

I am the Faculty Senate President for approximately the next four months. This is the first time I've addressed the faculty as a whole, and I appreciate the opportunity.

In my nomination for faculty senate president, I discussed shared governance as an ideal. The Faculty Manual, as Thompson just reminded us, tells us that "Shared governance requires transparency, communication and accountability at all levels of decision-making within the University." Today, I'd like to talk about my proposed Shared Governance website and Committee on Committees.

Let's be honest, the Committee on Committees is a ridiculous name, and I know that. But, let me see if some of the issues it is designed to address don't resonate with you.

Most of us know who the President of the University is, or the Provost. We can find their emails. We might even be bold enough to email them. And I hope we know who our deans and department chairs are. We have

some idea about the roles these positions fill, and how to communicate when we are displeased. But how many decisions are made on this campus by “them” – and you don’t know who “they” are? Maybe you don’t like the book used in the Summer Reading Program – who would you ask about the process really used to select it? Maybe you want to talk to a person from your college about how to frame a proposal for the Research Grants committee – someone who either is or has been on that committee. Maybe you want to advocate for the elimination of all freshman parking – who would you go to, besides the Director of Parking Services? As President of Faculty Senate, you might think that I can solve all your problems, but in reality, I don’t even know who to ask about these things sometimes. And even though my favorite book (the Faculty Manual, of course) tells me the composition of the committees that are intended to address these issues, it doesn’t tell me who to call, who is representing my college, and it certainly doesn’t tell me what issues they’ve considered or even when they meet.

The Faculty Manual contains various policies related to faculty life. For example, all the regular and special ranks and policies for their hiring and promotion are described. The manner in which search and review committees for academic administrators are formed is described. Part VII of the Faculty Manual contains descriptions for committees, like the ones I just mentioned, with faculty participation in many areas of university operations. We have committees like the Athletic Council with faculty members, staff and administration working together. There is an Intellectual Property Committee and an Institutional Research Board and even a Campus Business Officers Group, with no faculty at all.

So a question is, what kind of committee should be in the Faculty Manual to support shared governance? And, who should ultimately decide the composition of those committees? The Campus Business Officers Group is surely important to the operation of that function, but with no faculty members, why is it in the *Faculty* Manual?

The Faculty Manual is a bit hard to change. A change requires review by at least the Policy Committee, the full Faculty Senate and the Provost.

Some changes require Board review or even State Human Resources and Commission of Higher Education review. And there are other stakeholders that ought to be included. And, even if the first version submitted to the Policy Committee is perfect, changes are by default only incorporated and effective once per year. So, we drift away from what is written. And for a while it is ok, until someone gets mad because they notice that what we say we should do is not what we are actually doing.

So, the Committee on Committees and a Shared Governance Website is my proposed solution to this lack of transparency. The Committee on Committees will be composed of Faculty Senators, Staff Senators and Provost-level administrators and will quickly authorize those committees, councils and commissions that have faculty as stakeholders but not owners. Those bodies that do have faculty as owners will be referred, as usual, to the Policy Committee of the Faculty Senate. But, imagine how great it would be to quickly change your committee to better align with a changing student demographic, say in parking or the media advisory group, and to still be “authorized” in some way. Or to

figure out who, besides the administration, to engage with when you have concerns. The website will be searchable, so that new administrators, faculty and staff can find these committees. And that is a sustainable way of increasing transparency, communication and accountability in decision making that I hope the entire University can support.

To make this work, however, “we” need to do the hard work that is faculty governance, when we are the ones whose names are attached to these committees. If we don’t exercise our responsibilities, maybe someone might think we aren’t watching.

Thank you.