general principle stands: those who serve must be nominated by the group they represent.

6. The leadership of the constituent groups will regularly consult with one another to seek ways of developing more effective relationships among the groups and individuals.

7. College administration and shared governance leaders will regularly examine the effectiveness of the College's shared governance system, which according to Middle States Standard VII, should be included in the personnel reviews of the campus's senior administrative leadership. Personal accountability is an essential element in creating and sustaining an effective system of shared governance.

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College Administration may suggest parameters for these governance groups to consider, including inclusivity and diversity. If appropriate, College Senate may be represented by faculty or staff who are non-senators; students may be represented by students not on Student Senate; the important principle is that the relevant group elects or appoints its own representatives according to its own policies and procedures. College Administration may, for the purposes of inclusion (see point 5), appoint a limited number of members 'at large' or as 'presidential nominees' to ensure the widest possible range of voices are heard.

## **Conclusion**

We intentionally commit ourselves to working collegially with one another on the decisions we face, as members of the College, professional organizations, different disciplines, departments, schools, as students, as staff, or as administrators.

As indicated in the AGB whitepaper, we know that “Shared governance is complex. It requires action from multiple people serving in a variety of roles; regular policy review, habitual reflection on policy implementation, and ongoing dialogue should be sought by all involved.”<sup>4</sup>

The broadly participatory nature of these deliberations among parties with different interests offers particular relevance for public colleges and universities, as shared governance allows us to mirror the best practices for collective governance in a democratic culture.

**This document was ratified by the following bodies on December 6, 2018:**

College Senate

Brockport Student Government

President’s Cabinet

College Council

This document will be formally reviewed every 3 years.

Next Review Date: December 2021

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<sup>4</sup> *Shared Governance: Changing with the Times: An Association of Governing Boards (AGB) White Paper*, 2017, p.6