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Shared Governance at Virginia Commonwealth University: Increasing Awareness of Shared Governance Among Faculty

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**Shared Governance at Virginia Commonwealth University: Increasing Awareness of
Shared Governance Among Faculty**

A capstone project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor
of Education in the Department of Educational Leadership at Virginia Commonwealth
University

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Andrea H. Becker

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Melissa W. Tyler

In memory of my mother

Vivienne A. Ball

1949 – 2012

Forever loving and missing you

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Abstract

SHARED GOVERNANCE AT VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY: INCREASING AWARENESS OF SHARED GOVERNANCE AMONG FACULTY

By Andrea H. Becker, Carlton H. Goode, Jennifer C. Rivers, Melissa W. Tyler

A capstone project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in the Department of Educational Leadership at Virginia Commonwealth University

Virginia Commonwealth University, 2022.

Capstone Chair: Jonathan D. Becker, Ph.D., Department of Educational Leadership

The primary focus of this study is to understand and define the concept of shared governance as practiced at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU). The researchers approached the study through three guiding questions: What is shared governance as understood through relevant literature and practice; What are the current faculty perceptions of shared governance at VCU; How can awareness of shared governance be increased at the institution? A naturalistic study was conducted including a thorough literature review and narrative data collection from focus groups, individual interviews, and a modified charrette. Participants included faculty across the institution from a variety of ranks, units, and demographics. The study found faculty perceptions and literature speak to two overarching ways to experience shared governance at VCU: structure and culture. Structural components included the lack of standardized systems, workflow, and communication methods between university stakeholders. Cultural components encompassed decreased trust, engagement, and value of engaging in shared governance. Using the information collected, this paper offers recommendations for a collective definition of shared governance and strategies for increasing awareness.

Keywords: shared governance, faculty governance, participatory governance, structure, communication, recognition, trust, transparency

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Chapter One: Introduction

Imagine you are the president of a large, prestigious company. After conducting a rigorous search process to hire a leading content expert for an area of your company, you extend the offer, and sign the paperwork only to then have an external board overturn the contract you negotiated with the top candidate. The new employee is dumbfounded and frustrated. Internal constituents are left with concerns about company operations. External constituents begin questioning the communication and competency of both the board and the company.

Imagine that the company is the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the president is the long-standing dean of the school of journalism for the past ten years, and the candidate was a Pulitzer-prize award winning journalist being offered a tenured position in her area of expertise only to have the board overturn the decision for tenure (Folkenflick, 2021; NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, 2021). This is the story that hit the headlines over the summer of 2021, as the Board of Trustees disagreed with the faculty's decision to hire Nikole Hannah-Jones as a tenured faculty member (Jaschik, 2021; Shivaram, 2021). The Nikole Hannah-Jones story was highlighted in the media largely due to the connection between Hannah-Jones' work in race-based issues. The nature of the position being offered as the Knight Chair in Race and Investigative Reporting is paradoxical given the perceived discrimination and bias embedded within the opposing ruling from the Board of Trustees (Quillin et al., 2021; Shivaram, 2021). Once you cut through the salacious media story, therein is a perfect example of the topic that brings about this capstone project: Shared Governance.

Significance

The Hannah-Jones case provides one robust example of shared governance through analysis of the balance of faculty and administrative decision making for matters of hiring. This

particular narrative demonstrates the root cause of many concerns related to university shared governance: what matters should faculty govern, which matters should administration govern, and wherein lies the intersection of the two? In the Hannah-Jones example, the delineation lies in the specific matter of determining the final approval for hiring, tenure, and promotion within an academic unit for an academic appointment.

Emergency operational changes, such as those in response to COVID-19, serve as another significant example in which universities must engage in shared governance. Higher education has not been immune to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the emerging dualistic and opposing needs: maintain operations for economic stability while shuttering operations for health. As humankind and industries alike battle to shift how goods and services are provided and consumed, higher education was reminded of its commodity-like nature (Rof et al., 2020). Stakeholders questioned the value of higher education and precisely the value of the traditional in-person “college experience.” The increased demand for digital learning and virtual platforms forced academia to reflect upon the learning methods and environments offered. Institutions convened health and safety experts to determine operating protocols, quotas for gatherings and communal spaces, and policy for campus interactions (Crapo, 2021; Ramlo, 2021).

The rapidity with which administration maneuvered to redefine the collegiate experience out of necessity raised new questions hitting at the most core concerns of the shared governance argument: who is charged with oversight for the college environment? When decisions need to be made in haste, especially in times of crisis, should the balance of power be altered, and if so, when is the chance to revisit the decision made in urgency to ensure balance over time? Ultimately shared governance should be engaged when institutional change is made. The issue of

shared governance includes the balance of decision-making power, input, and stakeholder involvement. These recent situations and the questions raised further exemplify the need to delineate the balance of decision-making power between the faculty and the administrators relative to routine operations of the university.

Study Purpose and Research Questions

The concept of shared governance in postsecondary institutions is exemplified through the examples above related to hiring decisions and COVID-19 operational changes. The ways in which different institutional stakeholders are engaged in the various decision-making processes can be examined through many other relevant topics: academic freedom, free speech, tenure and promotion, and classroom and curriculum content to name a few (Garcia, 2020; Muhsin et al., 2019). The involvement of faculty and the representation of faculty voice in decisions such as these represents a critical institutional stake within the shared governance construct.

Partly to this end of increasing shared governance, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) has recently reconstituted its chapter at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU). Now that the chapter is reasonably well settled into the university, the chapter is hoping to understand faculty perceptions and understanding of shared governance at VCU. In the Request for Assistance (see Appendix A), the VCU chapter of the AAUP is described as follows:

The AAUP is a national membership organization of university instructors and researchers of all ranks that champions (or advocates for?) academic freedom and the closely allied notion of faculty governance....During the Spring 2019 term, a dormant group of faculty revived the VCU chapter of AAUP with deep concerns about the

state of both academic freedom and faculty governance at VCU....The VCU AAUP would like to have a comprehensive and systematic understanding of faculty perceptions and understanding of academic freedom and faculty governance at VCU.

As such, the AAUP chapter at VCU has requested the assistance through this capstone project as a means to understand the current perceptions and increase awareness of shared governance at VCU.

This capstone project sought to better understand the issue of shared governance as perceived and practiced and how it can be implemented to meet the needs of the VCUSAAP chapter. The findings of this capstone project will assist in developing a collective definition of shared governance and generating recommendations for the VCU AAUP chapter to enhance shared governance at the institution. The capstone project was conducted with three guiding questions:

1. What is shared governance as understood through relevant literature and practice?
2. What are the current faculty perceptions of shared governance at VCU?
3. How can awareness of shared governance be increased at the institution?

Organization of the Study

The document is organized into five chapters that will examine the topic of shared governance at VCU. This introductory chapter provides an overview of the issue, its significance, and the scope of work. In response to research question one, the second chapter provides a thorough literature review focused on understanding the topical history, defining shared governance, outlining best practices, understanding current trends and future considerations, and issues on the horizon. Chapter three provides information about the study methodology used to answer research questions two and three and provides an overview of how

the data was analyzed. Chapter four discusses the findings related to current faculty perceptions and increasing awareness of shared governance at VCU. Lastly, chapter five offers the researchers' observations and synthesizes the collected information to provide considerations for future research and recommendations to increase awareness of shared governance at the institution.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The concept of shared governance and all it encompasses is not entirely clear. The ways in which university personnel define, interpret, and enact shared governance are often highly individualized and contextualized. The ideas below are shared from the previous president of the VCU Faculty Senate N. Jallo (personal communication, August 17, 2021) and specifically demonstrate the complexities of shared governance encountered at VCU:

Shared governance is always on the minds and in the conversations of the faculty senate executive committee....The question I always pose is “what is shared governance and...how do we know if we have it...what does it look like?” Without the answer to the second part, it is hard to determine the outcome – do we have shared governance?

The definition [that] faculty senate leadership used in our discussions – shared governance can be defined and operationalized as the following: faculty senate will provide input and recommendations for major issues facing the VCU faculty. If the faculty senate recommendations are not reflected in the outcome, the rationale for decision-making is warranted. Ideally, we encourage continual dialogue to solve the problem and modify or provide additional evidence for the value of the faculty senate recommendations. In all honesty, within the spirit of collaboration and continued dialogue we usually meet the initial goal (provide recommendations with solid evidence to support them) but don’t always achieve the second goal (if [the] recommendations [are] not incorporated, converse about the rationale for decision making).

The purpose of this literature review is to better understand the enigma of shared governance in order to create a foundational understanding at VCU. When distilled down to its simplest form, shared governance is the balance of power between university faculty and

university administration (AAUP, 2015; Bahls, 2014; Cramer, 2017; DeCesare, 2020; Eckel, 2000; Gerber, 2014; Honu, 2018).

At the core of shared governance, the distinction between faculty and administration is as rudimentary as “education” and “operations.” Faculty are charged with bearing the expertise in their disciplines, creating new knowledge in their fields, and discerning what knowledge students need to successfully acquire and apply the curriculum beyond the classroom. In comparison, administrators are charged with concern for overall institutional management: ensuring financial solvency, institutional advancement, stewarding the institution’s physical and human resources, and ensuring the institutional mission is carried out. In many cases, faculty are considered the responsible party for education inside classrooms, labs, and other inquiry-based experiences while administrators oversee many of the components to support functions outside of the classroom setting: maintenance of the physical spaces, programs, and offerings that contribute to the general preparedness of the student body (Garcia, 2020; Muhsin et al., 2019).

While conceptually simple, the practice of shared governance is incredibly more granular and complex. Shared governance often is considered only in relation to the decision-making process when dealing with a large university issue. However, the specific steps include many varied and specific components, are vested with different stakeholders, and would have significant impact on specific university operations. To exemplify this complexity, imagine that student retention is the large university issue; a vast, overarching concern that matters to all professionals at an institution. However, some of the possible outcomes of a shared governance process might consider highly specific and individualized responses and only have direct importance to certain professionals at the institution.

To further consider this example, the initial question to solve retention might be: *if students are not retained at the institution due to grades, what should we do and who is charged with addressing the concern?* This question is followed by a series of possible considerations, each with individualized stakeholders who carry out those components and would assuredly be impacted: (1) Should faculty adapt their curriculum or adjust their instruction methods? (2) Should more tutors or academic coaches be hired? (3) Should the office of admissions adopt more strenuous requirements on who is being admitted? (4) Should prerequisite courses be augmented? (5) Should more study skills and time management programs be offered? (6) Do students feel supported and connected to the institution or should more be done to enhance students' sense of belonging in the co-curricular experience? All of these very granular considerations ultimately impact the retention of students at an institution yet each is nested with very different and unique institutional stakeholders. In this example there is likely not one solution to resolve retention concerns. Additionally, the variety of possible solutions highlight the need for equal contribution from faculty and administration throughout the process to gather input, make a decision, and implement the changes.

Input and buy-in from all stakeholders is required to advance an institutional mission and campus environment. In order to hear from all invested voices, there must be a commitment to ensuring that decisions are made with input across many levels and units at the institution or, more plainly, they must engage in shared governance practices. In the example above, ideally stakeholders from a variety of institutional areas would be convened to understand the divergent and connected components of retention and address the issue holistically. To best understand the practice of shared governance, this review of relevant literature will address the following topics:

history of shared governance, defining shared governance, best practices, current trends and considerations, and issues on the horizon.

A History of Shared Governance

When one thinks critically of academic governing boards, it is often an image dominated by older, cisgender, White men. This image, historically speaking, would be correct (Honu, 2018). In its earlier stages of development, college faculty, administration and student bodies were each composed of affluent, White men. Higher education was not as accessible to the general public as it is today.

Gerber (2014) noted that early colleges and universities were often only accessible to elite members of society. As such, fundamental agreements between faculty and administration were more easily achieved with homogeneous representation and narrow sections of the population. However, over time educational systems have become more accessible and increasingly diverse (Gerber, 2014). As a result, higher education has been charged with reconciling a wide diversity of needs and ideals; shared governance is a means towards that reconciliation. This section includes a brief historical look at the idea of shared governance, its origination, and how it has expanded over the years.

With the founding of Harvard in 1636, the nation embarked upon its efforts to educate its citizenry beyond secondary education. American postsecondary institutions during the colonial era were the poor distant cousins of those in England who drew upon both the German research and Oxbridge residential models to influence their own structures at the time of their founding (Bess & Webster, 1999; Dorn 2017 Gerber, 2014; Lucas, 2006; Thelin, 2011). Similarly, many early American institutions began with very few faculty who held higher degrees until early in the 19th century where there was a growing number of faculty with specialty areas and doctoral

degrees (Gerber 2014). Conversely, Dorn (2017) noted that some institutions, like Bowdoin University in Maine, were founded with less focus on a particular degree or field but rather a “peculiar obligation to promote the common good” (p. 17). By the early 1900’s, there were six universities that enrolled more than 5,000 students, and three of those employed more than 500 instructional staff.

Much of the earliest history of higher education in the United States runs through the Commonwealth of Virginia, coincidentally, the setting for this capstone project. The College of William and Mary, the second oldest school in the United States, was founded in 1693 by Royal Charter of King William III and Queen Mary II of England. In 1775, Hampden-Sydney was founded and developed as a liberal arts institution and is the 10th oldest institution of higher education in the United States. The University of Virginia, founded by former president Thomas Jefferson in 1819, focused on advancing knowledge, educating leaders and creating an informed citizenry (Becker, 2001). As described in the VCU Bulletin (2021), VCU’s foundational roots were laid back in 1838 when it was founded as the medical department of Hampden-Sydney College.

As the number of American postsecondary institutions increased, so did the desire for faculty with specialized credentials. The Ph.D. was becoming an increasingly popular attainment for both students and professors. One’s status in the academic community was measured by the type of degree held. With each additional degree, the faculty further proved their expertise in their field and in the classroom. While the number of Ph.D.’s grew and as the academy became more professionalized, the battle cry for academic freedom rang out loud in colleges and universities from coast to coast. As noted by Gerber (2014) “A growing determination among leading academics to define and defend the principle of academic freedom for all faculty in a

way that would cross disciplinary boundaries led to the formation of the AAUP in 1915” (p. 6). The call for academic freedom only intensified, and with the founding of AAUP, faculty believed that there was now a defender in their corner.

In the foundational years of governance in higher education, faculty were responsible for matters that dealt with curriculum development and classroom issues. Honu (2018) stated that this role would eventually expand to include working to make decisions on policy development, planning events for the institution, budgeting, and the hiring and evaluation of administrators. Gerber (2014) noted a push for more faculty governance in the 1920’s, soon after the founding of the AAUP. However, governing boards were reluctant to allow faculty members a larger stake in governing. Boards feared that increased faculty governance would detract from their main roles in teaching and research. This dynamic continued with very few changes for 40 more years until the 1960’s.

Based on the organization’s mission statement, the AAUP serves:

to advance academic freedom and shared governance; to define professional values and standards for higher education; to promote the economic security of faculty, academic professionals, graduate students, post-doctoral fellows, and all those engaged in teacher and research in higher education; to help the higher education community organize to make our goals a reality; and to ensure higher education’s contribution to the common good. (AAUP, 2006, Mission section, para. 1)

To this end, shared governance is named specifically as one of two primary concerns for the organization. As evidenced in the mission statement, many components are conflated with shared governance, including academic freedom the AAUP’s other primary concern. It is clear through its mission that the AAUP sees issues of shared governance and academic freedoms as connected

but distinct. Admittedly, there is a great deal of overlap between academic freedom and shared governance and in some instances it is difficult to speak about one without the other. For the purpose of this study, the researchers focus specifically on the components of shared governance.

In 1966, a joint statement was released by the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB), the American Council on Education (ACE), and the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) to “officially welcome the faculty’s role in shared governance beyond teaching and the curriculum” (Honu, 2018, p. 3). According to the AAUP, the joint statement was created and shared as an ethos statement for administrators, faculty, and governing boards to guide their respective institutions (2015, April 7). The statement, from its creation, was not in fact meant as a manual for direct institutional implementation, rather, as an overarching value set to be understood, augmented, and applied at individual institutions (2015, April 7):

It is not intended that the statement serve as a blueprint for governance on a specific campus or as a manual for the regulation of controversy among the components of an academic institution, although it is to be hoped that the principles asserted will lead to the correction of existing weaknesses and assist in the establishment of sound structures and procedures. (para 2)

The AAUP designed the statement as a means to offer overarching guidance related to the importance of shared governance as well as specific considerations for implementation at individual institutions.

In the introduction of the statement, however, the AAUP grounds the work as a call to action through three key arguments for the need for shared governance:

This statement is a call to mutual understanding regarding the government of colleges and universities. Understanding, based on community of interest and producing joint effort, is essential for at least three reasons. First, the academic institution, public or private, often has become less autonomous; buildings, research, and student tuition are supported by funds over which the college or university exercises a diminishing control. Legislative and executive governmental authorities, at all levels, play a part in the making of important decisions in academic policy. If these voices and forces are to be successfully heard and integrated, the academic institution must be in a position to meet them with its own generally unified view. Second, regard for the welfare of the institution remains important despite the mobility and interchange of scholars. Third, a college or university in which all the components are aware of their interdependence, of the usefulness of communication among themselves, and of the force of joint action will enjoy increased capacity to solve educational problems. (para. 6).

Through the AAUP statement, shared governance is named as an important issue for academia that requires collective understanding. Furthermore, the statement argues that shared governance is necessary to respond to changing funding models, to ensure institutional welfare particularly in times of personnel changes, and an overarching desire for collaborative and interdisciplinary approaches to solve educational problems.

In the decades following the release of the AAUP's 1966 joint statement, AAUP dealt with a range of issues addressing the rights of women faculty, Black faculty members, and faculty with non-tenure-track and contingent appointments (AAUP, 1998, 2015). They were also very interested in developing the role of students in shared governance at the university level. In the late 1970's and early 1980's, AAUP took up the cause of fighting for collective bargaining

and issued the Statement on Academic Government for Institutions Engaged in Collective Bargaining, which states that “collective bargaining should not replace, but rather should ensure, effective traditional forms of shared governance” for faculty members of all types (AAUP, 2015).

Moving into the latter half of the twentieth century, institutions of higher education drifted towards utilizing a more corporate-like model in the running of the university (Gerber, 2014). Even the AGB, one of the organizations that coauthored the landmark AAUP statement on shared governance, made a call for “a more corporate model of management in which a college or university’s chief executive officer must resist academia’s insatiable appetite for the kind of excessive consultation that can bring an institution to a standstill” (Gerber, p 22). This corporatization is referenced and theorized in a number of different ways, including “academic capitalism” (Slaughter & Rhodes, 2009) and the neoliberalization of higher education (Giroux, 2014; Winslow, 2015).

Competition creates excellence, as the free market model will ensure, and free markets in schools would only increase their quality. Higher education, from this perspective, should be reinvented in accordance with neoliberal market logics. Public governance can best support education—and reconcile the educational funding paradox—by getting out of the way and letting the most efficient free-market principles streamline public schools. (Winslow, 2015, p. 205)

Winslow articulated the theory of how the corporatization of higher education through a business adjacent enterprising model could increase educational quality and funding.

Gerber (2014) stated that the corporatized governance model would require an uncoupling of the three main elements of what makes professors, professors: teaching, research,

and service. Gerber argued that within these three elements lies participation in the shared governance process. If institutions adopted a business-like model, the holistic approach faculty have traditionally taken could be separated to allow faculty and administration to focus solely on certain deliverables: teaching, research, or service. In this model, Eastman and Boyles (2015) argued that faculty roles would shift largely to content experts serving in a more siloed fashion as guest lectures, researchers, and knowledge imparters, and administrators to take over the other tasks embedded in the classroom: advising, grading, degree progression, etc. In doing so, the academic experience becomes one of moving through silos rather than moving through a contiguous experience. This business-like model has been met with much trepidation, especially from faculty (Eastman & Boyles, 2015; Mills, 2012).

The corporatized model has impacted all aspects of the college environment. Rankings and statistics now drive the marketability of a university to its consumers, formerly known as students. The inception of *U.S News and World Report* “Best College” guide has shifted the value of institutional prominence based upon factors such as selectivity, campus amenities, signature programs and events, and alumni and donor giving. All of these factors contribute to an increased need for dedicated university personnel to attend to these components and focus upon the non-classroom activities and events (Mills, 2012).

One key reason for the corporate shift in university governance has been the dramatic change to the university budget model. Mills (2012) noted the recession and decreased federal and state funding have forced universities to become more dependent on private donors, endowments, and tuition dollars. As evidenced in the rapid increase in tuition dollars, Mills (2012) stated that in 2003 only two colleges had tuition rates of more than \$40,000 and by 2009 more than 200 colleges met or exceeded this rate. Consequently, components of corporatization

have moved the mission of higher education to one that ensures satisfied students and tuition dollars. As such, institutions move further away from being centered upon the depth of knowledge within a specific chosen academic domain or discipline to providing broad experiences that include many satisfaction factors outside of an academic discipline.

As a result of corporatization, academic professionals have become much more specialized and often siloed, with an increased value placed upon the administrative components of the educational environment. Faculty have been hesitant to agree with an evolving model that changes their role across many institutions and seemingly diminishes their value. Corporatized models have led to exponential increases in hiring administrators that is unmatched in the rates of hiring increase in full-time, benefited faculty hiring (Eastman & Boyles, 2015). Mills (2012) notes that in the latter half of the twentieth century, full time faculty positions have increased by 50% at institutions, which he noted as being proportionally in line with the increases to student enrollment.

However, during this same time period, administrative positions increased 85% and general staff positions to support upper-level administrators rose by 240% (Mills, 2012). Notwithstanding the increase in the total number of faculty positions, less than one third of faculty members at institutions nationwide are employed full time in a tenured or tenure-track position. Mills argued that administration employing faculty who are full time but non tenure track is ideal for those running the budget. “Whether they are adjuncts or teaching assistants (TAs), those without the claim to permanent jobs cost less and are easy to get rid of in a period of contraction” (pg. 8). The budget model that stems from corporatization is evidenced in the trend to hire more faculty for less and with fewer protections.

The adjunctification of the faculty labor force is problematic in a number of ways. Giroux (2014) argued it is inherent to the corporate model, or what he refers to as *Neoliberalism's War on Higher Education*:

A number of colleges and universities are drawing more and more upon adjunct and nontenured faculty ...many of whom occupy the status of indentured servants who are overworked, lack benefits, receive little or no administrative support and are paid salaries that increasingly qualify them for food stamps. (para. 2)

These working conditions raised concerns. An increasing number of faculty members operate without the benefits relegated to full time tenured and they are charged to meet the same educational outcomes, research and service as their benefited counterparts (Giroux, 2014). More directly relevant to this literature review, the increase in the percentage of contingent faculty has ramifications for shared governance. For any number of reasons, adjunct faculty have little participation in the shared governance at their particular institutions (Gerber, 2014).

Through the increasingly corporatized model, institutions must cater to student satisfaction in new ways. Atanda et al. (2017) stated in the earliest models of the academy, student associations were included as a key pillar within the educational framework and as the direct consumer of education. The term *universitas* was used to refer to the groups of students who formed together to collectively hire instructors to meet their educational needs. In response, faculty members created the *collegium* to offer protections as a collective and unified unit. However, similar to the current corporate model today, if the student association was dissatisfied with the *collegium* they “voted with their feet, migrating to a different city that contained an institution more in line with their requirements” (p. 71). Institutions must consider how student voices should also fit into models of shared governance. Schoorman and Acker-Hocevar (2013)

argued that students now must be viewed as both the traditional receiver of education but now also as “the clients” (para. 2).

Corporatization has impacted higher education, specifically, resulting from the reduction in funding from the state and federal government. The reduction in government funding has consequently contributed to the increased administrative focus on tuition dollars (Quarless & Barrett, 2017). With governmental support declining, the value of student generated tuition dollars increases to offset institutional costs. As such, Quarless and Barrett postulated that the corporatization of education, in turn, increases the need to satisfy the student demands in new ways than we have historically seen in higher education. They argued that funding models will shift to become more reactive to student satisfaction and anticipate a return to a funding model that blends a faculty driven model with one more similar to the aforementioned *universitas* structure (Atanda et al., 2017). It will be critical for university leadership to not only consider how to engage administrators and faculty in the practices of shared governance, but also students.

This financial pressure has impacted faculty behaviors for teaching, research, and service. Gerber (2014) stated that faculty members have little to no say on what and who they teach, but have their job duties defined by administration. In a similar vein, Shieh and Chan (2020) said faculty feel pressured to generate additional university funding by appealing to a larger “market” of students or to shift their research priorities to align with available funding through privatized donors. Schoorman and Acker-Hocevar (2013) also argue that in a corporatized model, faculty are pushed to focus on their deliverables and “product”: increasing the emphasis on the “publish or perish” paradigm. They indicated that this causes undue tension between the deliverables to students and to the university through research, publications, and rankings. Much attention must

be paid to the unfolding saga of shared governance as the model used has the ability to change the entire complexion and operation of institutions across America.

Rhoades (2003) argued that “academic capitalism” has completely changed how institutions operate by changing their management, production, and cultural system. These three areas of change have also caused increased demand for “managerial professionals” within the institution, causing faculty roles to shift in nature and in many cases further dividing the power of shared governance from faculty positions charged with education and management to dividing the professional roles all together: faculty and management.

Defining Shared Governance and Its Benefits

Collaboration is a commonly espoused value across many institutions of higher education. In practice, collaboration is crucial for the success of a large university. Faculty, staff, and administrators must work together to educate and support the success of the student body. Additionally, representation and inclusive decision making within collaborative practices are known to many as best practices in institutional governance. Shared governance is the process that allows for inclusive and robust engagement in the university operations (Honu, 2018; Jones, 2011; Laforge, 2020).

Shared governance can be defined as the shared responsibility among faculty and administration for primary and important decisions about general policies as they relate to the advancement of educational practices (Jones, 2011). Those practices have evolved over time to adapt to changing institutional needs. As such, an institution’s shared governance structure reflects a set of customs and practices that faculty and staff are involved in when making decisions concerning the day-to-day operation of their institutions (Gerber, 2014; Jones, 2011; Laforge, 2020).

Institutional governance varies across colleges and universities based on their specific needs, goals, history, and constituents. Institution-specific components are often evidenced in policy, procedure, budget, relationships inside the university, institutional standing with the external community, board members, and donors. Similarly, governance structures must be designed to balance an institution's unique needs and the task at hand (Quarless & Barrett, 2017). For example, when creating or modifying a policy, institutional leadership should initially consider which constituents have the most relevant expertise, are most directly impacted by the policy, and are charged with the implementation. If a university was considering altering degree requirements for a major, some key constituents in the governance process would include faculty within the discipline, students within the major, academic advisors, and administrators. However, if the university was considering changing the requirement for first year students to live on campus, the composition of the decision-making body would likely shift to a more administratively heavy body. In both scenarios, the governance structure should include stakeholders connected to any institution-specific characteristics. The ability to redefine the stakeholders to engage in different decisions is a critical step of shared governance as articulated by Quarless and Barrett (2017). They argued the need for strengthened processes for selection of governance bodies based on the decision being made rather than the composition of a standing body of decision makers.

The impact of stakeholder influence on institutional governance is best evidenced through the specific institutional history and the influence of outside agencies and corporations (Gerber, 2014). For example, a religiously affiliated institution would have a strong history and influence in accordance with its specifically connected faith held as an underpinning of all decision-making processes. In practice, the religious influence would be evidenced in policy,

protocol, and course content that is reflective of the connected religious values and practices perhaps in observed holidays, academic honor statements, or in required or general education courses. Similarly, an institution's relationship to research intensity may drive governance decisions whereby institutional change augments goals towards research contributions. Specifically, this may also include engaging specific donors or agencies supporting affiliated programs that may have an elevated role in governance.

Quarless and Barrett (2017) also argued for the importance of considering external stakeholders in decision making as well as specific institutional values. For example, a religiously affiliated institution should consider representation from their respective religious stewards. An institution that serves a specific demographic such as a women's college or a Historically Black College or University should ensure representation within the demographics across the governance structures. The involvement of specific and intentional stakeholder identities should change depending upon the issue at hand and the needs of the institution (Deemer et al., 2017; Quarless & Barrett , 2017).

According to Laforge (2020), institutional governance systems and practices are hardly consistent due to each institution's unique and different needs and missions. Institutional governance is variable based upon institution-specific guidelines, methods or procedures, legal obligations and relationships, and management hierarchy. Additionally, institutions have varied expectations of the specific roles of faculty and campus administrators that may dictate the role they play in decision making. Institutional governance will continually adapt to meet the ever evolving needs of higher education and society.

Universities benefit when engaging in practices of governance with equitable responsibility and distribution of decision-making power among individuals and groups who

have an invested “stake” in the success of the institution of higher education (Laforge, 2020).

When universities engage faculty in regular and well-maintained governance practices, institutional decisions can move more rapidly, allow for many voices to be heard when making decisions, ensure the nuances of how implementation may vary across units and levels are considered, and generally feel more equitable.

While there are clear benefits for the university operations when shared governance occurs, there are also benefits for those faculty members who choose to take a part in the process. Birnbaum (1991) highlighted four positive functions that a faculty member may gain as a result of participating in faculty governance: 1) contributing to management to their college, 2) providing a forum and a safe space for debating and finding solutions on institution policies, 3) gaining enlightenment on shared understandings of the goals among faculty as they relate to education values and beliefs, and 4) opportunities to demonstrate commitment to professional authority and values of the institution. Jones (2011) argued that while faculty benefit from these lofty university functions over time, there is little immediate reward or gratification for their service and expertise in the governance process. While faculty input is necessary for university decision making, it is often seen as an additional expectation or reserved only for more senior faculty members who are more invested in their institutional operations. To this end, faculty engagement in governance appears to be accepted as an essential part of higher education institutions; however, there is little incentive or rewards offered to balance these competing obligations (Flaherty, 2021; Gardener, 2019; Jones, 2011).

Additionally, shared governance is an important part of the sustainability and growth of institutions of higher education. When enacted, shared governance protects faculty rights, academic freedom, and expression thereby allowing faculty to completely engage in their areas

of expertise and focus on the creation of a robust educational experience (Flaherty, 2021; Gitenstein, 2017; Eastman & Boyles, 2015; Gerber 2010). Shared governance allows faculty to apply their rich content knowledge and traditional power over the classroom and curriculum to preserve the institution's culture, academic values, and mission (Brown, 2017). Ultimately, in matters of larger university operations, shared governance extends voice, input, and authority to teaching and research faculty (AAUP, 1994). To this end, a governance system founded on trust and transparency is critical for faculty and staff when making decisions regarding the university while enduring the pressures from outside constituents (Brown, 2017; Johnston, 2003).

The nature of determining the weight of power in decision making is critical to the concept of shared governance (Barrett & Quarless, 2017). Institutions should consider the balance of power between administration and faculty participation in decisions across a variety of issues. To this end, shared governance is often confused with two other secondary key terms: faculty governance and participatory governance. Faculty governance is sometimes misunderstood as the delineation of the faculty role in shared governance but more accurately describes the regulation of faculty-specific matters, not those that require shared governance. Participatory governance is often confused as the expected faculty participation in shared governance yet more generally describes the manner by which stakeholders engage in a process. Faculty and participatory governance are necessary components of shared governance but are not in fact synonymous with shared governance (Bahls 2014; Farazmand, 2018; Gitenstein, 2017; Johnston, 2003).

Faculty Governance

Faculty governance is intended for issues that can be confined to interests that only relate to faculty oversight such as reappointments, tenure, curriculum, student enrollment, majors, and

graduation requirements are a few issues that impact faculty governance (AAUP, 2015; Johnston, 2003). The decision-making responsibility should lie with the faculty and should not impact operations beyond their scope of expertise and sole authority (Gerber, 2010). While shared governance ensures equal faculty and administration influence on institutional decisions, faculty governance embodies issues that are more insular to the faculty and not the greater institution (Flaherty, 2021). Shared governance should be engaged when the interests are more generalizable to institutional structures and processes.

Silvernail et al. (2021) highlighted the importance of faculty self-governance and emphasized how it is grounded in an extensive body of research on procedural justice. They stated this should represent the extent to which the processes are used to arrive at outcomes that are deemed fair. Faculty governance is generally understood to relate to the governance that should be held at the faculty level only with no input from administration or other stakeholders.

Johnson et al.(2017) explained faculty governance to include all the mechanisms delegated to faculty for rendering recommendations and/or providing direct decision making through university-, college-, and department-level committee structures. Faculty governance bodies, typically referred to as academic or faculty ‘senates’ or ‘councils,’ generally function on a model of representative democracy, although their structures and practices vary greatly. These bodies can be helpful tools to ensure faculty are in agreement and have a unified position on larger issues.

Preparing courses, developing research, building relationships with students and other faculty members, and unexpected day-to-day challenges can be time consuming for any faculty member. Expectations of additional responsibility related to becoming a part of a governance structure can be an overwhelming addition. As such, serving as a member for faculty governance

can become a low priority on a faculty member's exhaustive list of tasks (Johnston, 2003). This can be a burden and have little return on investment regarding usage of time and talent. By participating and becoming a part of faculty governance, they can understand the institution's mission and structural needs (Johnston, 2003).

Silvernail et al. (2021) posited that faculty governance should allow for faculty to have the authority to make decisions across all components of faculty recruitment and hiring processes. This includes processes related to hiring, promotion, and dismissal of faculty in addition to oversight of the tenure process (AAUP, 1994). Within institutions of higher education, academic freedom and faculty governance create a fair workplace. They work together to establish criteria to meet the needs of a workplace where policies and procedures are equitably made and upheld. Higher education cannot survive without a demonstration of strong collaboration and employment of shared governance (Flaherty, 2021).

In the absence of shared governance, where faculty engage in further reaching decision-making processes, faculty lose the ability to preserve the academic foundations of subject matter as universities face bureaucratic pressures of funding sources, outside agents, and corporations. For example, when corporations or businesses sponsor research projects through donor dollars, the university's academic agenda can be challenged and even overturned (Stensaker & Vabo, 2013). Specifically, without the presence of shared governance, faculty risk losing the power to determine the university curriculum, degree requirements, tenure, and academic pillars of their respective disciplines.

Participatory Governance

Participatory governance focuses on democratic commitment and engagement and emphasizes practices, and includes community beyond the faculty. Farazmand (2018) defined

participatory governance as “establishing a bridge between public institutions and ordinary people, in an attempt to increase the effectiveness and responsiveness of public policy-making activities” (p. 3). The ideals of participatory governance are built upon the value that individuals have a voice in decisions that affect them. The purpose is to increase and heighten participation in the governing process by exploring the assumptions and practices of the conventional views (Fisher, 2012). In other words, the goal of participatory governance is to bring together decision makers and laypersons, mitigating the power dynamic between. Participatory governance can improve the effectiveness and responsiveness of general policy-making activities (Grote & Gbikpi, 2002).

Participatory governance includes the opportunity to improve social equity and the way services are delivered (Fisher, 2012). Gustafson and Hertting (2017) noted that the participatory governance structure should be a model based from the bottom up. The bottom-up model can occur by increasing inclusion of marginalized people allowing them to voice complex policy problems. By including marginalized groups, they will have a sense of belonging and feel empowered by participating in the participatory process (Gustafson & Hertting, 2017; Heaney; 2010; Rhoades, 2003). However, in practice, sometimes participatory governance becomes a collaborative communication model without equitably weighted decision-making to all who engage. One concern with participatory governance is the propensity for information and decisions to change as they move upward within the organization, allowing for different outcomes between the “ground” and the “top” (Farazmand, 2018; Fischer, 2012; Grote & Gbikpi, 2002).

Gustafson and Hertting (2017) espoused that those who engage in participatory governance choose to do so for different reasons. Some may engage for personal reasons and

others for professional gains. As such, one must bear individual rationale in mind when trying to understand the expected outcomes for those individuals are likely different as well. For example, someone who participates for personal reasons may have expected outcomes related to their passion or personal connection to the topic, or related to building community, whereas those participating for professional reasons may have expected outcomes that focus on how the decision will impact their specific role, or discipline.

Shared Governance

Faculty governance and participatory governance play unique and significant roles in shared governance at institutions of higher education. Faculty governance and participatory governance set themselves apart on the notion that faculty governance may have an impact on the initial decisions that contribute to an overall decision (Johnson et al., 2017) made by the institutions whereas participatory governance “may be used as a window-dressing strategy” (Farazmand, 2018, p 5). Shared governance is the intersection of faculty, administrators, the community, board members, and other stakeholders actively engaged in discussion and decision making about institutional policies and procedures (Bahls 2014; Gerber 2014; Honu 2018; Jones, 2011).

Johnston (2003) stated shared governance connects faculty and participatory governance to ensure that voices are heard on major university decisions: “The term shared governance is applied to the process that connects and holds in balance the governance structures contributing to institutional decision making” (Johnston, 2003, p. 60). Shared governance is the process that bridges all governance structures to ensure balance and equal influence on the process of decision making. Shared governance is a key part of institutions’ growth and survival. All voices must be heard and engaged to maintain collaboration for successful shared governance.

Shared governance, as articulated in the literature, is the intersection of faculty and participatory governance that contributes to institutional decisions (Bahls, 2014; Fischer, 2012; Gerber 2014; Heaney; 2010; Honu; 2018; Johnson, 2003). Shared governance is defined as the collective and mutual oversight of university operations partaken equally by faculty and administrators.

Best Practices in Shared Governance

As discussed in prior sections, different institutional contexts demand different ways of enacting shared governance. In the first publication of a three-part collection of information on the topic of shared governance, Cramer (2017) reviewed the recommended approaches to shared governance across external governance organizations. The first book in this body of work focuses on the arrangement of shared governance across the State University of New York (SUNY) system, where shared governance is not only a campus-level concern but a much larger priority across many campuses within the system. The SUNY Transformation Team enacted shared governance through the arrangement and the procedure of developing policies and the way decisions are made involving faculty, professional staff, administration, governing boards, and sometimes, students and staff. This model is reviewed, critiqued, and examined to better understand key elements of the governance model that have proven helpful when implementing a large and nuanced shared governance model. Some of the ideas include communication structures, policies and procedures for governance operations, and delineation of who is engaged in various operational matters. In the SUNY system, participation in governance includes opportunities for engagement for all employees at the universities and colleges across the system. This includes tenure-track, term or specialized faculty, temporary and part-time/adjunct

faculty, graduate teaching and research assistants, professional staff with and without faculty rank, along with classified and support staff (Cramer, 2017).

There are many additional ideas as to what might lead to a successful model of shared governance. Scholars have suggested several best practices that have been shown to have an impact on the successful implementation of shared governance practices across institutions of higher education (Bahls, 2014; Gittenstein, 2017; Honu, 2018; LaForge, 2020; Quarless & Barrett, 2017). Based on a review of the literature, there are some common recommended practices categorized as: developing a common definition; setting common expectations for engagement; creating a climate of trust; reviewing processes regularly; rewarding and recognizing participation; developing personal and working relationships; and ensuring work is action focused.

Developing a Common Definition

Developing a common definition of shared governance at an institution is a critical first step for the process. As explained above, the term “shared governance” can have multiple meanings and embedded understandings of operational expectations. Deemer et al. (2017) suggest “specifying who shall participate in what ways at which stages and of what kind of decision making or recommendation process at which level” (p. 9). An institution’s definition of governance should clearly outline what types of matters should be governed by whom, whose input is required, and with what amount of decision-making responsibility.

Laforge (2020) noted that administrators, faculty, staff, and other stakeholders must engage in conversations about the institution’s commonly agreed upon definition of shared governance. More importantly, they must also clearly define what is not included in shared

governance at their institution. For example, by-laws should be written to include how resolutions will be achieved in the cases of split decisions (Bahls, 2014; Laforge, 2020).

Setting Common Expectations for Engagement

There must be a common understanding among stakeholders; collaboration, and an air of fairness creates the necessary space for successful shared governance. This is noted to be an essential factor in order to retain the talents of faculty and staff, their expertise, and professionalism in the decision-making process (Bahls, 2104). Quarless and Barrett (2017) articulated the importance of meaningful participation and collective decision making as underpinnings for a well-functioning governance structure.

Reimagining the current form of the widely adopted “task force” model will allow for stronger engagement in shared governance. Often task forces gather diverse individuals and ideas but without clearly outlined structure or expectations of members, thereby leaving the decision making to the same powers and members who convened the task force. Instead, a proper structure, clear outcomes, and collegial engagement is a framework that can achieve the needs of both lateral engagement within a hierarchical environment (Quarless & Barrett, 2017).

Creating a Climate of Trust

Similarly, it is essential that stakeholders are allowed the space to express their opinions. However, this space must be one in which faculty are listened to, respected, and engage freely without fear of retribution. Gitenstein (2017) suggested the concepts of openness and transparency are just as crucial to shared governance as any data point. Quarless and Barrett (2017) recommended a strong balance of relational and structural environments as a best practice to effectively create a climate of trust. They argued the importance of congruence of values and

actions in a shared governance process; that the outcomes and actions from shared governance processes align with the institutions espoused values and shared definitions.

Faculty perceptions that the governing board or president makes the final decision reduces the faculty's sense of empowerment. Conversely, fostering a culture that implements shared governance allows transparency and involves faculty in the decision-making process. This involvement allows for faculty to steward the educational process and increases morale and faculty engagement (Brown, 2017; Johnston, 2003).

In order to further create a climate of trust that extends to the full campus, there must be transparent and open information sharing (Quarless & Barrett, 2017). To that end, the perception of influence held by campus "authorities" matters as much as the process by which a shared governance outcome is received. Trust in a clearly defined process is a necessary first step but the second is trust in the individuals communicating the decisions. When information is perceived to be shared openly and transparently, and rationale freely given, individuals are more likely to engage and offer opinions in processes of shared governance. Openly identifying the multiple perspectives considered, and explaining the rationale forms an "inclusive university democracy" (Quarless & Barrett, 2017 p. 143).

Reviewing Processes Regularly

Stakeholders should be prepared to check on the campus's state of shared governance and make changes when necessary. It is unrealistic to set operating rules for shared governance that are unchangeable. The operational structures and procedures must be evaluated and adjusted over time by the very nature of shared governance. Administrative leadership, faculty, and other key stakeholders change, so it will be necessary to take a barometric reading from time to time of

how the current practices are going and when it is necessary for changes in the operating system (Bahls, 2014).

Regular review of how the processes are operating allows for open and transparent communication. Deemer et al. (2017) suggested a time-specified review of bylaws to ensure outlined processes and procedures are working. The regularly identified review process also allows for identification of changes to processes due to technological or operational advancement. Process review allows for two critical points of reflection: to ensure the common understanding remains intact such as redefining ambiguous terms or those laden with multiple meanings, and to ensure new operational needs are considered, such as the integration of new technology or operational changes in format or engagement.

Rewarding and Recognizing Participation

Faculty are the heart of the university. Faculty negotiate the workload based on agreed upon parameters set forth by the department relating to teaching, scholarship, and service (O'Meara et al., 2017). Faculty are willing to devote time to university panels, however, incentives for their participation are not recognized: "Serving on committees, boards and senates is time consuming. Some positions may include a course release to compensate, but most do not, making it difficult to juggle heavy teaching workload, time for research and actively participating in service" (Emerine, 2015, p.55). Presidents and governing boards should reward faculty who fiercely defend strong shared governance and reward those who make it their mission to make timely decisions that ultimately affect the operation of the university (Honu, 2018; Jones, 2011; Laforge 2020). Barrett and Quarless (2017) noted that shared governance participation is often viewed as a component of a faculty member's *service* requirement while on the tenure track. They suggested continuing this requirement to ensure multiple levels of

engagement and to help shift the perception that shared governance is something one must do to achieve their goal but rather make it a part of the goal.

Another suggestion is to incentivize faculty members for engaging in shared governance by counting it into their performance review cycles, rewarding “star” faculty who contribute at an outstanding level, or simply by working to ensure balance between their responsibilities of teaching, research, and service. However, administrators must bear in mind that faculty are meant to be most heavily involved in teaching and research as directly tied to the educational mission of the institution (Barrett & Quarless, 2017). Faculty should engage in governance, but their time and expertise must be valued and counted in a way that does not detract from their primary role at the institution (Favero, 2003; Jones, 2011; Pope & Miller, 1998; Quarless & Barrett, 2017; Schoorman & Anker-Hocevar, 2013).

Developing Personal and Working Relationships

The president and governing board play an essential role in ensuring inclusion within the university: “The president’s role as the executive responsible for fulfilling the mission in a legally, ethically, and financially sound manner; and the faculty’s role in setting academic standards and admission requirements, establishing the curricula, hiring and nurturing faculty, maintaining institutional and programmatic accreditation, and participating in strategic planning, setting priorities, and searches for senior administrators” (Scott, 2020 p. 5). In many instances, the president may see themselves as the CEO due to the recent cuts in funding to institutions of higher education.

While the president is out seeking funding, the faculty role is “setting academic standards and admission requirements, establishing the curricula, hiring and nurturing faculty, maintaining institutional and programmatic accreditation, and participating in strategic planning, setting

priorities, and searches for senior administrators” (Scott, 2020, p. 5). Faculty are close to the students and are the gatekeepers for the academic mission. Both faculty and the boards must work together in order for institutions to thrive.

Bahls (2014) suggested developing methods to forge relationships between board members and faculty. Faculty members come from diverse backgrounds with records of accomplishments in research, contributions to scholarship, teaching, and innovative ideas that continue to propel the university forward. Thus, providing opportunities where meaningful interactions that allow faculty voices and the voices they represent to be included in the decision making would build consensus and show the importance of faculty involvement in shared governance (Severs & Labuz, 2017). Also, having an interdependent relationship can drive productivity and shared accountability which, arguably, could be utilized to bring stakeholders together on common ground. Methods for increased connection might include hosting a board meeting followed by a social hour, thematic professional development, or shared engagement opportunities. These methods demonstrate goodwill and allow for members of the board and the faculty to build mutual trust. They are able to see one another as human beings who are all tasked with the important work of stewarding higher education (Bahls, 2014; Jones 2011).

As described, faculty cannot fully participate in shared governance if they do not have complete information to make informed decisions. Similarly, board members cannot effectively oversee the academic mission if the information is held back from faculty. Lastly, the administration may often possess information relative to safety, student success, and budgetary considerations that are vital considerations for faculty and board members (Bahls, 2014). All three stakeholder groups must develop a trusting relationship to advance the mission of the

institution. Regular and open communication between these three areas is critical in order to ensure shared governance.

Ensuring Work is Action Focused

Quarless and Barrett (2017) argued that results from shared governance are measured with action and not conversation. They also agree that administrators should not only reward those participating in shared governance but also publicly acknowledge those taking up the cause of shared governance in their daily work. The propensity to engage in dialogue only is one danger when shared governance is only engaged by committee or task force.

Ensuring shared governance practices are systematized allows for action-oriented work and institutional accountability. One suggestion is to ensure written governance procedures include information about timelines and how to enact change after gathering ideas from stakeholders. Specifically, Cramer and Mozlin (2017) offered the following steps: “identifying need, exploring options, weighing priorities against resources, considering implications for different decisions, and ultimately making choices” (p. 89). The authors argued that while certain components of these steps lend largely to discussion, the stages of resource management, implications for decisions, and making choices all call for action.

Best practices in shared governance as a collaborative partnership entrenched in trust and transparency between faculty and administration is meaningful and a “win-win” to the institution of higher education commitment (Bahls, 2014). Moreover, aligning shared governance with university decisions can lead to sustainability where priorities align with the university’s vision, missions, and goals. Thus, moving past traditional shared governance to shared accountability with sustainable solutions that embody trust, communication, and results in the sphere of influence for which the stakeholders engage and are accountable (Bahls, 2014).

Current Trends and Future Considerations

There are many current events in the national news that raise issues of shared governance. The recent example of Nikole Hannah-Jones at University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill challenges the shared governance practices related to matters of faculty employment (Jaschik, 2021; Shivaram, 2021). Changes to university operations in relation to COVID-19 also bring about timely questions of shared input and decision making for university wide operational changes. The concepts of faculty freedom of expression, academic freedom, and content expertise have been called into question in educational spaces as the debate of critical race theory (CRT) through several examples of recent attempts by the state legislatures to ban or restrict teaching about race or racism.

Faculty Employment, Promotion, and Tenure

Nikole Hannah-Jones' tenure case, where faculty and administrators disagreed with the Board of Trustee's decision to not award tenure, is a recent example of shared governance concerns related to faculty employment. Nikole Hannah-Jones is a journalist, a MacArthur Fellowship recipient, a Pulitzer Prize winner, and former professor at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill (Robertson, 2021). Nikole Hannah-Jones was denied tenure by the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill's Board of Trustees (Commodore et al, 2021), even after the endorsements of the president, the provost, and tenured faculty. When university decisions are heavily influenced or swayed by an external board, there is clear cause for concern for the operations of shared governance practices (Honu, 2018).

Another recent example of this concern came to light in October of 2021 as the Board of Regents in the state of Georgia ruled that promotion and tenure decisions would be more influenced by university administration and not with faculty boards as traditionally enacted

(Heyward, 2021; Peebles, 2021). The new policy, unanimously voted into action by the Board of Regents, now gives the power to remove tenured faculty from their position to the university administration without the requirement of a faculty board for review. The Board maintains this change is to ensure high levels of continued academic contribution once tenure is granted as well as a swift response to questionable conduct. However, others argue that not only is this change an attack on academic freedom, it will negatively impact the ability for the state to attract and retain quality faculty - the very measure the Board claims to be protecting.

University Operations and Environment

COVID-19 posed numerous challenges to higher education in regards to policy changes and practices of shared governance continue to be tested (Flaherty, 2021). Flaherty questioned whether shared governance structures will survive the current events wrought with financial distress, low enrollment, and virtual engagement. The COVID-19 pandemic forces many institutions to function in a reactive model rather than one of intentional and proactive planning where shared governance is often best enacted. Major operational decisions have to be made in a short window of time, forcing many of our institutions to neglect written policy, contracts, and agreements eroding the underpinnings of shared governance.

The AAUP found many institutions of higher education made significant decisions without shared governance because of unforeseeable financial challenges during COVID 19. Many times, concerns with shared governance practices are brought to light during challenging times as institutions of higher education find themselves scrambling to meet the competing needs of faculty, staff, students, administrators and the board of trustees (Eisenstein, 2021). Recently COVID-19 tested the working of shared governance in three New York institutions.

Flaherty (2021) shared the story of Canisius College, a private college in Buffalo New York, having laid off 20 professors, the majority of whom were tenured. Existing policy, previously written and agreed upon, indicated this was not allowable by neglecting to gather input from faculty. Similarly, Keuka College, a private college in Keuka Park, New York, suspended important parts of the faculty handbook, closed academic programs, and ended faculty appointments without the voices of those in governing bodies. Both examples are concerns related to the shared governance process. Even in times of crisis and swift decision making, space must be created to ensure appropriate balance of input and decision making when it comes to major operational and staffing changes that impact the daily experience.

Curriculum Expertise, Academic Freedom, and Freedom of Expression

Issues of curriculum, academic freedom, and freedom of expression will have increasing impacts upon institutions' shared governance processes. The backlash to critical race theory is a timely issue for shared governance through an examination of faculty curriculum expertise, academic freedom, and freedom of expression. CRT is the study of systems, institutions, power, and race (Writer, 2008). No longer only regulated to academic units charged with ethnic or race-based studies, CRT has been applied to understand the impact of systems and power across disciplines. In more recent years, faculty have begun incorporating this content across a multitude of topical areas. (DeCuir-Gunby, 2020; Education Post, 2021; Powell et al., 2021).

The AAUP (2021) cautioned institutions from having politicians mandate the academic content of the scholarly material. They warned that this level of oversight may hinder institutions from fulfilling their mission. Academic mandates can hinder the institutional mission by diminishing universities' ability to provide all components of scholarly information on a topic, stifle inquiry and in some cases violate academic freedom (AAUP, 2021). Because faculty are

charged with the primary responsibility for teaching and research, they should also have primary authority over the content of the courses they teach (AAUP, 2021; AAUP, 1994).

The AAUP believes firmly in its mission related to academic freedom and the process of limiting academic freedom in education can be detrimental to the educational system. The recent debate about critical race theory is an example of free speech in institutions of higher education (Jaleel, 2021). In September 2020, then-president Donald Trump attempted to ban all diversity and inclusion training from all federal contracts, including teaching and training of Critical Race Theory at institutions of higher education (AAUP, 2021; Guynn, 2020). The ban was in contradiction to the aims and mission of AAUP (AAUP, 2021). The AAUP's mission endorses academic freedom to colleges and universities to teach, conduct research, and analyze the inequality which will improve campus learning across all interdisciplinary subjects (AAUP, 2021; Jaleel, 2021):

The AAUP affirmed that the faculty has primary responsibility for such fundamental areas as curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction, research, faculty status, and those aspects of student life which relate to the educational process” and that good governance requires good communication among faculty, students, and others who learn and work on campus. In the face of attempts to ban the teaching of CRT, these principles hold.

The task before us now is to formulate any defense of CRT as broadly as the Far Right has positioned its assault on the field. We, as faculty and other university workers, must recognize that the fervor over CRT is not about an abstract claim to individual speech but is instead an attack on collective histories and on the educators, organizers, and activists who identify those histories as important. (para. 7 & 8)

According to AAUP (1994), shared governance provides faculty opportunities to disseminate research and be transparent when doing so. Faculty members' ability to produce research and contribute knowledge should not succumb to the outside pressures of society (Brown, 2017; Johnston, 2003). Politicians and other agencies outside higher education should not hinder the scholarly growth of college and university faculty, whose job is to produce such knowledge (AAUP, 2021).

Issues on the Horizon

As institutions work to augment their shared governance practices and incorporate more voices, additional stakeholders have become engaged in the process. Non-faculty members and external stakeholders affiliated with the university are also now, more than ever, invited to participate in the governance process. Sometimes, the stakeholders are engaged equally for all decisions, which can in fact diminish the effectiveness of the governance practices. Honu (2018) noted that this creates concerns almost immediately; the additional voices create the proverbial “too many cooks in the kitchen” scenario. With the initial goal of governance to empower the faculty, the byproduct of additional outside stakeholder voices only further diluted the voice of the faculty. This change seems counterproductive to the joint statement put out in 1966 by AGB, ACE, and AAUP. There are some additional potential challenges to shared governance moving forward involving communication, new organizational structures, and diversity.

Communication Channels

Communication is one challenge that has arisen more recently and that will continue to arise in the shared governance model between faculty and administration. Divergence between the administration and faculty has been noted as a key reason for communication troubles within a governance structure (Quarless & Barrett, 2017). Arguably, the most often noted difference in

communication is based in the opposing concerns of these groups. Administrators are noted with prioritizing the operations of the institution, fiduciary responsibilities, and legal constraints. Faculty, on the other hand, prioritize the educational commitment of the institution through teaching, research, and service.

Upon further analysis of this communication gap, Quarless and Barrett (2017) posited that the commonly ascribed divergent nature of scope and role is in fact secondary to a much larger difference between the two groups: structural operating systems. The focal areas of administration and faculty are evident in the communication styles of each group. However shared governance should allow for a more holistic understanding of the total complexities and offer convergence of how to move forward to support both stakeholder needs equally.

Quarless and Barrett (2017) called upon organizational concepts published in 1984 by Bolman and Deal to better understand communication across governance practices. Quarless and Barrett argued that administrators operate within a hierarchical vertical structure while faculty operate in a horizontal or lateral structure, which is reflected in the diverging opinions for communication practices when engaged in governance. Faculty participating in governance are accustomed to a lateral exchange of ideas and decision-making structures, yet administration is conditioned to operate in a vertical operation. This simple, yet sizable, difference in structural operations creates different “rules of engagement” when entering spaces of shared governance related to both how ideas are shared and how decisions are made.

A new media ecosystem makes communication both simpler and more diffuse, changing our expectations of how we communicate with each other. And, without regular communication, important topics are not openly discussed and agreed upon by faculty and administration alike (Honu, 2018). Actually, Tiede et al. (2014) proposed “the variety and complexity of the tasks

performed by institutions of higher education produce an inescapable interdependence among governing board, administration, faculty, students, and others. The relationship calls for adequate communication among these components, and full opportunity for appropriate joint planning and effort” (p. 59). In agreement, DeCesare (2020) offered that there is a distinct difference between monologue and dialogue.

Building consensus through dialogue and input from diverse perspectives is a vital link between university faculty and university administration. Eckel (2000) noted that:

how administrators treat faculty shapes the ways in which faculty react within the governance arena. When administrators act in ways consistent with trusting faculty and appreciating their special knowledge and perspectives, these cases suggest that faculty will play active and complementary roles in governance. Administrators must acknowledge their own roles as participants in the shared governance process. (p. 34)

Eckel further suggested that shared governance is a hotbed for dissent and debate. Stakeholders either yield their opinion when it is time for a vote on an issue or they are ready to stand firm and hold their ground. DeCesare (2020) suggested that all views, even those dissenting views, be presented to governing boards. AAUP proclaims that the role of the president is to “plan, to organize, to direct, and to represent” the institution (AAUP, 2015, p. 120). This is of utmost importance, particularly when including faculty views that may differ from the leadership’s views.

Differing Structures and Changing Formats

In the wake of the onset of the COVID-19 global pandemic in 2020, many universities made rapid educational shifts from in-person learning via traditional, on-campus formats to online, distance education (Lloyd et al., 2020; Morgan, 2020). As the pandemic persisted,

universities have quickly, but not always nimbly, oscillated their educational formats between in-person, online, and hybrid. Online instruction, or distance education, has been a prevalent approach since gaining popularity in the 1990s. While some faculty are familiar with facilitating online instruction, many faculty remain more comfortable and proficient with in-person instructional methods (Kim et al., 2019). Ali (2020) argued that if online instruction remains a primary method adapted by brick-and-mortar universities, then the university has a responsibility to build competence levels in faculty to implement new technological modalities of instruction across all faculty members. Increasing this competence level is important not just for those who specialize in online content, but rather all faculty.

As course content has moved to online formats, slide decks, modules, and recordings of faculty-generated courses have become accessible to many beyond the students within the seats of their classroom. Negotiations between online instruction platforms, university administrators, and faculty members have increased as they seek to better define who owns the content: the faculty member who wrote the curriculum, the institution that pays the instructor for their product, or the platform where the content is accessed? The faculty generated intellectual property ownership has become an increasingly relevant issue (Cavanaugh & Huelskamp, 2021; Flaherty, 2020; Kranch, 2008). As academia concludes its third year of education in a global pandemic, online formats for instruction have become increasingly prominent (Lederer et al., 2020; Sahu, 2020; Morgan, 2020). While specific academic courses such as laboratories and co-ops that rely primarily on hands-on pedagogy are not easily transitioned online, many university leaders find the ability to reach a larger “audience” of students through online offerings appealing (Lashley & McCleery, 2020). Universities are seeing the transition to distance education as more attainable than before the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2017 Purdue University acquired Kaplan University, a for-profit and largely distance education entity. Faculty engaged the University Senate for a special session to discuss the deal that was announced to the university hours before it was made public (Fain & Seltzer, 2017; Seltzer, 2017). Faculty expressed concerns about lack of information and participation in the decision-making process related to significant university operations such as credentialing, academic program modifications, and curriculum. In a more recent but similar example, the University of Arizona announced they would be acquiring Ashford University from an educational technology company, Zovio. Similarly, faculty responded with concern and outrage for their lack of awareness and involvement in the considerations. In this instance, some faculty were invited to review the agreements and proposals but were required to sign non-disclosure agreements, reinforcing the sentiment shared by the faculty at large that they were not openly engaged in the decision-making process (Leingang, 2020).

Questions of course modality, expanding access to education, increasing student enrollment exponentially to online students, and the theoretical differences between traditional universities and for-profit operations are assuredly important topics of discussion relative to an institution's mission (Seltzer, 2017). However, as universities acquire other educational companies, they enter the territory of business dealings, hierarchical decision making, and, as evidenced at the University of Arizona, the necessity of behind closed-door dealings and non-disclosure agreements. These conditions breed secrecy and a "need to know" culture, rather than open sharing of information and discourse across the institution. In the examples of Purdue University and the University of Arizona, the most significant concern expressed by faculty was the lack of awareness, discussion, or engagement related to large institutional changes.

Decreased Faculty Involvement in Governance

Much of the current literature focuses on the declining role of faculty in the area of shared governance. Johnson et al. (2017) believed there are certain challenges to shared governance such as stakeholders having unclear goals or competing goals, making the governance bodies seem inconsistent as their goals battled amidst decisions. Further, faculty members of the same department, let alone from different disciplines, could have opposing ideas of what they believe shared governance to be. Hence, their ideals produce different notions on the outcomes of issues concerning shared governance.

Bejou and Bejou (2016) also surmised that the traditional shared governance model is no longer viable due to the competition of faculty and administrators. Missions of universities today have changed dramatically from what they were when institutions were formed and even as recently as the mid-1900s (Gerber, 2014). Bejou and Bejou (2016) posited that the definition and role of shared governance can and must change to keep in step with the mission of the modern university. In this call to action, Bejou and Bejou (2016) argued that “the variety and complexity of tasks involved in shared governance produce an inescapable interdependence among the board, the president, the administration, faculty, staff, and students (p. 8). Interdependence refers to the way shared governance touches all aspects of campus life including policies affecting adjuncts, promotion and tenure policies, performance-based pay, budget, campus life, school mission, etc.

As the faculty define their place in the area of shared governance, especially those junior ranking faculty, they have taken on the mantra of “seen and not heard” when it comes to being a part of the shared governance process. Gardner (2019) discussed the implicit and explicit messages assistant faculty get in their early years. In many cases, they are advised that until

receiving the protection of tenure, they should keep their thoughts and opinions to themselves so as not to rock the boat. Gardner explained how this idea of keeping silent is destructive to the idea behind shared governance but, unfortunately, silence is the very message being heard by faculty members across the country.

Junior faculty are often coached that they should wait until tenure protects their role, before they speak. Gardner (2019) argued that these messages of keeping silent go against everything espoused by the AAUP and that having a voice in all matters across the university landscape is truly what it means to have a part in shared governance. One particular fault in this model is the lower faculty ranks are often the most diverse. Without the protection of tenure, thoughts and concerns representative of diverse populations may become stifled or not represented at all. Gardner suggested young faculty find allies and talk with the department head to better understand the historical responses from administrators when faculty speak up. Understanding the protocol, written or unwritten, is paramount to understanding how to navigate the landscape as a junior level member of the faculty.

Additionally, Chaddock and Hinderliter (2017) raised the issue of diversity and the role it plays in shared governance. Diversity is vital for an effective shared governance board. The necessity for diverse faculty is imperative to the growth and cultural competence of institutions of higher education. In other words, Puritty et al. (2017) concurred that “a diverse institution has individuals from different backgrounds; an inclusive institution values an individual's identity and encourages the relationship between cultural identity and work” (p. 1102). Conversely, Chaddock and Hinderliter (2017) argued three key concerns to diversification attempts: recruitment and retention, tokenization, and speed. They stated that recruitment and retention of a diverse faculty body is challenging for postsecondary institutions much less within governance

structures. To this concern, they suggested that administrators should follow up to ask why diverse faculty are not retained. One detriment of tokenization is that simply because a candidate is viewed to hold marginalized identities, they may not necessarily be taking up the cause of diversity if they were appointed to the shared governance board. They may, in fact, be against diversity for the topic at hand. To the final concern, speed, the authors offered that institutions must balance climate with urgency. To better understand this at a campus-level, they suggested institutions should engage in a process of specifically identifying current barriers to diversity, rather than ideating on idyllic structures to progress.

A related concern lies within the engagement of faculty who hold marginalized identities within shared governance. The literature identifies two critical barriers to faculty with marginalized identities: lack of trust and the absence of tenure protection. Trust has been noted as a key component of shared governance operations (Atanda et al, 2017; Bahls, 2014; Chaddock & Hinderliter, 2017; Gerber, 2014; Gitenstein, 2017; Quarless and Barrett, 2017). Kater (2017) offered that often many of the systems in place at institutions of higher education mirror the systems of oppression across American society. The systemic power differential creates significant concern that faculty who hold minoritized identities are not free to fully engage in governance and must stifle their opinions.

One explanation Kater (2017) offered is connected to the corporatization of colleges and as such their governance processes. Faculty who assimilated and agreed with upper administrators, who are often White men, were more likely to see positive gains and career advancement. Conversely, faculty who dissented or spoke against the administration were penalized. This reinforces the systemic power differentials between upper administration and faculty exemplifying the praise and reward received when agreeing with those in power.

Another explanation is that African American, Native American, Latinx, and international faculty members were often disenfranchised from the decision-making process (Brown & Miller, 1998; Tierney & Minor, 2003; Jones et al., 2017). When they were engaged, their ideas were meant to be representative of entire populations of students and faculty with shared identities. However, when engaged, their ideas, concerns, and suggestions were often outweighed by the opinions of the majority despite the goal of their presence being to diversify the group, provide diversity of experience, and alternative insight and information for consideration.

Brown and Miller (1998) along with Tierney and Minor (2003) discussed how minoritized faculty begin to feel apathetic towards shared governance after seeing the cycle of tokenization play out: hire a minoritized faculty member to share a “different opinion,” and then make the same decision that would have been made without their identity or expertise present. Jones et al. (2017) reviewed this same finding and suggested that many faculty do not find engaging in governance to be worth the risk without the protection of tenure.

As of 2017, 66% of faculty are non-tenure track compared to just 40 years prior a faculty body composed of 75% tenure or tenure-track members (Jones et al., 2017). While the non-tenure track faculty group is growing it is also creating a more diverse faculty membership across the lower levels of the faculty. However, these are also the levels least likely to engage in governance (Jones et al., 2017; Kezar, 2013; Morrison 2008). The literature cited lack of invitation and documentation of non-tenure track faculty involvement as two possible factors. However, a larger concern noted across the literature is the faculty members’ fear of retribution.

Engaging diverse faculty members in governance is made challenging because of the barriers resulting from their individual identities and collective ranking. The fear of retribution

encompasses grandiose formats such as being removed from their role or not renewed and less overt but equally detrimental formats such as negative evaluations and being passed over for opportunities (Tierney & Minor, 2003). Schoorman and Acker-Hocevar (2013) observed new faculty invited to participate in governance weighed the cost of participation before agreeing to participate or not. They argued because faculty involvement in governance is not tangibly counted or valued, convincing new faculty to engage can be difficult. They also found in their research, 47% of faculty who engage in formal governance efforts already engage in other ad hoc structures at the university, indicating that the faculty most likely to engage in new governance structures are already engaged in shared governance at the institution in some format.

In general, Chaddock and Hinderliter (2017) stated that shared governance boards need to ask three overarching questions to better understand their own readiness to increase diverse participation in governance through a quick self-assessment. The first consideration should be whether diversification is necessary for their board at this time. Secondly, whether the shared governance body is ready to commit to diversity and inclusion on the shared governance board. The final question is about better understanding their desired aim and gain of diversifying the governance boards. Once institutions answer these general questions, they should be better prepared to assess and address the needs of their governance practices.

Chapter Summary

While the topic of shared governance is one with a great deal of research and attention as an overarching ethos espoused across higher education, specific practices to implement shared governance are lacking. The AAUP maintains that shared governance is a crucial underpinning of a well-functioning university, yet universities struggle to implement shared governance in an effective and efficient manner. As such, shared governance is a topic that should be important to

institutions of higher education nationwide and is of particular interest to the newly reconstituted AAUP chapter at VCU. Chapter Three of this document will outline the methodology used to collect and analyze data to understand faculty perceptions and understanding of shared governance at VCU.

Chapter Three: Methods

Purpose and Research Questions

As evidenced in the first two chapters, the topic of shared governance has garnered a great deal of attention in recent years. Shared governance is of particular interest to the recently reconstituted AAUP chapter at VCU. The VCU AAUP chapter requested this research project in hopes to understand faculty perceptions of shared governance resulting from concerns related to faculty governance and academic freedom at the institution.

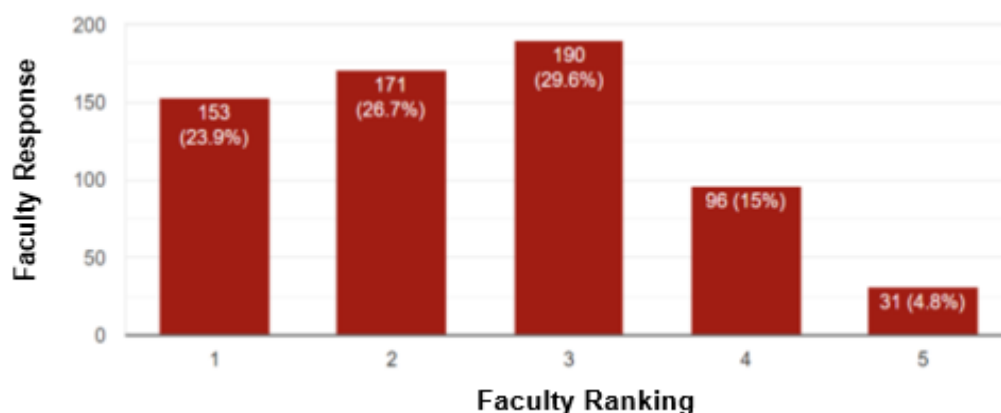
VCU's AAUP chapter conducted a climate survey in the Spring 2021 semester. The survey, disseminated to all VCU faculty, showed that VCU had very low satisfaction ratings in the area of shared governance (E. Carpenter, personal communication, July 22, 2021). The findings from the VCU AAUP climate survey in spring 2021 (Appendix B) further indicated that the university is not living up to its stated commitment to practicing shared governance. The survey indicated that college faculty, staff, and students are given the opportunity to participate in decisions concerning university operations through discussion alone. While inclusion in the discussion is a helpful first step, as noted by the VCU AAUP president, faculty are then ultimately prohibited from voting and sharing with the broader community (E. Carpenter, personal communication, July 22, 2021).

Figure 1 displays the responses of 641 faculty members to a question about their perception of shared governance practices at VCU. Faculty were asked to rank their agreement with the statement "Currently, I believe shared governance is practiced at VCU" utilizing a 5-point, Likert scale where 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree. About half (51%) of the respondents disagree/strongly disagree with

the statement that they believe shared governance is practiced at VCU. Fewer than 20% of the respondents agree or strongly agree with the statement.

Figure 1

Shared governance at VCU



In addition, the survey showed that 70% of the faculty perceive decisions in their schools and colleges are mainly made by the administration without their input. Thus, faculty do not feel included by upper administration. According to the president of VCU's AAUP chapter, "this is not shared governance, but at best participatory governance, where select college faculty, staff, and students are afforded some opportunities to participate in significant decisions concerning the operation of their institutions through discussions, but not by vote and often prohibited from sharing with the broader faculty community" (E. Carpenter, personal communication, July 22, 2021).

This study aims to better understand and define the concept of shared governance as practiced at VCU. This study aims to deepen the knowledge of faculty perceptions of shared governance and increase awareness at VCU through three guiding questions:

1. What is shared governance as understood through relevant literature and practice?
2. What are the current faculty perceptions of shared governance at VCU?

3. How can awareness of shared governance be increased at the institution?

Theoretical Framework

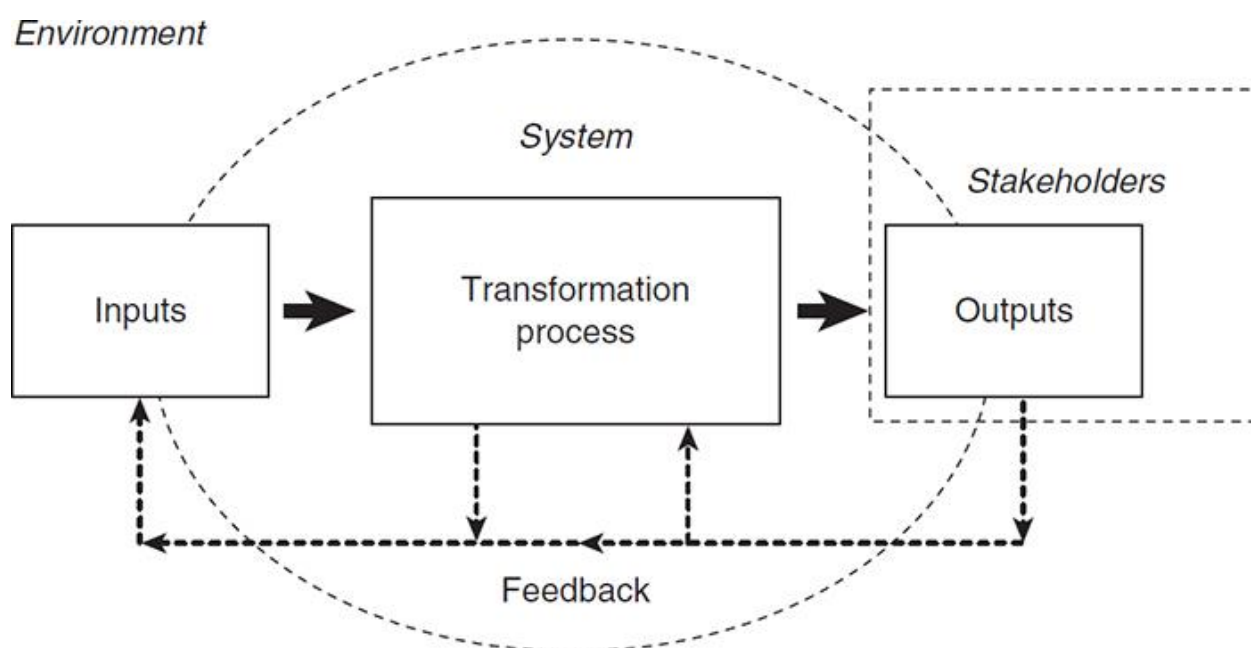
Every good construction project begins with a blueprint and is built upon a framework. Without a strong framework, a million-dollar mansion simply becomes a hodgepodge of bricks and mortar. So, too, can be said about research. Good research is constructed upon a theoretical framework. Grant & Osanloo (2014) declared that a theoretical framework “serves as the structure and support for the rationale for the study, the problem statement, the purpose, the significance, and the research questions” (p.12). Without a specific blueprint, the direction and vision of a study will be hard to follow and will leave the reader at a loss comprehending the study. As such, it is very important to select and solidify the type framework to be used at the beginning of the research project. Not only does the theoretical framework provide structure, Grant and Osanloo (2014) said that it is an “anchor for the literature review, and most importantly, the methods and analysis” (p.12). It provides your study with definition and a coherency that otherwise would not exist.

Systems theory was selected as the theoretical framework for this project. There are many ways systems theory can be used to understand organizational structures and cultures (Gordon, 2021; Edwards, 2019; McLinden, 2016; Wilkinson, 2011). Wilkinson (2011) defined systems theory as “a conceptual framework based on the principle that the component parts of a system can best be understood in the context of the relationships with each other and with other systems, rather than in isolation”(p. 1). This particular definition best encompasses this research project. Figure two below visually represents the core components and relationships espoused in systems theory. An effective system consists of many inputs derived from its stakeholders. The transformation process (or deliberation) takes into consideration the inputs from the stakeholders

and yields outputs (the decisions). Throughout the system, there is a continual feedback loop to engage stakeholders in the transformation process while it is under review and once concluded. The output is then discussed and may yield further changes, thereby starting the process again. Of note, systems theory acknowledges the importance of a process that is inclusive of many stakeholders within the system and allows for frequent feedback.

Figure 2

Systems Theory Representation



Note. Systems theory. From *Key concepts in organization theory* (p. 169), by J. Luhman and A. Cunliffe, 2013 SAGE Publications Ltd. Copyright 2013 by John Luhman and Ann Cunliffe.

The shared governance process at the university is an example of systems theory: whereby the institution is the system, and shared governance is the transformation process. Ideally, and in an effective shared governance model, Figure 2 visually represents the steps how shared governance would occur within the institution's system. Feedback from stakeholders would generate new input for consideration in a transformation process. This may be representative of a need acknowledged by any one stakeholder group or across many. Regardless

of who initiated the call for consideration, all stakeholders should be represented throughout the process. It is important to note that in systems theory, feedback should flow both into and out of the transformation process before a final output is delivered to all stakeholders. In a similar vein, shared governance should be a multi-staged process with communication and engagement opportunities throughout the decision-making process.

The team-based research project closely examined the thoughts and ideas of faculty members on the system of shared governance at VCU. Faculty members, staff members, students, and administration are groups who intermingle with one another. They coexist at the university through a series of structures and systems including classrooms, laboratories, organizations and governing bodies, such as faculty senate and AAUP.

This project looked at how all of these entities, or systems, work together currently and how they might work better, together, to create a better-defined, and agreed upon, shared governance system at VCU. One advantage of utilizing a systems approach is that it aids in examining the functions of complex organizations (Gordon, 2021). VCU, with all of its different entities can assuredly be classified as a complex organization with many systems by which to truly understand in relation to shared governance.

Research Design

The information derived from the 2021 AAUP survey helped inform the direction of the study, the specific research questions asked, and the additional information necessary to inform the project. The research team deemed a naturalistic approach would best encompass the many components of the project and yield rich information on the faculty perceptions of shared governance at VCU. Naturalistic research generally produces qualitative data. Creswell (2018) stated that naturalistic research is

the use of interpretive theoretical frameworks that inform the study of research problems addressing the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem.

Moreover, an emerging (qualitative approach) inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that is both inductive and deductive and establishes patterns of themes (p. 8).

The naturalistic approach allowed the capstone team to collect qualitative data and to analyze those data using inductive and deductive analysis to understand the problem of practice. In addition, this approach allowed the capstone team to build upon and augment the information gleaned from the AAUP survey administered in 2021 and relevant literature to enhance the knowledge of shared governance at VCU.

As previously indicated, the VCU AAUP's response to the capstone RFA indicated a desire to understand faculty awareness and attitudes about a perceived problem at their institution. To gather the specific qualitative data, the research team constructed a series of interviews and focus groups to understand the lived experiences of faculty at VCU. Narrative research methods were used to collect and interpret data from VCU faculty related to their awareness and perceptions of shared governance at VCU.

Narrative research is increasingly used in studies of educational practice and experience, chiefly because teachers, like other human beings, are storytellers who individually and collectively lead storied lives (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Moreover, narrative research is the study of how human beings experience the world, and narrative researchers collect these stories to understand and write narratives of experiences (Moen, 2006). Even though narrative inquiry is comparatively a newer branch within the qualitative or interpretive research tradition, much has already been written on the approach. Narrative research was selected to capture the accounts

and lived experiences of faculty at VCU related to shared governance and to apply these experiences to understand the research questions specifically within the context of VCU.

The project was broken up into two main parts: a thorough literature review and narrative research conducted via focus groups, one-on-one interviews, and a modified charrette. In order to fully understand the topic of shared governance, and to respond directly to research question #1, the team first conducted a detailed literature review as outlined in chapter two of this document. The literature review allowed the team to understand relevant trends, practices, common challenges, and best practices related to shared governance. Relevant literature identified historical underpinnings of shared governance, defined and explored key issues, and unearthed current best practices. Review of the 2021 AAUP survey results highlighted trends and relevant topics for AAUP members at VCU for study.

The narrative research component, aimed at answering the second and third research questions, was developed, and largely influenced by Bahls' (2014) extensive work related to best practices. The team developed questions to ask participants about their understanding of key concepts of shared governance as experienced at VCU. The derived questions helped the researchers gather thick and rich descriptions from current VCU faculty relative to their understanding and awareness of shared governance through focus groups. In order to gain additional descriptions, the researchers conducted a series of individual interviews. These interviews focused mainly on the perceptions of key stakeholders who were unable to participate in the focus groups due to their roles (such as those in executive roles with the AAUP chapter or staff governance organizations). Additionally, a modified charrette-style workshop was employed to gather ideas and recommendations from current VCU AAUP chapter members for implementing shared governance practices.

Part I: Literature Review

The first part of this project was the completion of a comprehensive review of relevant literature related to shared governance within higher education. The researchers utilized this information to better understand the key issues and terms embedded within the AAUP 2021 survey. Additionally the literature served as a foundation to inform the questions for focus groups and interviews, and initial codes for data analysis.

Database Searches and Key Terms

In the summer of 2021, the researchers read Gerber's (2014) book to gain an initial overview of the historical context of shared governance and its evolution over time. Then the team began the search for literature utilizing a variety of keyword search functions across multiple databases in education, social science, and behavioral sciences including JSTOR, ERIC, EBSCO, and Google Scholar. It was imperative to source both long-standing, historical underpinnings of shared governance through textbooks and peer-reviewed literature as well as more recent and relevant journal articles related to current issues of shared governance.

The team began by primarily searching terms such as "shared governance," "shared governance and higher education," "shared governance and university," "shared governance and colleges," and "education and shared governance." As the team reviewed articles and began to observe emergent themes, search terms expanded to include "faculty governance," "history and shared governance," "participatory governance," "shared governance and tenure," "shared governance and faculty," "shared governance and administration," "shared governance and COVID-19," AND "shared governance and online learning." Additionally, the researchers read Cramer's three volume series *Shared Governance in Higher Education* to ensure a strong understanding of current trends and topics (Cramer, 2017, 2018, 2021).

Literature Review Components

The literature review was divided into five key components: a history of shared governance, defining shared governance and its benefits, best practices in shared governance, current trends and future considerations, and issues on the horizon. At the conclusion of the literature review process, the researchers utilized the academic review in chapter two to generate a separate document for the VCU AAUP chapter. This version of the literature review was provided in a more palatable format compared to the full literature review with the intent of future dissemination of the information collected about shared governance to faculty. This document might serve as a guidebook, of sorts, for the recently reconstituted VCU AAUP chapter.

Part II: Narrative Research

The research team utilized three components to collect descriptive information relative to faculty knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of shared governance at VCU. Narrative methods were selected to best understand the lived experiences, perceptions, and awareness of faculty through one-on-one interviews and focus groups. Narrative methods allowed the researchers to understand the individual and specific lived experiences of faculty at VCU relative to shared governance. Given that each faculty member experiences VCU and their relationship with governance individually, narrative methodology was the most appropriate way to understand the information gathered (Creswell, 2018). The researchers first completed a series of focus groups with VCU faculty, followed by individual interviews. Additionally, a modified charrette, or design thinking workshop, was utilized to understand faculty recommendations for increasing the awareness of and engagement with shared governance at VCU. These three components allowed

the capstone team to gather a cross-section of faculty perceptions of shared governance through their personal experiences at the institution.

Setting

Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) is located in Richmond, VA, is an urban institution with two main campuses: Medical College of Virginia (MCV) and Monroe Park Campus. VCU has 29,000 students and over 23,000 employees at VCU and VCU Health System with 2,501 full-time faculty; 692 part-time adjunct faculty members are included in that number. VCU offers undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs, administered within the school or college. In addition, the university offers over 200 programs in the sciences, humanities, and arts (Virginia Commonwealth University, 2021).

Focus Groups

The research team conducted eight focus groups; two were face-to-face focus groups that occurred in-person on the Monroe Park campus and six were facilitated virtually via Zoom. Zoom is a video conferencing tool that enables individuals to meet virtually (Zoom Video Communications Inc., 2016). The use of Zoom to conduct the focus groups was offered as an option to allow faculty to engage virtually in response to COVID-19 personal safety concerns and remote working operations. Van Bezouw et al. (2019) defined focus groups as “multiple individuals engage[d] in a dialogue focused on the research theme which is guided by a moderator” (p. 2721). Faculty were invited to share their interest in focus group participation by completing a brief survey. In the survey, faculty were able to disclose demographic information and self-select their preferred modality, location, and times (Appendix C).

The focus group protocol consisted of 6 open-ended questions and prompts designed to gain in-depth responses (Billups, 2021). The questions were specifically designed with respect to

the three guiding research questions: What is shared governance as understood through relevant literature and practice; What are the current faculty perceptions of shared governance at VCU; How can awareness of shared governance be increased at the institution? The specific questions were based on the literature review gathered on common concerns and recommendations for best practices, predominantly influenced by Bahl's 2014 framework (Appendix D).

After the protocol was developed, the research team utilized the framework of cognitive interviewing to solicit feedback on the focus group questions by conducting a pilot focus group with five faculty members. Cognitive interviewing aims to understand shortcomings and adapt the research instrument, or focus group protocol in this instance, thereby enhancing the quality of feedback garnered (Ryan et al., 2012). Participants in the pilot focus group assisted the research team through their participation and feedback related to the wording of questions, prompts given, and general flow of the focus group. The cognitive interviewing process was used to refine the research approach by identifying problems embedded in the cognitive process by which participants engage.

Recruitment. All VCU faculty were invited to participate in the focus group via an email invitation to the faculty (Appendix E). There was not an official faculty listserv, or email list, available to the researchers to disseminate across all faculty and as such several methods of communication were engaged to share the opportunity with VCU faculty. The research team intended to utilize an external listserv created by the client via the Action Network populated with public information posted about faculty contact information. However, when the client attempted to disseminate the information, they were informed that the VCU network had blocked emails from Action Network. While the client indicated they would request access be restored, they indicated the team should try alternative methods.

Next, the researchers reached out to VCU's Faculty Affairs and Provost Office to ask the recruitment email be shared with all faculty. The researchers were instructed that the project and participant invitation was in accordance with the VCU mass mail policy and could not be sent (VCU University Relations, 2021). Then, the research team reached out to the Faculty Senate to send the invitation over their listserv. The Faculty Senate indicated they did not have a listserv for all full-time faculty and instead suggested reaching out to specific faculty chairs or deans of colleges and schools across the university. The research team also requested the opportunity be shared with the VCU Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence (VCU CTLE) listserv and were told it could not be shared on the listserv as mass mailings were reserved for training and development opportunities. However, the researchers were able to post the opportunity via the CTLE Facebook group.

The research team compiled a list of leadership of each academic college or school at VCU from the individual school websites. Members of the research team emailed deans to share information about the study, recruitment of participants, and requested it be disseminated to their respective faculty members. Additionally, the email invitation was shared with VCU AAUP Chapter membership in email and announced at a chapter meeting. The researchers posted the invitation for participation in the VCU Telegram, a faculty event notification method sent daily to faculty, staff, and students. At the beginning of November, the client notified the researchers that the Action Network had been restored and the email was also sent to faculty via the Action Network. Lastly, the researchers also engaged personal connections with VCU faculty and asked them to share the information with their peers and departments.

The participant invitation included information about the purpose of the study and requested consent to participate in the study via an online survey. The survey collected consent

as well as demographic information such as gender, racial identity, faculty rank, school/college, years of teaching experience, AAUP member, member of faculty senate (past/present), not affiliated with AAUP, and whether they would like to participate in a one-on-one interview as a follow-up to the focus group. The identity of the faculty members will not be included in the final report nor general participant information coded by demographics. The purpose of the survey was to ensure that there was faculty representation for all ranks (full professor, associate professor, assistant professor, and instructor) and both campuses' participation. The research team sent the initial survey on October 27, 2021, and follow-up emails weekly for three weeks to those who had not responded.

Participants. Each focus group consisted of 2-6 participants, totaling 29 focus group participants at the end of the study. The focus groups participants represented university faculty from multiple units, those involved in governance such as AAUP members, Faculty Senate members, and others who were not involved in formal governance structures. Table 1 displays the total number of faculty members who participated in the focus groups by rank. Female and male faculty identities were both well represented, however, very few faculty of color participated. Mostly, faculty from the Monroe Park Campus participated compared to those from MCV campus. Most faculty who chose to participate had more than 13 years of teaching. While we had participants from tenure and term ranks, no pre-tenure or tenure track faculty responded to participate in the focus groups.

Table 1*VCU Faculty by Rank and Gender - Focus Group*

Faculty Rank	Assistant Professor		Associate Professor		Full Professor (or equivalent)		Focus Groups	
	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Sex								
Female	5	17%	3	10%	4	14%	12	41%
Male	1	3%	10	34%	4	14%	15	52%
Non-binary	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Prefer not to answer	1	3%	0	0%	1	3%	2	7%
Transgender	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

Facilitation. Based on the number of responses received for focus groups, the research team hosted eight focus groups: six were hosted virtually and two were held in-person on the Monroe Park campus. Two members of the research team served as moderators for each focus group. The decision to allow for dual moderators allowed the research team to ensure equal focus to the content and the procedures (Billups, 2021). The virtual focus groups were facilitated on the Zoom video conferencing platform and video recorded. In person focus groups were recorded with an audio recorder.

The recordings of all eight focus groups were meticulously transcribed by the capstone team utilizing the Otter.Ai software platform. Once the transcription was complete, participant information was de-identified and the transcripts were coded accordingly with “participants 1-29.” Given the sensitive nature of the topic and highly specific answers and examples, coding participants was critical to ensure confidentiality of the participants’ respective responses. The research team retained a list of the participant codes that was matched to respective participant demographic data (gender, race, tenure status, etc.) for thematic analysis.

Individual Interviews

Subsequent interviews allowed for in depth understanding of key topics that emerged from the focus groups. Interviews were necessary to obtain detailed responses that offered robust descriptions of faculty knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions. Subsequently, the interviews were used to gain further understanding from stakeholders who were not able to participate in focus groups. Due to concerns for power dynamics, individuals who might skew focus group responses because of the depth of their involvement in faculty governance were asked to participate in the study through individual interviews. Additionally, the research team specifically included outreach to faculty of color and faculty on the tenure track to participate in the interviews.

The interview questions were the same questions as developed for the focus groups based upon Bahls' 2014 framework for best practices. Since the individual interview participants were different from the focus group participants, and potentially held different positionality on the topics, a consistent set of questions would best allow the researchers to note any variance in participants' experiences in the narrative responses. The specific questions asked and interview protocol are provided in Appendix F.

Recruitment. To ensure participation from a cross-section of faculty through targeted interviews, the research team identified initial individuals who held positions with AAUP and Faculty Senate to participate in the individual interviews. Using a snowball sampling method, interview participants were asked to identify additional faculty members who would be helpful to interview as well. Ultimately, 21 faculty members were identified and invited to participate and complete a survey indicating their consent and demographic information (Appendix G). The research team sent individual invitations to the faculty members soliciting participation consent. The invitation included the purpose of the study and requested faculty consent to participate in

the study. The research team sent the initial interview invitations on December 2, 2021 with follow up emails to faculty who had not responded.

Participants. The research team received 11 responses to participate. The targeted participants represented university faculty from multiple units and faculty rank. Table 2 displays the total number of faculty members who participated in the interviews by rank. There were 11 participants in this part of the study.

Table 2

VCU Faculty by Rank and Gender - Interviews

Faculty Rank	Assistant Professor		Associate Professor		Full Professor (or equivalent)		Interviews	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Sex								
Female	2	17%	2	17%	0	0%	4	36%
Male	1	8%	4	33%	2	25%	7	64%
Non-binary	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Prefer not to answer	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Transgender	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

Facilitation. Individual interviews were designed to allow faculty members to fully respond without concern for the reactions of or impact to colleagues or peers that might occur in a focus group setting. Interviews were held in a one-on-one setting, with one researcher and one faculty member. Also, the research team delegated the interviews to ensure group members did not conduct interviews where perceived conflicts of interest existed, such as connections to the faculty's college or program oversight. This environment and intentional pairing of the interviewers encouraged more open responses from participants and clarifying questions from the researcher rather than assuming the respondent's meaning based on experiences. The interviews were conducted utilizing Zoom for video conference as the means of data collection. The 11 interviews were transcribed utilizing the Otter.Ai software platform for transcription.

Modified Charrette

Charrette is a French word that means cart. The term originated from the final examinations at École des Beaux Arts in Paris during the 19th century. The proctors circulated the charrette, or cart, to collect the students' final drawing as they frantically put the finishing touches on their products for jury critiques. The National Charrette Institute defines the charrette as "a collaborative design and planning workshop that occurs over four to seven consecutive days, is held on-site and includes all affected stakeholders at critical decision-making points" (Lennertz et al., 2006, p. v).

Condon (2008) defined charrette in a more abstract term "a time-limited, multiparty design event organized to generate a collaborative produced plan for a sustainable community" (p. 1). A critical part of the entire process is communication. Communication makes people feel involved, builds consensus while transforming stakeholders into designers of their own future. Subsequently, a design charrette is a "mixed group of participants who work collaboratively and integrates intuitive, rational and emotional knowledge; it's an inventive approach, includes idea-generating forces and results in envisioning futures; is sup in a creative atmosphere to allow many different stakeholders to collaborate; alternates between plenary discussions and small mixed design teams to provide a creative environment to think about the future in unlimited ways; creates an environment in which outdated frameworks, often related to individual beliefs or siloed policies, can be overcome; makes use of maps and other visual tools to allow people to collaborate and integrate topographical, ecological as well as social and economic aspects" (Roggema, 2013). A charrette allows transparency in the decision-making process while ensuring inclusivity that all voices are part of the outcome.

In this component of the project, faculty members were engaged in a modified charrette session. This session was facilitated to better understand actionable methods to increase the awareness of shared governance and generate possible recommendations for enacting shared governance institutionally. Ideas developed as a result of the modified charrette assisted the researchers in identifying concrete recommendations to remove barriers and establish an action plan. This plan, informed by the charrette, allows for the redesign of shared governance to enhance governance practices and increase VCU AAUP chapter participation in governance efforts at the institution.

Recruitment. Members of the VCU AAUP chapter were invited to participate in the Charrette through multiple mediums of communication. The modified charrette was described to the VCU AAUP chapter in two meetings. The first announcement was made at the end of the fall semester to describe the project, the process, and gather feedback about the best dates and times to offer the workshop in the spring semester. The second announcement was made in a spring chapter meeting to garner additional interest. Three emails were sent to the VCU AAUP membership to recruit participants via a Google survey (Appendix H) yielding four interested participants.

The workshop was initially scheduled to occur in-person on the Friday before classes began for the spring semester, based upon chapter feedback. Unfortunately, before the start of spring semester, there was an increase in COVID-19 cases due to the Omicron variant and VCU asked faculty and staff to remain virtual if possible prior to the beginning of classes. The capstone team rescheduled the workshop for the following month. The survey was disseminated to membership again to reflect the new date and time. Additionally, faculty were asked for their preference on the format: in-person, virtual, or either.

Participants. The participants of the modified charrette were recruited solely from the VCU AAUP chapter membership. Seven AAUP members responded with interest, six indicated they would participate in either format and one indicated they would only participate if it was virtual. Given the nature of the workshop design being highly collaborative, the team decided to host the modified charrette in person with the six participants, five of whom attended and participated. While the group was small, three different colleges were represented and faculty members represented different appointment types, and years of experience. Four of the five participants were male, and one female.

Facilitation. The design of a modified charrette is different from a normal work meeting, it creates an atmosphere that allows stakeholders to think differently, broadly where unique ideas and values are welcome (Roggeman, 2013). Based on the number of responses received for the charrette focus group, the research team hosted one, three-hour charrette session on campus with two 15-minute breaks. The capstone team served as moderators for the charrette focus group.

The team developed and followed the protocol for the modified charrette (Appendix I). The modified charrette participants were split into two groups, separating faculty from the same units to allow for free and open discussion. The research team observed, took comprehensive notes, and photographs of the group work, and retained the final artifacts such as notes, posters, and presentations from the participant groups.

Data Analysis

For this study, the research team used Otter.Ai software platform to transcribe all focus groups and interviews. Each member reviewed the transcript and then assigned each participant a number to keep the faculty members' identity confidential. For example, focus group participants

will be identified as “FG1” and interviewee as “I1”. The participant codes were matched to the demographic data collected in the consent surveys and retained for analysis.

Transcripts were then uploaded into Dedoose. The Dedoose platform is used as an electronic dashboard for thematic analysis and was used to assist the research team in sharing data and collaborative theming. Dedoose (n.d.) allows one to “organize and analyze research data, no matter what form those data take” (p.1). Each transcript was uploaded by participant number to allow for thematic analysis across demographic information such as gender, race, rank, etc. For example, a focus group with five participants was uploaded five times and coded by each participant separately.

Thematic analysis was used to identify, analyze, organize, describe, and report themes found within the interview information. A step-by-step approach is used to generate qualitative codes (Nowell et al., 2017). The researchers created etic start codes from the literature review described in Part I and emic/in vivo codes were developed during the analysis process. Etic refers to descriptive data that "can reliably be produced even by someone with limited contextual understanding. Emic refers to data that "are explanatory and that refers to the meanings participants themselves attach to their experience" (Haapanen & Manninen, 2021).

As coding occurred by all members of the capstone team, it was critical to ensure shared definitions and consistent application of codes. To do this effectively, the team met to standardize the definitions of codes and norm the application of codes to text after first individually applying the developed codes to one text then discussing commonalities, differences, and ultimately re-coding the text with the standardized application of codes. Attention was paid to the ensuring the consistency and precision of code application by the researchers to ensure trustworthiness within the research (Billups, 2021). This process allowed

the researchers to compare their code definitions and application to ensure consistency across all data for inter-rater reliability. From the codes, 13 secondary themes emerged that were refined to yield five overarching themes. A visual representation of the themes, sub themes, and codes as organized by research question can be viewed in (Appendix J).

Limitations

This research project resulted in a number of limitations including the time constraints set by the doctoral program to complete the project. The research project was limited to the timing of the requests for faculty participation. This was due to lack of a central communication method to engage all university faculty which potentially resulted in a low yield rate of faculty participation. This research project had a low involvement and response from MCV campus, faculty of color, and tenure eligible faculty despite the multiple attempts across several methods of communication. The research project sample was largely skewed to those invested in the topic of shared governance, which potentially may be lacking the voice of faculty who are not engaged in governance. Also, COVID modification may have inhibited faculty engagement or influenced engagement. Subsequently, the research project yielded low faculty participation from across both campuses.

Chapter Summary

This chapter described the theoretical framework using a naturalistic research method to conduct the research project. The literature review, conducted as Part I, was used to understand the topic and largely to answer research question one. Narrative research was used to conduct focus groups, interviews, and the modified charrette to yield data findings to answer components of all three research questions. The next chapter will discuss the findings from the research methods described in this chapter.

Chapter Four: Findings

The purpose of this study is to develop an understanding of shared governance as perceived and practiced at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU). This chapter describes the findings from the information and data gleaned from the literature review, focus groups, interviews, and modified charrette. The literature review was a critical component of the study given the request from the VCU AAUP chapter to review the understanding and awareness of shared governance at the institution. The themes found in the literature review, specifically the best practices, largely influenced the areas of concentration for the qualitative component of the project.

The information collected from the literature was augmented by the participants' narratives about their experiences with shared governance at VCU. The study aimed to deepen the knowledge of faculty perceptions of shared governance and increase awareness at VCU through three guiding questions:

1. What is shared governance as understood through relevant literature and practice?
2. What are the current faculty perceptions of shared governance at VCU?
3. How can awareness of shared governance be increased at the institution?

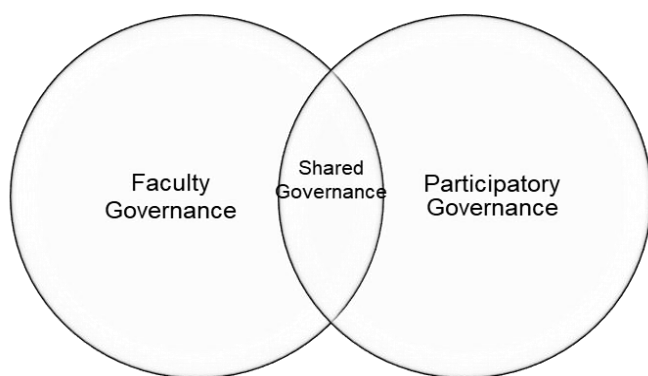
When reporting the results of the qualitative components of the study, the general term "participant" or "faculty member" will be attached to any raw data rather than labeling said data. Given the small number of participants in the study and the level of personal detail shared when discussing their experiences, the research team will not differentiate the raw data in an effort to best honor participants' confidentiality. In a similar fashion, specific colleges or schools within the university that were used within an example will also be excluded from the raw data as an additional measure to protect the participants' confidentiality.

Research Q1: What is Shared Governance as Understood Through Relevant Literature and Practice?

The information collected from literature and qualitative research methods indicated varied nuanced and specific understandings of shared governance. While the many definitions and applications often have commonalities and shared philosophy to bind them, the variance allows for individualized meanings. These individualized meanings often result in an inconsistent application in practice. Equally important, and embedded in the understanding of shared governance, is the need to know how shared governance will be structured and implemented. Generally, the review of literature indicated that shared governance occurs when there is a common definition and a climate of trust whereby multiple stakeholders take part in informing institutional practices through shared expectations, values, and engagement. Shared governance can be defined as the collective and mutual oversight of university operations partaken equally by faculty and administrators. Figure 3, below, illustrates how the literature currently describes the intersection of governance at universities.

Figure 3

The Intersection of Shared Governance



Research question one is largely informed by the literature as outlined in chapter two of this document. Additionally, participants in the qualitative study expressed how they experienced

shared governance in practice at VCU. The review of literature and participant experiences articulated the need for certain foundational components to be present to generate an understanding of shared governance: a common definition, common structure, stakeholder engagement, and an institutional culture that is conducive for shared governance.

Additionally, there were seven themes that emerged in the literature as best practices for understanding shared governance. Though institutions operate with their own unique sets of mission, vision and values, the best practice themes seemingly captured the essence of what was expressed by participants during interviews, focus groups and the charrette at VCU. The following sections provide additional clarity and context by analyzing the emergent themes from the literature as exemplified in the narrative experiences of participants.

Research Q2: What are the Current Faculty Perceptions of Shared Governance at VCU?

Research question two centers on current faculty perceptions of shared governance at VCU. Data collected from 29 focus group participants, 11 individual interviews, and five participants from the modified charrette were analyzed to generate the findings in this section. The participants spoke about their lived experiences with shared governance at VCU. Three major themes emerged from the qualitative data collection about faculty perceptions of shared governance at VCU: (1) Too much administrative power, (2) Devalued faculty engagement, and (3) Desire for change. Table 3 below visually exhibits the overarching themes and subthemes that came directly from the data collection. Also listed are codes used by the researchers. The codes were recurring words or themes mentioned by participants during data collection, thus determined to be inextricably important to the research.

Table 3*Research Question 2: Emergent Themes, Subthemes, and Codes*

Research Question 2: What are the current faculty perceptions of shared governance at VCU?	Themes	Subthemes	Codes
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top-down decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • administration, administrative bloat, top-down decisions, structure, silos, trust, distrust, transparency, communication, not-included, power, decision making
	Too Much Administrative Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Futile governance structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wanting trust, distrust, transparency, structure communication, frustration, apathy, disconnected, tenure status, not-included, not-heard, perception, power, decision making
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bylaws and constitutions not followed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • structures, silos, not included, tenure, frustration, communication, transparency
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being valued 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • perception, not included, not heard, not agreed with, devalued, apathy, disconnected, communication, expendable
	Devalued Faculty Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High risk, low reward (fear of retribution, apathy from lack of trust, lack of reward) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • perception, reward, not rewarded, anger, frustration, apathy, tenure status, administration, silos, lack of faculty knowledge, retribution, intimidation,

		marginalization obstructive, risk, human resources, trust, distrust, wanting trust
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being engaged effectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • perception, disconnected, structures, silos, communication, not rewarded, decision-making, lack of faculty knowledge
A Desire for Change		Hopefulness, structures, communication, trust, distrust, power, retribution, risk, recommendation, lack of communication, transparency

Too Much Administrative Power

The first theme that surfaced from the analysis is too much administrative power. Several participants in the focus groups and individual interviews perceived that administration wielded far too much power, resulting in faculty feeling frustrated and not included in the decision-making process. Three secondary themes emerged largely from examples related to committee involvement, hiring, promotion and tenure, and the lack of institutional standards for decision making. The secondary themes were top-down decisions; decision-making structures, and bylaws and constitutions which contributed to the overarching perception of too much administrative power. One participant noted a feeling of disappointment with the university that developed as they gained a greater understanding of the inner workings of the university. This participant said:

Once people get far enough into the university that they start to understand how it starts to work, and think there tends to be some disillusionment with the lack of perceived agency in matters of function and matters of hierarchy matters of the university workings outside of immediate curriculum.

The participant's disillusionment seemed to stem from an acknowledgement that there are many layers to making decisions at the university that lay outside of curriculum decisions. Once those layers are peeled back, it becomes visible that there is a hierarchical system that does not appear to support all members of faculty and staff alike.

Top-Down Decisions. Concern related to top-down decision making were expressed by 34 participants, or 85% of participants. Participants indicated a variety of experiences that led them to believe faculty were not really vested with decision making power, rather simply handed down to them from above. Within this sub-theme, participants perceived that decisions were often private and relegated only to the purview of upper administration. Instead, they felt that decisions should be more largely discussed and open for public comment. One participant expressed concerns for the administration making decisions in secret by stating:

my observation [...] [is it has] gotten more so over the past few years. And what it used to be there seemed to be more: more of a communication back, and more engagement. But now there's a lot more secrecy and some of the bigger decisions that are being made at the higher level in terms of hiring of Dean's, or hiring of the provost, and things like that.

Another participant noted that this power held by upper administration brought about a sense of frustration for themselves as well as other colleagues. This participant relayed an experience of serving on search committees when they felt the hiring decision was made by upper administration and not the committee members. They recounted these experiences as resulting in feelings of being demoralized. They said:

Serving on search committees have been [a] very frustrating part of being a faculty member. And I've been very involved, I've chaired many searches. And I've been, I mean,

I've really chaired more than I've actually served as just a faculty member. And it's a very frustrating process, because we do a tremendous amount of work [...] and to feel like, for us, it can seem like our opinions do not matter, you know, that the administrators may have their own agenda about who they want to bring in, or who they want to hire, [...] [...] and we're not allowed to make it seem that the search committee thinks that one candidate is better than another candidate. And so, that really ties your hands as a search committee, because when you like, sometimes there is one candidate that's with the search committee clearly thinks is the best candidate, but it might not be the same candidate that the dean would like, you know.

This participant captured and voiced a common sentiment shared by many participants related to their experiences on committees in general: giving a great deal of time and energy only to feel their input was not reflected in the outcome. Other participants recounted similar experiences where they felt a decision had already been made. Many participants gave examples related to service on search committees and feeling as though the committee was engaged to simply go through the motions without feeling like their actions or expertise yielded actual decision making power related to the final hiring decision. While search committees were the most frequent example shared, the idea of engaging a committee to deliberate on a topic that did not influence the ultimate outcome was a common experience voiced by participants.

Related to top-down decision making, participants noted the communication surrounding the final decision as particularly important. The code “top-down decisions” co-occurred frequently with “communication”, “transparency”, and “not included.” Seemingly, participants felt when decisions were vaguely communicated and lacked rationale, this was used as a method to hide the administrative nature of the decision and lack of faculty input. Participants felt that

when a top-down decision was shared, administration engaged in vague communication as a method of disguising the decision or decision making process. A focus group participant declared the following regarding communication “and I think that [...] had mentioned that you use the word veneer. And there's certainly a veneer of communication here. But that, but a lot of times, I think it leaves me wanting.” This faculty member conveyed doubt and felt the formal messaging was not intended to provide clear communication and rationale. In their perspective, the communication was only engaged to ensure the decision was shared but not necessarily to communicate information effectively or provide rationale or additional context. The idea of unclear communication and resulting ambiguity left participants with perceptions of doubt and frustration when speaking about decision making processes.

Another participant similarly commented on the lack of communication as frustrating and intentional. They gave another example related to serving on a search committee and felt the lack of explanation demonstrated the top-down decision did not take into account the work and opinion of the committee. The participant said:

Once that decision is made, there really isn't any explanation that goes down to faculty. You know, what I always did at the department level is and we actually had this written into our bylaws was that the chair could not choose a new faculty member unless the search committee recommended. And that gave them the ability to recommend it, you know, if they recommend it to people [other] than his chair, I got to choose which one we wanted to talk with the dean about. But at the Dean's level, when that decision was made, that really wasn't any articulation down to the faculty, it was just a decision between the chair and the dean. And that's been pretty consistent.

Despite having bylaws at the faculty level stating how decisions would be made, the participant felt as though these bylaws could be ignored by those in positions at higher levels. Study participants generally articulated when lack of clear communication and rationale was present, they perceived the decision to have been made without including or utilizing faculty voice. This has created an atmosphere of distrust as well as a continued level of frustration for the participants involved in these types of shared governance processes.

Futile Governance Structures. Participants articulated strong opinions and emotions when speaking about decision making structures. Specifically, they indicated that the current structures of governance such as Faculty Senate, University Council, and college/school specific councils do not produce decisions that are widely representative of the faculty. As such, participants articulated feelings of frustration and apathy relative to their involvement in formal governance processes. One participant commented on their role as part of a university governing body and how they did not feel empowered to make decisions knowing it could be, and in their perception likely would be, vetoed or ignored by the administration. They said:

[the governance body I am a part of] we're trying to win what our input is asked for. Like when we, when the administration asked for faculty input about whatever it might be, and then the opposite. You know, they don't [...] they don't follow the recommendation with the input that we provide. We feel like there should be an explanation about why, you know that and that's something that we've been trying to really [do] this year, especially, like communicate over and over again to administrators is that if we asked for our opinion and our input. And if you, if you take it, then that's great. You know, it makes us feel like we were that, that we were an important part of the process and a valued member of the process.

The desire to have their opinions valued and utilized was a clear factor for why this participant engaged in governance processes. The frustration and perception that their input would be ignored was evident in this participant's comment. Another participant discussed a situation within their organization's governing structure that also caused frustration. Similarly, this participant declared a perception that the decision-making process seemed to be in opposition to their hope for the operation of shared governance practices. They said:

We've had some really troubling situations. And I will say that it's a trend that I think that's growing. And the growing trend is for administration, and I'm referring to [...] making unilateral decisions, I mean, fundamentally critical decisions regarding student population, regarding the leadership, of creating an intermediary level of administration. No faculty input at all. And basically then lessening the role of the chairs. So basically, pulling apart the role of the chair, creating a higher level above the chair.

The participant's perception that faculty are not adequately represented in decision-making processes even when participating through a formal structure, was supported with another participant who commented:

...there is an appeal that came to us that clearly was erroneous. The judgment, the peer review committee had recommended for promotion, the chair had recommended for promotion and the dean, turned this candidate down. And to us, it was a very clear case of retribution. And we wrote that up. And we sent that along to the provost, who didn't even read our report but rubber stamped the Dean's letter, rubber stamped it. We sent them along to the president completely disregarded.

Participants noted similar situations within their organizations and seemed to be untrusting of the administration to support faculty in matters of university policy or in hiring practices.

When speaking about structures to review policy and hiring practices, participants spoke of the challenges when decisions are informed too heavily by administrative power and oversight:

Anything that's top down never seems to work. So there has to be some way to have everyone meet in the middle. And you know, the old "having a new committee on it" is probably not going to solve the problem either. But I don't know what the answer is, but I feel like it'll just sound like lip service, perhaps if it's, if it is, from the top down.

The study participants noted the need to engage more opinions but also doubted the effectiveness of a committee in overturning the top-down approach. They were left feeling unsure of how to resolve the concern. Another participant also questioned the structures around decision making stating:

We had some working groups to redefine the structure of the department chairs. And there was a working group [that] made some proposals. They offered it to the dean. And then the dean's office produced what their vision was. And there was some overlap [and] there was some contention. But I would again, characterize this space between the conclusion of the faculty committee work and the administrative decision as being kind of a blank gap. We're very, very little understood as to what went on the on the tacit understanding that ultimately, the Dean has the ability to make a decision as the dean sees fit.

Across these several examples, participants articulated their perceptions of too much administrative influence on governance structures yielding them futile. Participants perceived the structures were not engaged effectively to ensure the faculty voice was adequately represented in the final decision.

Bylaws and Constitutions Not Followed. Some faculty articulated that they felt there was too much administrative power by using examples of when they felt bylaws were in place but not followed. Participants also discussed bylaws and constitutions as avenues to inform and govern decision-making practices. These regulatory documents are designed with the intent of providing standard processes and clarity by outlining the rules of engagement. One example best exemplified this concern by explaining a hiring decision that yielded a candidate outside of the outlined process:

[we had] an external search to fill the position [...] And our bylaws [...] very specifically, provide a thorough process for the nomination and election process of a chair from within the faculty. [...] And the way that that decision was treated after the fact, sort of, the way the results were shared, is that we were told the dean and the provost would take a couple of weeks to think about it. And three or four weeks later, we got an email that was sort of like, 'we're doing this.'

In this example, which was referenced by multiple participants, a hiring decision was made outside of the process as outlined within the bylaws allowing for the perception of administrative power to outweigh that of the agreed upon bylaws.

Additionally, participants spoke to the idea that sometimes regulatory documents were intentionally vague when outlining procedures for conflict resolution or final decision-making power if there is not a unified recommendation. One participant shared how they perceived their unit's internal bylaws as a mechanism to support administrative power in instances such as these. They said:

We have like our faculty bylaws and our committee structure and things like that. But they're vague enough that it's very possible for decisions to be made at a higher level and not to actually reflect the faculty voice, in my opinion.

Participants articulated they could not trust that bylaws ensure faculty voices were adequately represented in a decision-making process or final outcome. Overall, the participants expressed concerns that unit-level bylaw structures lack clarity and consistency; leaving too much room for interpretation resulting in too much administrative power.

Devalued Faculty Engagement

A second theme that emerged from the data related to faculty engagement. The theme of faculty engagement consisted of three secondary themes: (1) being valued in shared governance, (2) high risk and low reward, and (3) being engaged effectively. Many participants made comments about faculty engagement and generally shared negative perceptions related to how faculty are currently engaged in shared governance.

Being Valued in Shared Governance. Generally, research participants indicated that they did not feel that faculty were adequately valued or engaged in shared governance. Participants even articulated examples where faculty have been excluded from participation altogether. Similar to the instances above that recounted frustration and mistrust of top-down decision making, some participants articulated their experience was more accurately encapsulated by a feeling of being devalued. The participants who noted a feeling of being devalued, recounted examples when they were invited to participate in shared governance but then their thoughts were not utilized. One participant said:

I think we are invited to express our opinion, you know, and these are troubling questions, right? Because I think there is the veneer of our opinions being valued. And I

think the current administration has invited a lot of input. And then that's completely disregarded. You know, and there have been really specific instances of that. So, I think they'll say, "Yeah, we really want to hear your voice." But our voices really aren't heard. As exemplified through this participant's experience, faculty have a perception that their opinion is invited but ultimately not utilized in the final decision-making process.

In order to feel valued within the shared governance process, several participants mentioned the concept of respect. They voiced concern that their voices and ideas would not be respected by the administration. When their ideas were not acted upon or reflected in final decisions resulting from a shared governance process, faculty felt devalued. Instances such as these also were partnered with emotions of apathy. Participants wondered why they would give their time to participate in a process if their opinions were not going to be taken into account. One participant said:

The faculty and the staff, we need to feel like our opinion is going to be respected and actually used because if we don't feel that, then many of us are going to be less likely to attend something, whereas a decision has already been made, we're in the same position on that one, the example. So if we feel comfortable that our opinion is going to be listened to and considered, then you're going to get more engagement.

Another participant echoed the thoughts of the last participant on voices being heard and acknowledged. They remarked:

So there needs to be some level of respect and reception of what the, what the responses are. As you were saying earlier, if the decision has already been made, and all we're doing is an exercise to allow people to give their opinion, but we're not really going to be doing anything with it, then what's the purpose of doing the exercise? So as a university,

whether it's faculty or faculty and staff or whatever, the leadership has to be willing to accept the opinion and we need to do a good job of generating the appropriate opinion. The idea of ensuring the correct individuals are engaged for specific decisions was also discussed in relation to feeling valued. As demonstrated in the quote above, the speaker noted a clear line of demarcation between processes involving just faculty, faculty and staff, and decisions with just leadership.

High Risk, Low Reward. The data reflected participants' perceptions related to evaluating the levels of risk and reward when engaging in shared governance. Participants noted that often their engagement was high risk, specifically represented in the code "retribution," and not highly rewarded. Participants offered their perceptions on short and long-term effects on their career if engaged in shared governance. Analysis of all of the data showed that participants ultimately articulated three common feelings related to this sub-theme of high risk, low reward: fear of retribution, apathetic views towards future engagement, and lack of reward.

Fear of Retribution. One participant noted, "I had to step down [from my leadership role] because I spoke my mind too often." Other participants said that they felt that they could speak their mind but were doubtful that their concerns would be taken seriously. One participant stated:

I would say that you're free to speak freely as long as you don't offend anyone. And yeah, and it depends on the situation. You're free to speak freely, to kind of advocate for yourself and your department or program - not that it will be sort of, you know, taken seriously, but you're free to express yourself. But when it comes to being critical, or of the administration or things of that nature, then that is something that will probably end up coming back to hurt you in the end.

Participants in all settings discussed the balance of sharing their time and ideas in shared governance processes with the idea that they would either face retribution or not be utilized. Regardless of the posited outcome, participants indicated hesitancy to engage due to concern for retribution.

Sixty percent of the faculty participants (n=24) vocalized that the concern for retribution for engaging in shared governance negatively impacted the culture of trust. One participant explained this concisely by stating “a lot of faculty don't have the job security, from which to speak up. But if the original question is, is are faculty feeling afraid to speak up? Yes.” Participants such as this one raised clear concerns related to job stability if they engaged too freely in shared governance. Another participant stated “there is a very real fear of retaliation.” Participants shared a variety of perceptions related to their tenure status and the level of comfort to engage in shared governance at VCU.

While participants' level of trust in the shared governance process did not actually seem to change based upon tenure status, some participants posited that faculty comfort around engagement might increase once tenure is achieved. Tenure status seems to be an aspect that faculty connect with their feelings of trust. “Tenure” and “risk” co-occurred 15 times in the focus groups and interviews and “tenure” and “retribution” co-occurred an additional 9 times. The ideas of trust, risk, and faculty status were a connected construct for faculty when thinking about engaging in shared governance. One participant summed it up by saying, “if that is the case, if there is a fear of speaking up, then we are living in a police state. This is not [shared governance] anymore.” Another participant offered:

And before I was tenured, you know, what, there was a feeling that well, before your tenure, you don't want to say too much, because you know, you don't want to rock any

boats, you don't want to say anything, that's not gonna get you tenure. And then once I got [tenure], so I think for a lot, for a lot of people who are tenured, you feel more secure, that you can express your opinions and be more open.

However, other participants shared examples that indicated tenure may not provide the security assumed in previous excerpts. “[I] want to say that even when you're tenured, a professor, as I have been, I'm now [nearly 50] years into the profession, there's still plenty that's done to keep you from speaking up.” One participant shared their observations of others experiences:

The vast majority on this campus are non-tenured. And even in tenured professors who have spoken up, it has been, there have been some very impressive repercussions. People who have seen their salary stripped by 70%. They're still employed, so they can't complain. But they're no longer paid. Or they're asked to work three times as much clinical [work]. So there are repercussions even if you're 10 years [tenured]. And we have seen people disappear overnight. [They will] just no longer be there the next day.

As evidenced above, participants articulated perceived concerns for others or heard rumors of retribution towards other faculty who spoke up. Other participants, however, recounted their own, personal experiences. One faculty spoke about their concern for retribution, despite tenure status, after speaking publicly against a policy implementation:

and yes, I have the advantage of being tenured. And, it will be hard for them to get me out of my job. And I don't think they're trying now because I did hire an attorney. But, it feels repressive. It does not feel like an open dialogue.

Fear of retribution, especially related to issues of job security, was articulated by many participants from faculty across all tenure ranks.

Concern for retribution was not only apparent in participants' specific narratives but also evident in how they spoke about the act of engaging in the focus groups and interviews. The following three quotes help to demonstrate the level of unease for faculty to engage with the researchers about shared governance "You'll pick our pseudonym?" "We will have a pseudonym, yes?" "I'm sorry but who are we recording [this focus group] for?" This unease and distrust was further exemplified in how two participants responded to one another in a focus group. When asked how freely faculty can express their opinions one participant stated "[They're] afraid to speak up, especially non tenure [and] tenure track. [They're] afraid to speak up for fear. Even tenure, if it's too controversial there are repercussions. At minimum you're seen as an outsider." To which a second participant responded "I will second that, even the recording [of] this session. What can I say if it would be traced back to me? If it's too specific [it] can be traced." The expressed concerns demonstrated how concerning the topic of trust is for faculty even when only engaging in a conversation about shared governance at VCU.

Apathy Resulting from Lack of Trust. Nine participants articulated how lack of trust in shared governance has yielded apathetic views towards engagement. One participant shared an example related to a recent search process:

For example, [the candidate] was selected from a pool of *one* that came to the university. And even with the relatively performative attempts to get faculty input, there was very little chance to say anything meaningful. I went to [the] job talk. I gave feedback. I felt at the time that there was nothing I could have possibly said that would [...] have prevented [them] from being selected.

The narratives from these participants provided examples of distrust in the process, further producing feelings of apathy towards future engagement. One participant stated, "And so I think

I feel, and I think a lot of my coworkers feel, that no one believes that shared governance is happening.”

Other participants stated a sense that shared governance was espoused in words only but not carried out in action. One participant explained this by discussing difficulties their college had historically had in filling a vacant seat on a governance body:

[it's] more performative, not real, you know? And so if they really felt like it would affect change, and the administrators were really wanting to work more from a collaborative shared governance document, I think we'd have that position filled every year. But I think that those two things affect why we don't.

Ultimately, these nine participants voiced distrust in the shared governance process which in turn manifested an apathetic attitude yielding decreased desire to engage in future processes.

Lack of Reward. Participants across all methods of data collection noted a lack of reward for participation in shared governance. When the researchers asked how faculty are rewarded for participation in shared governance, many participants were observed to scoff, laugh, or generally struggle to provide examples. After the initial emotional reactions, participants then voiced that participation in governance processes is often considered as the prong of “service” in the faculty’s load.

Many participants seemed particularly frustrated that engagement in shared governance was categorized as service. Participants expressed that they viewed participation in governance as an obstacle that had to be done in addition to their work of teaching and research. One example is seen when a participant stated, “in terms of reward, service is a burden.” One participant concisely shared, “In theory, we get service. Service, we get service.” Another participant expanded upon the idea by stating, “The second thing is they don't feel rewarded. [...]

mentioned it earlier. Right? The rewards. I mean, there's, there's really no path to tenure or to promotion based on service.” This participant voiced concern that while commitment to service through involvement in shared governance may be noted, it is not valued in a similar way to teaching or research within the promotion and tenure track of a faculty member. Generally, participants agreed that they did not feel service was equally valued as teaching and research but nor is it rewarded as an additional responsibility.

Participants who held leadership positions in units also highlighted their perspective on the challenge of placing value upon service through shared governance. One participant noted:

[My school has] the same kind of breakdown of scholarship, service, and teaching. And it was never questioned until I became chair. Because I learned about the breakdowns and other schools and realize, well, what are we doing? And how did we come to that? And so some guidance, I know it's very difficult with the, with the university as diverse as VCU in terms of all the disciplines, but some more guidance in terms of what is a reasonable service load and what's an exceptional one would help.

This participant's statement exemplified the challenge in quantifying the appropriate balance between teaching, scholarship, and service. As such, they expressed a challenge in understanding how to quantify faculty engagement.

While acknowledging that service may be assumed as a general requirement for faculty, participants expressed desire for more clarity and guidance about how much service is expected. Participants wanted more specificity as to what be considered exceptional merit through service or how it may be captured as a more integrated component of the promotion and tenure path. Another participant offered “one of the difficulties I have as chair is evaluating what an

appropriate service load is.” Participants shared a common desire to quantify service so faculty and administrators can adequately evaluate and reward engagement.

Additionally, faculty members noted that the concept of rewarding service should consider more tangible rewards beyond simply counting towards the service requirements. One participant acknowledged if monetary compensation is not a tangible reward, considerations should be given to account for service in time allocation:

The kinds of compensation that faculty can get, are never money. And so we said “hey, you know, can we get a course release?” Can you call this a fellowship, so that then you know, it comes with the course release, you know, so this service is recognized in some way. All that fell on deaf ears, and I actually ended up quitting the committee because it was just too much work. And, and I used to be involved in leadership for my unit. And I know that it takes faculty efforts to get things to make things work. And then I know that there's a constant push and pull between making sure that we're making good decisions in terms of how faculty time should be spent in those efforts, but also that faculty need to step up. But, there often seems to be lots of asks, of, oh, well, you know, this falls under faculty governance, sometimes it doesn't.

This faculty member suggested that if participation in shared governance cannot be valued through monetary rewards or compensation, their time should be rewarded formally and accounted for in their overall composition of duties. This idea was also supported in the conversations by participants of the modified charrette who spoke about ideas for a differentiated course load. Participants suggested balancing course loads for those heavily involved in governance to account for the time and energy for involvement. Additionally, they felt it might

allow for unit leadership to evaluate service more closely, specifically how the overall time, talent, and effort of a unit is spent in aggregate.

Many participants felt the reward structure should occur on a local college or school level. Some noted the evaluation or promotion and tenure practices as appropriate avenues to recognize and reward dedication to shared governance. Others spoke of more tangible reward needs through time or monetary compensation. Generally, participants felt that engagement in shared governance was not adequately rewarded. One participant summarized these ideas by saying:

When it comes down to it, it's really your unit leadership that is responsible for acknowledging. And more than just in a line on your evaluation, rewarding in some way that that participation. And I don't think we fully see that yet. And that's, that is unfortunate. So [service is] really a labor of love.

In addition to voicing a desire for rewarding engagement beyond an evaluation process, this participant also acknowledged that those reward structures do not exist. They then noted that participation is actually driven by individual desire to engage in service. This notion was supported by another participant who stated, "So you have to do it, I think because of a passion and a commitment and not necessarily because there's a, that there's a reward that is offered in return." Overall, participants indicated that there are few to no rewards gained by participating in shared governance processes.

Being Engaged Effectively. Participants, particularly in the modified charrette, discussed the idea and importance of considering representation in decision making fluidly, specifically related to the issue at hand. Several participants in focus groups and interviews also shared their perceptions that faculty should be more intentionally engaged in shared governance processes that align with either their decision-making power or their specific expertise. One participant explained the idea of power allocation by stating:

And we have a clear delineation between what [faculty are] supposed to decide or participate in, and then maybe what the experts need to decide and participate in. *Then I think we're really going into shared governance. Because why should you be on a road committee? [...] As an example, like, I wouldn't want to be on a road committee. I want a civil engineer to be on a road committee, somebody who understands traffic to be on the* Why should *I* be on a road committee? Why should *I* decide about parking? I was on a parking [committee], for crying out loud, and they wanted to increase their rates. After 10 meetings, they increase their rates? I mean, okay, so if you're going to do it, don't involve me. Right? And I'll accept [the committee's decision], because it makes my life easier. [...] So which part of that belong to [faculty]? Okay. And which part belongs to the administration?

This example spoke to the desire for the participant to have their voice heard but in a meaningful way: either based on their scope of work or expertise. The sentiments from this participant were echoed by others who expressed similar frustration with being asked to engage in committees, and work groups simply to have faculty presence but then not engaged on those they felt directly impacted their work.

A Desire for Change

The third theme that emerged from the study was that of a desire for change. Participants in interviews, focus groups, and the modified charrette expressed a desire to contribute to change through shared governance at VCU. Several participants mentioned that despite the top-down management style and lack of perceived shared governance, they still felt hopeful about shared governance. One participant shared their hope for and commitment to shared governance when they said:

And, you know, with the new provost coming in, I remain, you know, I'm hopeful about how the new provost will be. But, you know, it's when you [...] had this lack of trust, then that's causing the new provost I have to work even harder. And then everything that happens is being dissected [...] I mean, I try to remain hopeful, and thinking that it can happen. And just it's, I mean, it's, it's very tiring, to be to always be like to persevere, and to just keep at it all the time. I mean, you can't let your guard down ever to make sure that our voices are being heard.

As noted above, participants' level of hope in the shared governance process was augmented through changes in leadership. This leadership change-based hope was noted by a few different participants. Another shared:

We have a new provost. And this new provost does seem to value openness and engaging faculty. So, some of my opinion is jaded because I've dealt with previous groups. But I am hopeful that that change is coming. Hope.

Participants such as these articulated a desire for change in shared governance and a renewed hope that change could be an outcome of the change that coincides with new leadership.

More generally, participants spoke about shared governance as a process that occurs over time. They also declared their commitment and ambition to bring about change. One participant said this in regards to being hopeful around the prospect for creating true shared governance:

I mean, our goal continues to be a goal almost every pretty much every year for [a] number, [the] last number of years: to work towards shared governance, true shared governance. And, and so I mean, I try to remain hopeful.

Another participant noted shared governance will help the university thrive and be successful. They said that:

The whole principle behind shared governance is that we all want to work together to make VCU a better place for faculty, staff, and students, and we want to make it be successful.

The balance of commitment and hope was true for many participants. They spoke to the continued need for engaging in governance and a yearning that their involvement in shared governance will positively impact the institution.

Another trend that emerged during the interviews and focus groups was that the expressed hopefulness often appeared as a byproduct of loyalty. There were several participants that felt that their loyalty and dedication to the university seem to spear on hopefulness of finding a shared definition of shared governance. An example of this loyalty and hopefulness came from a participant who noted that:

[I] think the reward is not something that is presented to us it has to do with, we're more engaged with feel more involved with the university, we have more pride in what we do, it becomes less of a job. You know, we're not just going to work, but we're going to participate. And that makes for a much better community feel at the university. To me,

that's where the reward is, that's what I've gotten out of it over the years is that sense of belonging, purpose.

Similarly, another participant noted, “[a] sense of trust, and, and collegiality and collaboration, and makes you feel more positive about, about your work.” Another shared they felt participation “doesn’t have to be rewarded: the outcome can be the reward.” And lastly, one participant said participating in shared governance is “also intrinsically rewarding, it feels good to be a part of changing and creating policies that you have to be held accountable for.” Participants such as these engage in governance to connect with the university, influence decisions, and leave their mark upon the institution. Overall, participants placed value in shared governance and the hope they have to engage meaningfully with the process.

Research Q3: How can Awareness of Shared Governance be Increased at the Institution?

The final question the researchers asked in the interviews and focus groups was how awareness of shared governance can be increased at colleges and universities. Additionally, the focus of the modified charrette was on generating ideas to improve shared governance at VCU and increase awareness. Examples provided by participants during interviews, focus groups, and the modified charrette confirm the findings of the literature review. The literature indicated that shared governance is not a one size fits all model. When attempting to increase the awareness of shared governance at VCU, it is important to understand the specific context, setting, and climate that impact shared governance at the institution. Increasing the awareness of shared governance requires consistent attention to the process, regular evaluation and ensuring all stakeholders are engaged.

Further analysis of the data revealed specific variables that participants spoke to that would increase awareness of shared governance at VCU. Participants’ narratives echoed many of

the best practice recommendations derived from the literature review. Two overarching themes emerged as important considerations to raise awareness of shared governance at VCU: creating collective understanding and increasing engagement.

The chart below compiles the themes and subthemes, which emerged from research question three. Two overarching themes which arise are creating collective understanding and increasing engagement. The literature and the study data support the importance of the two overarching themes in the shared governance process.

Table 4

Research Question 3: Emergent Themes, Subthemes, and Codes

<i>Research Question 3: How can Awareness of Shared Governance be Increased at the Institution?</i>	Themes	Subthemes	Codes
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Common Definition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● recommendation, communication, definition, structure, silos, mixed messages, transparency
	Create a collective understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Common engagement structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● in-fighting, communication, trust, silos, structure, transparency, administration
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Common engagement expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Structure, reward, not rewarded, tenure status, silos, in-fighting, trust, HR, risk
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● University structure and engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● definition, reward, not rewarded, devalued,

		administration, top-down decisions, expendable, structure, silos
Increasing Engagement	● Building trust	● trust, distrust, wanting trust, lack of faculty knowledge, administration, communication, transparency, top-down decisions, power, decision making, risk, retribution
	● Increasing communication	● communication, transparency, trust, structure, power, top-down decisions, decision making, administration, recommendation, hopefulness
	● Increasing transparency	● communication, lack of communication, trust, distrust, administration, transparency, mixed messages, power, not included, structure

Creating a Collective Understanding

The research informed us that shared governance practices are hardly consistent among institutions because of the uniqueness among each university. Shared governance systems may be set up to include certain stakeholders to be used at different times. One of the participants explained how they feel shared governance needs to be better understood at VCU:

I think clear institutional guidelines for what shared governance looks like, at the different stages within the university at the college school department level, could be helpful. Because what I see happening sometimes is that without those institutional guardrails, individual units are able to use shared governance to create systems that exclude certain types of faculty from the process.

As noted, shared governance needs to be made clearer before it can be effectively enacted. One way to ensure the “guardrails” are in place is to ensure a common definition of shared governance at VCU.

Requires A Common Definition. The literature outlined the importance of developing a common institutional definition of shared governance as a critical first step. This is due to the fact that shared governance can hold multiple meanings and conflicting understandings of operational expectations. Participants in the focus groups and interviews also supported the need for a common definition, and the current lack thereof, in their responses. Of the respondents, 57.5% (n=23) articulated the need for a common definition to be developed and enacted across the institution.

In their approach to articulating a need for a definition, many participants offered their own specific understanding and interpretations of shared governance, further demonstrating the variety of meanings across the institution. While the supposed definitions were largely similar in their overarching values and ideals, they each demonstrated just how nuanced the ideas within the overarching definition can be. Specifically, some of the differences of note were that some participants referred to the certain stakeholders but not others, some suggested certain structures, some offered definitions to define who should have the power over certain types of decisions,

and many offered specific examples of committee work or task force participation as their view of shared governance.

Participants echoed the theme from the literature that the act of defining shared governance collectively and ensuring consistent interpretation is challenging. Statements from many of the participants directly spoke to their experience lacking a clear definition of shared governance at VCU. One participant shared, “I do think it’s unclear really what shared governance is. [...] I feel like I have a sense of what is supposed to be but that’s not always what seems to be actually playing out.” Another participant similarly asserted, “there’s a lot of discussion about, you know, shared governance, yeah, we gotta have it or whatnot. But it’s kind of like, well, what, what does it really mean? What does it look like?”

The study participants vocalized the lack of a common definition and understanding of how to enact it creates a barrier to their engagement in effective shared governance at the institution. One participant offered “I think cleaner definitions of what shared governance is, would be a starting point so that we’re all operating from the same definition of shared governance.” Another stated, “We talk about faculty governance as this very important thing. And yet, we don’t know what it is.” A final participant offered “I think it’s really just making sure that there’s a shared universal understanding of what it means to VCU.” The participants specifically noted the need to generate a shared definition at the institution that could be integrated at all levels.

The participants' examples confirm the importance of a common definition to understanding shared governance at the institution. However, a definition alone is not enough to ensure shared governance is understood at the institution. One participant summarized this by suggesting, “[make] sure that there’s, you know, there are some common definitions. [...] But,

you know, besides some shared definitions, that there are some shared expectations.” Additional attention should also be paid to outlining how the definition is enacted at the institution and providing specificity to the language.

Requires Common Engagement Structures. Participants echoed the best practice suggestions for structure. Specific to the best practice of regular review of processes, one participant offered, “whether it would make sense to change the structure on the program level or at the university level, I just think it would be good to look at that and analyze it in a systematic way yearly.” This individual noted that without a regular review of the structure, it is difficult to accurately assess what changes should be made and on which level.

Additionally, the literature suggested the structure should be inclusive of many stakeholders that allows for a wide input across all stakeholders and a fluid delineation of decision-making power. One participant said their thoughts on the various stakeholders through the following example:

There is some, like, hierarchy. Right? So I think it should be explained, like, I think it would work better if you said, okay, these are the opportunities. Right? So, you know, within the departments, you know, all the faculty are supposed to be involved in the curriculum and the hiring decisions on who teaches what class. Right? And in the college, you know, these are the opportunities where the faculty give input. Right? And these types of decisions have to be run through the shared governance can't be made without, you know, sort of, I guess that's the question, you have to decide what is [...] shared governance? Each side approved something? Or [is] shared governance, really the opportunity to, for the faculty to communicate to the administration?

This participant noted the power dynamic as a hierarchical structure but sought clarity on how different stakeholders could understand how to engage and their respective scope of influence.

The requisite for a common structure emerged as a theme across the focus groups, interview, and modified charrette participants, particularly as many participants recounted concern for inconsistencies in university processes and structures across academic units. In the focus group setting, in particular, it was a common occurrence for participants to engage with one another about how certain processes are approached across their respective units and then request to follow up and share information.

Requires Common Engagement Expectations. It became evident from participant narratives that each college or school at the institution has different engagement expectations and cultures for shared governance. One participant talked about the rigor and tiered approach to shared governance within their own academic unit stating:

[we have] committees and also a Faculty Council and then the larger university has Faculty Senate. But, you know, what kind of power [do] those organizations actually have? I don't know that people feel like there was a powerful organization. And they may be right. So I don't know how likely faculty are to bring it to their, you know, sort of, I think those are the bodies that are supposed to do those things. But if they're not empowered, then faculty aren't going to bother to go to them

Interestingly, despite the varying unit-based approaches to structures of shared governance, both participants expressed doubt in the ability for faculty within their unit to effectively engage in shared governance at the institution.

Participants in focus groups, interviews, and the modified charrette spoke to the barriers created by differing unit-level structures. Many noted the challenge in communicating across

faculty members. Participants of the modified charrette identified that inconsistent structures created silos and created unnecessary hurdles to engage faculty across units. Varied structures lead to inconsistent experiences with shared governance, ambiguity, and contributed to frustration that was voiced by many participants. As such, participants in all settings articulated how differing expectations of faculty engagement created barriers to collaborative and consistent participation. One participant offered:

another component of shared governance is, it's particularly challenging in cross disciplinary environments. So as we talk all about moving to more cross disciplinary collaboration, and in a unit like mine. [...] But like, I mean, I report five ways. So I report to four Dean's and the provost and have five different groups, right? So shared governance across different units within the same school and college might be challenging, but what about when it's between two colleges or schools, who are trying to work together towards a joint degree program, for example, or a joint appointment?

Participants noted the differing groups created challenges in remaining informed. The variety of groups means reliance upon a representative liaison for updates. One participant in particular noted that without a strong liaison structure they would not be informed.

there are so many different groups and departments in there. Now, in the past couple years, our representative has started coming back and, like, sharing the, I guess, the summary of what's been going on in the meetings. But as an individual, I have no idea.

This participant's experience called for the need for shared structures or positions to share information back with individual faculty members. Another participant saw the generalized structural differences as a suggestion for additional exploration by stating:

And then kind of thinking about the differences between all the different units and the

variety of types of units and programs that we have here. I don't know if it's possible to have more standardization among the different areas. Maybe I think that would be an interesting thing to explore. Whether that is a good idea or not, I don't have an opinion on it right now. But it's just something like what you're doing versus what I'm doing. [...] Like, there's just such a wide variety of programs here. And whether it would make sense to change the structure on the program level or at the university level, I just think it would be good to look at that and analyze it in, like, in a systematic way.

These examples demonstrate the desire expressed by participants for a common structure, or structures, for shared governance across the institution.

Similar to ideas espoused by focus group and interview participants, the variety of differences in structures across schools and colleges was a poignant topic of conversation with the participants of the modified charrette. Charrette participants noted similar concerns related to differences in the formal structures across the academic units. However, charrette participants expanded upon this idea to include conversation about the varied expectations and rules for faculty to become engaged. Specifically, one participant noted that their school does not allow term faculty to participate in certain forms of governance. Another participant offered in opposition, their school relies heavily upon term faculty. The group discussed the challenges laden in both approaches. One prohibits a group of faculty from engaging and limits their voice in informing institutional decision-making processes. The other places undue burden on a specific group of faculty who often carry higher administrative loads. The modified charrette participants discussed the desire to not only standardize the structures across units but also to create more consistent expectations and avenues for faculty to engage.

Participants within the focus groups and interviews did not discuss the varied unit-based engagement eligibility requirements as the charrette participants did. However, participants in the focus groups and interview did note there was a need to standardize engagement structures. Some examples they discussed included the creation of a standard structure for curriculum review, search committee composition, and promotion and tenure committees. Specifically, the idea of outlining who, and how many, faculty are engaged at each stage of the process. Similarly, they recommended delineating input roles from decision-making roles and standardizing the approach so faculty are aware of their expectations and decision-making power when participating. For example, one participant noted:

I think there's a high level of variability in what that looks like in departments and decisions by different administrators. [...] I think that some level of institutional guidelines around what shared governance looks like in the hiring process, for example, would provide some consistency around what shared governance in things like hiring looks like. You know, is there a standard policy around shared governance requires that any administrator that makes a hire has to provide a statement of why that candidate was chosen? Or the list of the top finalists? Or if I don't, I'm not trying to decide it for anybody. But I think that that would provide some consistency.

It was evident that participants are aware of differences between units and struggle to engage in shared governance across units and across the institution, in part, due to these differences.

University Structure and Engagement. Beyond the theme of requiring a more consistent structure to unit-level governance, many participants discussed the need to define a university wide structure. Engagement expectations were specifically supported in the narrative of participants who stated a desire to expand engagement opportunities and ensure faculty are

aware of how to become involved. Generally, participants felt like increased participation in shared governance would enhance the practice. One participant offered “I feel we would all benefit if there was just greater buy-in from, like, the overall community at VCU to be engaging.”

Several participants noted that engagement should include stakeholders beyond faculty members. One stated:

We can improve shared governance, this is something that the faculty have to work together. And shared governance is not just for faculty, but it's also for staff, they also have a role to play in this and [...] they should be unified in their effort to improve the shared governance here, because we all need to have certain freedom, certain academic freedom faculty, staff, and even students, all of them.

Another participant similarly offered:

I don't think faculty can accomplish shared governance alone. Like by definition, that's not *shared*. If it only represents *one* class of worker, it's not good. So I think a real functional shared governance process would have to include Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, and student government as a decision-making body that has impact. And that would mean like some university-wide bylaws on what administration's role to those bodies would be and what the circumstances are under which those bodies could affect the decisions made by upper administration.

This particular example helps demonstrate the desire for a comprehensive review of the current structure: not only does it request the review of the governing bodies but also how they work in relation to one another.

The need to involve and engage university stakeholders is an important part of shared governance expressed in the literature and the lived experience of faculty at VCU. One participant indicated the structural change as being critical to the success of shared governance at VCU when saying “without actual structural changes to governance at the university, would actually exacerbate some existing problems, which is cherry picking, who gets supported based on how they participate.”

As evidenced across many of the examples, the lack of a unified and defined structure creates as many systemic concerns as concerns grounded in distrust and doubt. Faculty view structure as a means to define and develop rules of engagement for shared governance at VCU. The concerns raised by participants indicate that the lack of standardized structures create feelings of distrust for faculty. The differences in how schools and colleges across the university create structures also created concern around the consistent application of processes participants assumed to be standardized such as search processes or promotion and tenure.

Overall, it was clear from multiple participants that for shared governance to work properly, all stakeholders must be able to engage in generating input, outline decision-making processes, identify the decision makers, and allow for feedback from the university community to feel connected to and engaged with the operations. One participant summed this sentiment up by stating:

When you think of shared governance done right, that's how it is. It's sort of the administration thinking, I have the mindset. And I've heard a former president, another institution say this [...] institution runs well, will be at its best, when, you know, we're all in it together to run the institution [...] We're making decisions, you know, the administration, I mean, President, you know, and approvals, they, of course, are harder

for that reason to make the ultimate final decision. But you would hope that there will be, you know, as part of their process for making decisions that they would bring in multiple stakeholders. And that would include faculty to be part of that shared governance, you know, that they'd have, you know, some input.

Shared governance in practice and through the literature is supported by common structures that allow stakeholder engagement across all stages of the process and clearly delineate between input, decision making, and feedback. In recounting their experiences with the absence of common structures, participants often also discussed the impact to feelings about shared governance. Participants commonly connected the lack of a commonly defined shared governance structure at the university level with the creation of doubt and distrust.

Increasing Engagement

Increasing connection to shared governance is an important piece of increasing awareness. Participants articulated experiences about their engagement with shared governance and their perceptions of why others engage or do not engage in governance. Some of the key categories that emerged related to increasing engagement were increasing: trust, communication, and transparency. These three categories were widely discussed and valued by participants.

Building Trust. Trust is a cornerstone of engagement, and trust emerged as a key theme from the qualitative data with 70% (n=28) of participants discussing the concept of trust related to their experiences with shared governance at VCU. The notion of trust is closely tied to the earlier findings of faculty feeling valued through respect and trust. Generally, participants recounted a general lack of trust, their expectations for trust, desire for increased trust, concern that administration did not trust faculty, and an overarching distrust for administration. Participants also relayed personal encounters that yielded distrust due to experienced and

observed retribution. Accordingly, when faculty spoke about their experiences engaging in shared governance processes, many cited fear of retribution, involvement-based risk, and a generalized lack of trust as barriers to faculty engagement. Emotions related to distrust in the VCU shared governance process included feelings of marginalization, frustration, anger, and apathy.

Faculty in the study broadly discussed a culture of trust as critical to shared governance. Some spoke to the idea that adjusting institutional culture occurs over a great deal of time, particularly to establish and build trust among faculty. One participant discussed the culture of trust as a tradition of shared governance and desire for faculty to engage freely. This participant offered the following related to the absence of trust embedded within the culture at VCU:

one of the things that's core at all [of] this is trust. And that, to me, as a faculty member, it's very, very disappointing. That there does not seem to be, I don't think an atmosphere of trust when shared governance is considered

Many of the focus groups and interviews alike centered on the absence of and desire to establish a culture of trust at the institution.

Many participants spoke to the need to build trust among faculty as a necessary step to improve shared governance. However, some faculty expressed concern that the lack of trust could possibly be impacting areas outside of the climate of shared governance. Specifically, one such participant offered:

The first thing that needs to happen is that we need to, there needs to be a lot of work done to rebuild a feeling of trust across all stakeholders. I mean, between faculty, staff, and administration. And I'm like, one thing I think that I, I'm hoping is that the students

don't realize all the problems that are happening outside the classroom. I mean, maybe they do, but I'm hoping that they don't really know all the issues that have been going on.

This participant shared a need to develop a culture of trust across stakeholders with concern for their engagement but also conveyed concern for student perception. It is evident that participants expressed concern for how trust among faculty and administration might impact the student experience. Another offered that increased engagement in shared governance and inviting more to participate might increase trust by stating:

there needs to be a sense of trust built and one of the ways that that happens is to let voices be heard, you know, and, and I mean for when our voices are being heard to feel like, that they are really [being] listened to.

The idea of sharing more information, often verbalized by participants as transparency, came up many times in the study. Specific to creating a culture of trust, the idea of transparency occurred on four instances related to trust. One participant offered:

just feeling like there's a lack of transparency, definitely just, it gives me an overall impression that there's less shared governance, because I can't see where the decisions are coming from I, you know, I don't ever feel or know if, like, my feedback or feedback was heard at all, we just see the final decision. So it, at least, gives me the impression that there is less shared governance.

This participant's example demonstrates their experience of doubting the shared governance process by not receiving transparent communication related to feedback and decision making.

In another similar example, one participant spoke about the lack of transparency as feeling secretive. "And when they aren't able to recognize when being secretive about decision making could actually be harmful to the process of shared governance. That's when that tendency

towards secrecy could become problematic.” This participant’s experience suggests that when decision makers are not transparent, they are perceived as hiding something and ultimately harm trust in the shared governance process. The idea of transparency was connected with trust and influenced how faculty felt about the shared governance process. It is important to also consider how the idea of communication, as a whole, impacts the shared governance process.

Increasing Communication. Shared governance is a process that requires regular and clear communication channels between all university stakeholders. By increasing communication throughout the process, stakeholders have more information and are able to engage more regularly. As such, communication was one of the most consistent and pervasive themes in the study as both a primary concern for faculty, second only to the concept of “top-down decisions”. Seventy-eight percent of participants ($n=31$) spoke about communication as a central component of their experience with the practice of shared governance at VCU. Additionally, “communication” was the most popular code to co-occur with other popular threads within the data: “communication” had 25 co-occurrences with “structure,” 24 co-occurrences with “top-down decisions”, 18 co-occurrences with “administration” and 14 co-occurrences with “recommendation.” Participants not only clearly expressed their opinions for the need for communication within shared governance.

Initially, participants expressed a general lack of communication. One participant noted the absence of communication as the central cause for concern related to shared governance by stating:

here at VCU, the communication always doesn't happen. Which is bad because that's where everything should begin. [...] it'd be reflected in the outcome. And that's, I think, often where things fall apart. Where, you know, first of all, if you have constituencies

that you didn't even consider, that you probably should have. Then they're not happy.

And then they're really not happy at the end of the process

Additionally, participants voiced confusion and differing opinions around who they expect to receive communication from. In all settings, participants indicated the idea of generalized or “bulk” VCU communication channels such as the telegram or VCU News updates were not sufficient. This was especially true when communicating calls for input or relaying the outcome of decisions. In several focus groups, interviews, and the modified charrette the example of Telegram being used to notify faculty of a call for open response to proposed policy changes was noted as ineffective. In many instances the participants responded that the responsibility lies with the administration. One participant stated:

I think that there needs to be continuous, constant dialogue between the different levels in the university. I just have a sense that, you know, I might be able to get my Dean's ear. [...] I wouldn't have any thought at all about ever trying to get the Provost's ear and getting the president's ear would be, you know, an impossible task. And I think that [...] it's on those guys to reach down to departments, to schools, to engage those groups on a pretty constant basis. That, I don't think happens. I don't see [that] happening.

Many participants shared their experiences with not knowing who to reach out to or how to engage in shared governance processes. One participant noted “Is our voice Faculty Senate? How do we contact them? Or how do we even know when or how to contact them? You know, can we? I have no idea.” Another participant saw the confusion around communication as a significant barrier to faculty engaging in shared governance at VCU.

I don't know who I would reach out to other than just, there's someone else in my department I can trust to ask about. But, like, you know, in a more formal sense. Or

maybe, like, other units where you don't have someone who knows about it. [...]I'm, like, I guess I'll just keep that thought to myself, because I have no idea who to reach out to or how or if it would be worthwhile in the first place. So, yeah, I do feel like that's a pretty significant barrier.

Participants shared examples where they were unaware of opportunities to participate, issues being discussed, and how to express interest to share their input in a process. Faculty spoke about a lack of communication around topical issues, awareness, and how to engage. “You know, how do we know what's even being discussed to provide feedback in the first place? How do I know when we meet? How would I ever find out how to join any of these things?” This particular participant noted the ambiguity of many of the specific components others shared: what to provide feedback on, opportunities to participate, and a general sense of absence of communication. The narratives from participants exemplified the general lack of regular information sharing from consistent channels.

In addition to examples of the lack of communication about current issues and conduits for engagement, faculty indicated their desire for increased communication. Some faculty made the distinction that they did not need to be involved directly in either the input sharing or decision-making process, rather that the act of receiving communication about institutional updates allows them to feel engaged and supported. Connected to the previously articulated sentiments of increasing trust, some participants offered that sharing more information about processes and decision making might increase trust and lead to increased engagement.

when an administrator lets everybody know that that's what has happened. And the process has a little more faith and buy in on the decision. Also, there's a little more

confidence that future decisions would follow that sort of process and people will be a little more engaged in future endeavors.

The idea that sharing more detailed and frequent information about processes was seen as a way increase confidence in shared governance and ultimately a means to garner faculty members' trust.

Participants spoke about regular communication, opinion seeking, and transparent communication as methods to ensure faculty voice is represented and considered in decision making. In the examples, faculty wanted to see more communication as a verb, indicating dialogue and invitation for active engagement, rather than a noun that passively states the outcome or decision. One participant emphatically said this by stating "We need more information about how decisions are being made, rather than the decision being made and informed after the fact that a decision has been made. And I think that's the key."

One participant offered, "sometimes you give feedback and you don't ever hear an answer at all." Another stated, "sometimes we hear something. Sometimes you get an email. And sometimes, nothing." Lastly one participant said "sometimes you give feedback and you don't ever hear an answer at all. [It] feels like information doesn't matter. The way it's disseminated makes you feel like the engagement didn't matter." One participant summarized the experience of opportunities for faculty to communicate input but not feeling the communication was valued by stating:

[I] think we are invited to express our opinion. [...] I think there is the veneer of our opinions being valued. And I think the current administration has invited a lot of input. And that's completely disregarded. You know, and there have been really specific

instances of that. So I think they'll say, yeah, we really want to hear your voice. But our voices really aren't heard.

Faculty expressed emotions of frustration, apathy, and disappointment when they were given opportunities to communicate their opinion on a topic that ultimately was not evidenced in the outcome. In instances such as this, participants shared a desire for communication about the rationale for decision making.

Increasing Transparency. Numerous participants spoke about the desire for transparency across a variety of contexts and settings relative to communication. In looking at the narratives expressed by faculty, there were specific areas of communication that were noted with an increased desire for transparency: involvement in shared governance, explanation of the process for decision making, and rationale for the decision made. Specifically, participants indicated a desire for decision outcomes to be explained by who provided input, how it influenced the decision, and if a decision counter to faculty input was generated then rationale should be provided. One participant exemplified the connection between clear and detailed communication and faculty engagement by sharing:

There needs to be very transparent communication for shared governance. I mean, I think if faculty don't know what's happening, or if administration didn't know what was happening, for that matter, but I think it tends to go the other way. But, you know, I think that faculty needs to be made aware of things.

Participants such as this indicated a desire for increased communication and articulation related to shared governance processes.

Similarly, participants emphasized the need for clear delineation of decision-making power as important in the shared governance process. Participants indicated they felt

communication would be more transparent if they understood the scope of the decision and the stakeholders' respective influence on the matter. Largely, these comments expressed a desire to specifically see how faculty voice was considered in the process. One participant stated "What part [of the decision] is administrative? What part of that did [faculty] say?" Another participant similarly valued knowing the opinions expressed by various stakeholders "if it's shared governance, then there's going to be a distinct announcement of how faculty voices were included in that" Another participant stated "it's very difficult to gauge how much of a decision was predetermined, and how much of a decision was influenced by the [faculty's] report." For some participants, such as these, it helped them understand which perspectives influenced the decision.

The communication disseminated at the end of a shared governance process was particularly important to participants. Concern for lack of communication at the end of a process was evidenced by one faculty member who shared "once that decision is made, there really isn't any explanation that goes down to faculty." Participants focused not only on the need for communication to occur at the end of a process, but also, what should be included. "Usually [we get] some communication [at the end of a shared governance process] but it's not effective. No 'why' is shared." This request was increasingly vocalized when the decision seemed different from the perceived faculty opinion. One participant offered:

oftentimes with the decision making, there's not a lot of feedback. If a decision is made, contrary to the faculty recommendation, there's also not a tremendous amount of transparency about information that went into that decision making. The faculty involved in it, you know, the task forces, the working groups, those faculty have the information. But it does not trickle down, out of those committees.

Many participants expressed frustration with the decision-making process. Some qualified that their frustration was largely focused around the lack of open and detailed communication at the end of a process. One participant summarized this by stating:

Even if it was something, like, the provost is going to make the decision. And he's going to say, 'I'm making this decision. And I understand that it doesn't actually fall in line with what you guys are saying or what you guys are recommending and here's why.'

The desire from faculty to understand the rationale for decisions, and to see how their feedback was invited and incorporated in the process was a primary concern for communication.

The practice of shared governance at the institution requires regular, open, and transparent communication between all university stakeholders. Specifically, participants noted the desire for increased communication and increased awareness of how to participate in shared governance processes. Additionally, they requested more detailed information be provided in the communication at the conclusion of a shared governance process. Some of the recommended components include information about who was engaged, opinions considered, and the rationale for the final decision.

Chapter Five: Discussion

Shared governance is an ambiguous term that holds multiple definitions for faculty members at VCU and the application of a shared governance process is even more enigmatic. Even the AAUP's introduction of its historical, 1966 statement on shared governance, which outlines the definition of the term and its relativity to university stakeholders, acknowledges the absence of standard suggestions for implementation. "It is not intended that the statement serve as a blueprint for governance on a specific campus or as a manual for the regulation of controversy among the components of an academic institution" (AAUP, 2015, para. 2). This study, requested by the VCU AAUP chapter, sought to understand shared governance at VCU through three research questions:

1. What is shared governance as understood through relevant literature and practice?
2. What are the current faculty perceptions of shared governance at VCU?
3. How can awareness of shared governance be increased at the institution?

Research consisting of a comprehensive literature review, eight focus groups with 29 participants, 11 individual interviews, and a modified charrette yielded data that described the collective understanding and perceptions of shared governance at VCU.

The research findings indicated the concept of shared governance does not have a singular definition nor a singular practice of application. As such, the literature offered a variety of definitions and considerations to inform a set of best practices (Bahls 2014; Cramer 2017; Gerber 2014; Johnston, 2003; LaForge 2020). When coupled with the articulated experiences of VCU faculty from the narrative research, two distinct categories for recommendations emerged from this study: structural recommendations and cultural recommendations. This chapter will

share the researchers' perspectives, offer structural and cultural recommendations for practice, and suggestions for future research on the topic.

Summary of Findings

Through the review of literature, focus group and interview data, and a modified charrette, researchers identified a series of findings related to how faculty at VCU experience shared governance. The data collected across all components of this study provided a robust understanding of faculty perceptions of shared governance at VCU and ideas to increase awareness at the institution. In the findings, the researchers thematically analyzed the data in response to each of the three research questions.

Research question one was posed in order to understand shared governance through relevant literature and practice. The literature review indicated there are a variety of definitions and interpretations of shared governance across institutions. The bottom line is, a common definition should be adopted and the mission and purpose of the institution should dictate the specific interpretation and application of shared governance. Best practices were identified through the literature to ensure effective implementation of shared governance. The literature review findings were supported by the study participants' voices who articulated a need to further understand shared governance and its practice at VCU. The thematic analysis of the narrative data used to understand research questions two and three is visualized below in Table 5.

Table 5*Themes, Subthemes, and Codes Emerged from the Narrative Research*

Research Question 2: What are the current faculty perceptions of shared governance at VCU?	Themes	Subthemes	Codes
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top-down decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • administration, administrative bloat, top-down decisions, structure, silos, trust, distrust, transparency, communication, not-included, power, decision making
	Too Much Administrative Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Futile governance structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wanting trust, distrust, transparency, structure communication, frustration, apathy, disconnected, tenure status, not-included, not-heard, perception, power, decision making
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bylaws and constitutions not followed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • structures, silos, not included, tenure, frustration, communication, transparency
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being valued 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • perception, not included, not heard, not agreed with, devalued, apathy, disconnected, communication, expendable
	Devalued Faculty Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High risk, low reward (fear of retribution, apathy from lack of trust, lack of reward) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • perception, reward, not rewarded, anger, frustration, apathy, tenure status, administration, silos, lack of faculty knowledge, retribution, intimidation,

			marginalization obstructive, risk, human resources, trust, distrust, wanting trust
		● Being engaged effectively	● perception, disconnected, structures, silos, communication, not rewarded, decision- making, lack of faculty knowledge
	A Desire for Change		Hopefulness, structures, communication, trust, distrust, power, retribution, risk, recommendation, lack of communication, transparency
<i>Research Question 3: How can Awareness of Shared Governance be Increased at the Institution?</i>	Themes	Subtheme s	Codes
		● Common Definition	● recommendation, communication, definition, structure, silos, mixed messages, transparency
		● Common engagement structure	● in-fighting, communication, trust, silos, structure, transparency, administration
	Create a collective understanding	● Common engagement expectations	● Structure, reward, not rewarded, tenure status, silos, in-fighting, trust, HR, risk
		● University structure and engagement	● definition, reward, not rewarded, devalued, administration, top-down decisions, expendable, structure, silos
		● Building trust	● trust, distrust, wanting trust, lack of faculty knowledge,

		administration, communication, transparency, top-down decisions, power, decision making, risk, retribution
Increasing Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • communication, transparency, trust, structure, power, top-down decisions, decision making, administration, recommendation, hopefulness
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing transparency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • communication, lack of communication, trust, distrust, administration, transparency, mixed messages, power, not included, structure

Research question two delved into faculty perceptions of shared governance at VCU. Themes that emerged from interviews, focus groups and the modified charrette centered on the themes of too much administrative power, faculty engagement in shared governance, and a desire for change. These larger themes emerged from common experiences from participants while secondary themes about lack of reward, apathy resulting from the lack of trust, fear of retribution and decision-making power also emerged.

Research question three centered on how awareness of shared governance can be increased at VCU. The study concluded that shared governance can be increased at VCU through two overarching themes: creating collective understanding and increasing engagement. Study participants spoke about the need for a common definition, common structures, and common engagement opportunities to create a collective understanding. To increase engagement, participants noted the need to build trust, increase engagement, and increase transparency

through involvement, processes, and rationale. Both of the overarching themes were identified as focal areas to increase shared governance at VCU.

The information gathered from the literature review and the narrative data from those who participated in the study outlined common themes and experiences that should be considered further. The researchers used the study findings to inform their recommendations for this study. The recommendations from the findings across the three research questions can best be understood through two overarching categories: structure and culture. Structural components spoke to the need to standardize systems, workflow, and communication methods between university stakeholders. Cultural components spoke to increasing trust, engagement, and the value of engaging in shared governance.

Recommendations

Data collected from the literature review, focus groups, interviews, and modified charrette provided a robust understanding of faculty perceptions of shared governance at VCU and ideas to increase awareness at the institution. The analysis of the data identified thematic findings related to how faculty at VCU understand and perceive shared governance. The themes across all three research questions yield two overarching categories to consider increasing awareness and improving the practice of shared governance at VCU: structure and culture.

Structural recommendations are built from the findings related to systems, workflows, and communication methods between university stakeholders. Cultural recommendations encapsulate themes of trust, engagement, and the value of shared governance. In the end, VCU needs to make a set of structural and cultural changes to best support the systems and execution of shared governance. In order to accomplish the task of increasing awareness of shared governance at VCU the researchers make the following recommendations.

Structural Changes

According to the data, clarity and standardization around shared governance is lacking at VCU. Common structures will ensure stakeholders approach governance with shared language, ideals, and procedural understanding. In moving forward, it will be important to assess the alignment of structures, definitions, and efficiencies of processes. Once common structures are established, best practices further recommend that the structures and regulatory documents should be evaluated on a regularly scheduled basis (Bahls, 2014; Cramer, 2017, Quarless & Barrett, 2017). In response to the operational concerns from the data, the researchers recommend four specific structural changes for consideration: develop a university-wide shared government policy, review and assess the institution's shared governance bodies, develop standard structures and bylaws, and augment communication channels.

1. Develop a University-Wide Shared Governance Policy

- a. A collective and common policy to outline shared governance at VCU will reduce confusion, manage expectations, and ultimately allow all stakeholders to understand what is included in shared governance at VCU and what is not.
- b. The creation of a shared governance policy will be critical to ensure effective implementation moving forward. Components of this policy should include the creation of a common definition and a shared governance policy webpage:

i. Create a Common Definition of Shared Governance

1. Relevant literature should serve as a foundation for the definition and augmented by institutional considerations such as mission, vision, and values. For example, a cumulative definition of shared governance as generalized from the literature can be defined as the

collective responsibility among faculty and administration for university decisions and general policies that reflect customs and practices of the institution (Laforge, 2020; Cramer, 2017; AAUP, 2015; Bahls 2014; Gerber, 2014; Jones, 2011).

2. The creation of the common definition should be a collaborative process engaging many stakeholders, including perspectives from across the institution. The development of the definition, itself, can serve as a process to role model aspirational components of shared governance at VCU. Even within a proposed cumulative definition, there are many ambiguous terms that would require clearer definition at the institutional level. For example, in the term *collective responsibility*, the institution must define who is included or excluded in the word “collective” and what does responsibility look like as a whole and by individual stakeholder units? How is responsibility and decision-making authority dispersed among the collective stakeholders? Study participants and literature confirmed the importance of commonly defining shared governance, outlining standardized structures and expectations for how university members engage (Cramer, 2017, Bahls 2014).

ii. *Create a Shared Governance Webpage*

1. A university webpage for shared governance would remedy many of the structural concerns and simultaneously assist in enhancing the culture of shared governance at VCU.
2. The webpage could serve as a centralized repository for many of the standardized guiding documents and processes developed for the institution (such as the definition, formal governance bodies, and process mapping across stakeholders).
3. Additionally, the webpage could serve as a centralized location for gathering input, engaging faculty and staff across the institution, and reporting information. More dynamic information could be housed in a dashboard format to report information and share feedback with the VCU community in a timely manner.

2. Review and Assess the Institution's Shared Governance Bodies.

- a. Common structure and engagement expectations are important to ensure that all members of the university know how decisions are made and how to engage in a governance process stated the importance of defining shared governance, delineating the processes for input and decision making, and specifically outlining how shared governance is then enacted at the institution as a best practice (LaForge, 2020, Honu, 2018, Cramer 2017; Bahls 2014). Specifically, Bahls (2014). Furthermore, the literature addressed that the decision-making process should be transparent and collectively defined to determine which decisions should be held by which stakeholders (Barrett & Quarless, 2017; Bahls 2014; Gerber, 2014, Johnston, 2003).

- b. A review should be conducted of the institution's formalized decision-making bodies such as Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, University Counsel, and Student Government. As was evident from the modified charrette, it is important to assess these bodies to determine if they adequately capture the current institutional needs.
- c. A regular review cycle should be determined for the shared governance policy and outlined within the procedural documents generated. Quarless and Barrett (2017) noted the regular review of the shared governance structures and processes as a best practice to ensure efficiency and effectiveness over time.

3. Develop Standard Structures and Bylaws for Governance Across Units

- a. A review of the governance structures across specific colleges and schools should be conducted. The study indicated the current governance structures vary widely in their presence (or lack thereof), rigor, and scope of influence across VCU's many colleges and schools. The findings also indicated there were different eligibility expectations for faculty to serve departmentally or institutionally. Expectations for engagement should be standardized to ensure equitable experiences and accessibility (Barrett & Quarless, 2017; Deemer et al., 2017; LaForge, 2020).
- b. Additionally, a review of the institution's ad hoc or constituent-based bodies such as AAUP, United Campus Workers, and Black Education Association should also be completed as the study revealed that faculty engage differently with each of these groups. Consequently, different groups of faculty may be drawn to engage with different governance structures. The review will be important to understand

what governance structures currently exist at VCU and how those groups interact with one another and the university at large. The review would assess if the groups adequately meet the needs of VCU and ensure equity-minded representation in governance bodies in the future.

- c. The regulatory documents from each unit such as constitutions and bylaws should be reviewed and standardized to ensure more efficient and consistent operations. The study highlighted wide variability across units with regard to regulatory documents. Some units had no formally documented bylaws or constitutions while the units that did have these documents were not consistent, creating barriers for standard expectations for engagement.
- d. All governance structures should clearly delineate the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders including the delineation of power, scope, and communication. Specifically, the literature outlined the importance of defining who will participate in each stage of governance and who is vested with making different decisions (Bahls, 2014; Deemer et al., 2017; Quarless & Barrett, 2017; LaForge, 2020). Furthermore, the literature addressed that the decision-making process should be transparent and collectively defined to determine which decisions should be held by which stakeholders (Bahls 2014; Barrett & Quarless, 2017; Gerber, 2014, Johnston, 2003).

1. Augment Communication Channels

- a. A review of communication channels and their intended audience is recommended. This review would allow VCU to understand how communication channels are currently used and accessed. Additionally, a gap analysis would be helpful to

- understand the best channels of communication to consider in the future for specific audiences or message types. Participants in the study noted communication as a barrier to shared governance in its current existence at VCU.
- b. Increasing faculty connections across units is recommended. Participants in focus groups and the modified charrette highlighted the concern that faculty at VCU currently do not have a mechanism to communicate across units. Faculty are unable to connect with other faculty at large at the institution. With the noted inconsistencies in communication structures across schools and colleges, faculty articulated barriers in communicating with those outside their school without specific knowledge of another school's structure or via personal connections. The recommended shared governance webpage could be developed to remedy this through a section dedicated to faculty communication such as a shared posting space, listserv, interdisciplinary research, etc.
 - c. The aforementioned shared governance webpage could alleviate many of the communication concerns and ensure the dissemination of information between university stakeholders. The website could include a centralized repository for agenda minutes from colleges or schools, Faculty and Staff Senates, Board of Visitor meetings, University addresses, etc.
 - d. The final recommendation is to create a template for communicating the decision at the conclusion of a shared governance process. Participants in the study indicated a desire to see more transparency related to decision making. To improve transparency, items to consider for the communication template might include (1) the names involved parties or membership list if a standing committee, (2) information about the

input received and considerations reviewed, (3) and overview of the review process, with specific inclusion of any additional/external feedback steps, (4) the overall vote and outcome, and (5) a rationale for the decision made

Cultural Changes

Additionally, VCU should consider the following cultural changes to improve shared governance and increase engagement. Assessment of the culture should be conducted on a regular basis to understand how the proposed environment and institutional values are evidenced in lived experiences of faculty and staff. The researchers recommend four specific cultural changes for consideration: creation of a shared governance dashboard, increase trust, increase engagement, and increase the value of shared governance.

1. Create a VCU Shared Governance Dashboard

- a. The creation of a shared governance dashboard, possibly as a section of the recommended website, would allow the university to report on the state of shared governance at the institution in regular intervals. Participants noted the lack of regular and transparent communication contributed to their negative perceptions of shared governance at VCU. The literature affirmed the need for regular, open communication as a critical component of shared governance (AAUP, 2021; DeCesare, 2020; Cramer 2017; Quarless & Barrett, 2017; Bahls, 2014). A dashboard would augment the communication practices at the institution by offering more frequent updates to the VCU community.
- b. The dashboard could host space for faculty to review information and provide input if they are not engaged through a formal governing body such as Faculty Senate or their school/college council. Many participants engaged in shared governance at VCU held firm, and sometimes polarized, positions on specific topics. Increased engagement through informal means such as a dashboard, would

allow for more participation in the shared governance processes at the institution and would encapsulate the ideas of many more and possibly provide a more holistic view.

- c. Additionally, information about high level task forces, committees, and work groups could be shared on the dashboard. From the focus groups and modified charrette, information to include would be factors such as a membership list, timeline, and status updates throughout the process. Tiede et al. (2014) validated that the frequency and level of detail shared should be proportional to the variety and complexity of tasks occurring at the institution.
- d. The VCU AAUP chapter annually deploys a faculty climate survey and the results are disseminated with membership. As a component of this study, the AAUP chapter requested an edited version of the faculty climate survey (Appendix K). We recommend that the faculty climate survey results relative to shared governance be reported on this dashboard as an institutional benchmark. Whereby, the VCU community can view and monitor the climate respective to shared governance at VCU. The climate information on the dashboard could be modeled in a similar fashion to the VCU campus culture and climate dashboard maintained by the Office of Institutional Equity, Effectiveness, and Success.

1. Increase Trust

- a. Opportunities for stakeholders to interact, share information, and communicate will increase familiarity between stakeholders and help garner a sense of trust.
- b. Gittenstein (2017) noted trust as a cornerstone of shared governance when creating institutional culture. In order to increase trust pathways to develop

stronger, more collegial working relationships should be considered. Bahls (2014) confirmed the importance of strong personal and working stakeholder relationships.

- c. One recommendation is to increase trust through more frequent and detailed sharing of information and communication with other members of the university community. The literature and study participants emphasized the importance of trust in shared governance. Participants focused on examples of experiences that lacked trust as well as ideas as to how to increase trust.
- d. Participants in particular noted the lack of direct and “transparent” decision making, resulting in feelings of doubt, frustration, and apathy. Through their narrative, the desire for increased transparency specifically represented themes related to more frequent, timely, and detailed information about decision-making processes. Stronger working and personal relationships will assist in fostering the idea of shared goals, trust, and positive connections across stakeholder groups (Bahls, 2014; Jones, 2011; Severs & Labuz, 2017; Scott, 2020).

1. Increase Engagement

- a. VCU should consider opportunities to increase awareness of shared governance processes through more active methods. Specifically, we recommend actively soliciting faculty to become involved in the shared governance process. The study found that shared governance at VCU is often not a process that actively engages faculty, and requires them to seek out the information on their own. Specific attention should be placed on ensuring faculty are aware of the call for

participation to share input and provide feedback (Bahls, 2014; Cramer & Mozlin, 2017).

- b. General study participants noted they were often unaware of processes occurring until a decision was made and noted they wish to have been able to provide input, feedback, or minimally have awareness of the process and who to contact. In addition, they noted they did not know how to give input on processes or who to share input with. Participants connected to formal governance structures noted awareness for methods to share input but expressed desire to include new participants. Participants involved in governance structures and those not involved expressed a desire to include new and varied voices in the governance process.
- c. One consideration for increasing engagement is ensuring the structured governing bodies reflect the desired composition that is reflective of the VCU community. One interview participant suggested considerations to ensure a blend of returning and new members when creating committees, task forces, and within the formal institutional governing bodies. Participants in the modified charrette spoke to the idea of ensuring diverse representation across colleges/schools, faculty ranks, years of experience, and personal demographic markers such as gender and race. Ensuring the governing bodies reflect the general VCU community, ensures representative feedback and that new and diverse thoughts are included in decision-making processes.
- d. In considering composition, specifically consider who is represented and who is absent from decision-making processes. Some populations to consider specifically include faculty on the tenure track, faculty of color, as well as representation

across all schools and units. VCU prides itself on diversity, equity, and inclusion and as such this is an area to ensure engagement (VCU, 2021; VCU, 2019).

- e. Participants spoke to formal constructs that are set to help ensure diversity on committees. However participants who hold minoritized identities offered that they are often already overloaded with service opportunities. When considering composition, thought should be given to ensuring methods of inclusion in formal composition structures as well as informal opportunities for point in time input throughout the process.
- f. Consideration should be given to the creation and inclusion of training about shared governance opportunities and preparation within employee on-boarding processes. Including shared governance as part of the on-boarding process would ensure new faculty members are aware of the defined structures and become aware of how to engage in shared governance processes at VCU. Adding this component, perhaps by inviting executive officers from the Senates to speak at faculty/staff orientations would indicate the importance of their involvement in the governance process and encourages engagement across all levels of faculty.
- g. Increased opportunities for collaboration, engagement, and governance across schools/colleges will also increase engagement. Silos between units were noted as a barrier by study participants. Opportunities to break down these barriers by opening opportunities for cross disciplinary engagement should be considered.

1. Increase Value of Shared Governance

- a. Participation in shared governance processes must be demonstrated as an institutional value (Bahls, 2014; Cramer, 2017). Participants indicated that current

practices do not indicate a value is placed on shared governance. They articulated they do not receive rewards for engaging in shared governance, and many participants indicated they feel engaging is actually a risk. If shared governance is truly important to VCU then it must be valued in ways that are tangible.

- b. Options for rewards for those who meaningfully engage in shared governance should be considered. Participation in shared governance takes a great deal of time and commitment outside the scope of the expected workload. To value the time and energy formally through individual employment considerations is important. This could be achieved through several formal options: a differentiated course load for faculty who participate, additional value placed on participation in the annual evaluation processes, value within the promotion and tenure process, or a monetary bonus for engagement.
- c. The study indicated those who engage in shared governance, currently, are engaged for personal commitment: either due to the topic or to the desire to participate. As a result, governance processes often include only the opinions of those who are highly invested and may lack the opinion of the general faculty member.
- d. Additionally, we recommend further discussion around the process of promotion and tenure. Study participants noted that teaching and research contributions far outweigh service in the promotion and tenure process. An exploration of a promotion and tenure track that more highly values service as a pathway should be conducted.

- e. Outside of connecting value specifically to individual engagement and performance, institutional value must be demonstrated. VCU should consider ways to highlight and recognize contributions institutionally as well as within individual colleges and schools through communications, announcements, or recognition events for those who are involved in governance processes.

Summary of Recommendations

In order to improve shared governance at VCU, considerations should be given within two overarching categories: structure and culture. The structural recommendations focus on the development of university-wide policy, assessing the institutional governance bodies, standardizing structures and bylaws, and augmenting communication. Cultural recommendations include the creation of a shared governance dashboard, and increasing trust, engagement, and the value of shared governance.

The recommendations were generated in response to the data collected through the modified charrette, individual interviews, focus groups, and literature review. The organization of recommendations by cultural and structural changes most adequately respond to the study findings through the systems theory framework.

Systems theory is used to understand the totality of an organization through the relationships between its structures and culture (Gordon, 2021; Edwards, 2019; McLinden, 2016; Wilkinson, 2011). The study findings and subsequent recommendations speak to improvements in those two areas of the VCU system: its structure and culture. Understanding the findings of study through this framework allowed for the creation of recommendations to address the overall system by influencing the structures and cultures. As articulated by Wilkinson (2011), systems theory framework allows one to understand and change the overarching system, in this case

VCU, by discerning the context of the individual parts of the system based on their relationships to one another.

Suggestions for Future Research

Shared governance processes are complex and difficult to define, structure, and enact. Additional research on the topic would create a more robust understanding of shared governance and offer additional considerations to benefit VCU. Given the low participation rates in this study from non-tenured faculty and faculty of color, a targeted study to better understand how those groups experience shared governance is critical. Additionally, the literature indicated these groups are rapidly growing in representation across the academy. As such, additional research to the experiences of faculty of color and non-tenured faculty will be critical to understand the future of shared governance.

Future research is suggested to understand the experience of all stakeholders within the shared governance process. This study only captured the experiences of faculty members at VCU. A study to understand the administrative and staff counterparts is recommended. Similarly, the role of students within the scope of shared governance was not explored in this study and should be considered as a topic of future research.

Lastly, this study focused on the lived experiences of faculty members at one institution. It could be beneficial to conduct further research to compare structures and experiences across other institutions of higher education. This research would be helpful to gain understanding relative to differing models, how those models are experienced by stakeholders at the respective institutions, and allow for the sharing of best practices.

Researchers Perspectives

In discussing the recommendations for practice, it is important to acknowledge the unique perspectives and situations that may have influenced this study. First, all four researchers are employed as staff or administrators at VCU. This may have shaped if and how faculty participants decided to engage in the study. Additionally, the researchers' specific affiliations with particular administrative units may have influenced specific responses from participants.

Accordingly, the researchers engaged a variety of methods to limit bias. Researchers did not conduct interviews with participants with whom they had personal working relationships. Two researchers were present and served as dual moderators for all focus groups and co-reviewed the transcripts for accuracy. After the transcripts were completed they were de-identified before being uploaded to Dedoose for the coding. No sole coding occurred when reviewing the data, to ensure accurate application of codes to text and interrater reliability checks were conducted throughout the process.

The researchers approached the review of qualitative data after the completion of the literature review and were guided by etic coding. Given the nature of the project and client's desire to base the findings within a review of literature it is important to note how literature informed the analysis. While additional emic codes were identified in the process, the analysis was largely influenced by practices derived from the literature and informed the constructs of the study. Thus, it is possible that the findings were skewed or influenced by the application of etic coding.

Additionally, it is important to share observations noted by the researchers related to the process of conducting the study. While these observations are not reflected in the findings as they were not explicitly articulated in the narratives of participants, they mirror some of the

participant experiences shared related to engagement and communication. The researchers had great difficulty in disseminating the invitation for faculty to participate in the study. Researchers were not able to utilize the mass mailing through Faculty Affairs to invite faculty to engage in the study of shared governance at VCU. The Faculty Senate, as the representative governance branch of faculty, did not have a listserv to reach all full-time faculty members. Despite several attempts, there was not a unified way to send this information out to all faculty at VCU to ensure they had knowledge of the study and the opportunity to participate. Researchers relied on personal connections and multiple communication channels to disseminate information. The lack of access to centralized communication channels may further exemplify the difficulties faced when trying to communicate across units.

Lastly, it is important to acknowledge the possible impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the study. Increasing cases and university operational changes in response to the Omicron variant impacted the modified charrette and restricted participation. As VCU concludes its third academic year responding to the pandemic, it is possible individuals are feeling the effects of burnout and less likely to engage in requests for additional time or energy. Additionally, faculty participants had challenges scheduling attendance for the focus groups largely due to changing flexible work arrangements or modality barriers. While the zoom platform may have been more convenient for some participants' schedules, it also may have been difficult for participants to feel comfortable sharing, given the nature of the topic, if they utilize a common work space

Conclusion

Shared governance is a concept that holds multiple definitions and implies varied experiences for those who engage in its processes. This study utilized a systems theory framework to analyze the literature and the data collected from 29 participants involved in eight

focus groups, 11 individual interviews, and a modified charrette. The information gathered from the literature review informed the qualitative research in the protocol structures as well as the interpretation of the qualitative data utilizing etic coding. The data collected from the study offered insight into how faculty members understand and experience shared governance at VCU and identify recommendations to increase awareness at the institution. Shared governance at VCU is a timely issue and one that is ripe with opportunity.

In conclusion, shared governance plays a major role in postsecondary institutions across the country. As colleges and universities face 21st century challenges such as changes to online learning, threats to tenure status, and national debate over curriculum content, it is imperative to keep in mind that college populations are also becoming more diverse. It is necessary to regularly review, and discuss, best practices for shared governance to ensure adequate response to change and the inclusion of different perspectives. It is imperative that stakeholders utilize clear communication practices and work collaboratively to better collegiate environments across the country.

Call to Action

In a time of uncertainty coming out of a global pandemic, institutions of higher education are poised for transition and transformation. Technology is changing and impacting instructional methods in both how faculty provide material and how students wish to receive information. There are rapid changes to online and hybrid instructional formats and augmented training from private sectors and corporations alike that threaten the underpinnings of the higher educational system as a preparation for professional engagement and career readiness. Postsecondary environments that once helped prepare students are now in direct competition with corporations primed to offer apprenticeship-style environments with specialized on the job training: offering

students salaries and benefits to join the workforce sooner and without educational debt.

Attractive corporate offerings in a virtual world, coupled with an impending population-based enrollment cliff indicate that now is a critical time for the academe to ensure its future success (Campion, 2020). And the COVID-19 pandemic forced organizations to make decisions with haste, changing daily operations and redefining the very ways people interact with one another.

In this transitional time, postsecondary institutions need faculty and administration to work together to ensure the path forward allows higher education to thrive. Harvard University's Henry Rosovsky was noted in a January 2017 interview as stating "equally important for the promotion of excellence in the university is an emphasis on shared governance. The faculty needs to be involved directly in the process of running the university and in the setting of priorities." The sense of urgency for faculty to be involved in the governance of the institution has only increased. Battles over power will only cause institutions of higher education to fracture at a time when they need to be strong.

Given this urgency, we look back to systems theory to understand how to respond to the situation. As such, transformation can come when the system is working properly. According to the depiction of systems theory provided in our study, transformation occurs when all parts work together, with information flowing between all parts to ensure the relationships between areas support and reinforce one another. In higher education, this process occurs through shared governance: balancing power between university faculty and university administration to make the best policies, practices, and operations for all.

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Appendix A

AAUP RFA

Client Request for a Capstone Study (RFA)

Submitted to VCU's Department of Educational Leadership

Date: March 8, 2021

Client (organization): VCU AAUP

Contact Person(s): Everett Carpenter, Ph.D.

Director of the Nanoscience and Nanotechnology Program

Professor

President, VCU-AAUP

Contact phone and email: ecarpenter2@vcu.edu

(804) 828-7508

Sections of the Proposal:

Please answer in narrative form. Specific details will help us evaluate the project. Use as much space as necessary; most applications are several pages in length.

1. Statement of the Problem: What is the problem of practice that you wish the team to address? *Problems of practice are recognized as persistent and specific issues that impede the work of practitioners. These problems can hinder organizational responses to external challenges, create uncertainty within organizational decision-making, or reduce leadership effectiveness. These problems may require a response informed by both theory and practice (Carnegie Project for the Education Doctorate).*

The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) is a national membership organization of university instructors and researchers of all ranks that champions (or advocates for?) academic freedom and the closely allied notion of faculty governance. Most universities in the US, in one way or another, subscribe to or endorse AAUP's standards. During the Spring 2019 term, a dormant VCU chapter of AAUP was revived by a group of faculty with deep concerns about the state of both academic freedom and faculty governance at VCU.

Academic Freedom is defined by the AAUP in its "1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure," (revised and amended several times since 1940, and is explicitly adopted by many universities and scholarly associations) as "full freedom in research and in the publication of the results," "freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject," and being "free from institutional censorship or discipline" when "they speak or write as citizens." Faculty Governance is defined by AAUP (from AAUP "Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities," 1966-68 & 1990) as follows: "The faculty has primary responsibility for such fundamental areas as curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction, research, faculty status, and those aspects of student life which relate to the educational process. On these matters the power of review or final decision lodged in the governing board or delegated by it to the president should be exercised adversely only in exceptional circumstances, and for reasons communicated to the faculty."

The VCU-AAUP would like to have a comprehensive and systematic understanding of faculty perceptions and understanding of academic freedom and faculty governance at VCU. The AAUP offers a survey for evaluating shared governance. It is basically a yes-no checklist that might be a good start. A more comprehensive effort to document faculty perceptions and understanding

might include interviews, focus groups, surveys, etc. about both academic freedom and shared governance.

2. Background: What is the specific context that led to this problem of practice? Provide the context of the organization and brief overview of the circumstances that led up to the issuing of the RFA.

As the VCU chapter of AAUP is newly re-awakened, the chapter has resolved initially to raise awareness among VCU's faculty about the principles of academic freedom and faculty governance, and to encourage faculty of every rank and discipline to join us in our efforts to ensure that faculty play the fundamental role in shaping VCU's present and future that they must play at every university in the US.

VCU-AAUP believes we need to continue working on raising awareness of the chapter and to ensure that the chapter is working with good information. Therefore, working with a team of EDLP Ed.D. students during academic year 2021-22 to comprehensively and systematically document faculty perceptions and understanding of academic freedom and faculty governance is a natural and logical step for VCU-AAUP. We see it as a win-win as it would provide valuable data and information to the chapter and would be a meaningful and relevant learning experience for Ed.D. students interested in higher education leadership.

3. Resources and Support Available: What assistance will be available to the Capstone team? For example, the scope of the project may require access to data sets, documents, employees during working hours, email lists, or other research items. How will the client support the research endeavor?

The VCU-AAUP chapter will make its members available to the Ed.D. capstone team on an as needed basis. The chapter meets monthly and we would welcome attendance by any or all members of the capstone team at those meetings. As a newly re-awakened chapter, we have no other resources to offer beyond access and enthusiasm for the project. Some relevant data may be publicly available or made available by VCU.

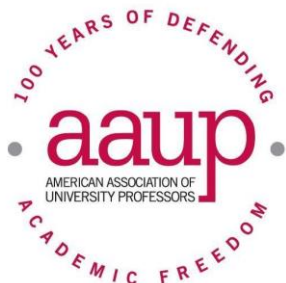
4. Expected Products and Timeline: Will the suggested timeline above be feasible? Do you have any additional requests?

In addition to and as part of a final, comprehensive report on VCU faculty perceptions and understanding of academic freedom and faculty governance, the VCU-AAUP chapter would welcome a synthesis of the foundational literature on academic freedom and faculty governance in higher education. This synthesis could serve as a literature review for the comprehensive final report and should also serve as a standalone document that the VCU-AAUP chapter could use as a white paper or as a background report that could be used to orient new and veteran faculty members alike to the issues of academic freedom and faculty governance.

We believe the timing of this project is consonant with the near-term goals and efforts undertaken by the VCU-AAUP chapter. If the standalone synthesis of the literature could be delivered at the midway point, perhaps by the beginning of the Spring 2022 semester, this would serve the needs of the VCU-AAUP chapter well.

Appendix B

AAUP Climate Survey



Faculty Climate Survey Report American Association of University Professors - Virginia Commonwealth University Chapter May 3, 2021

Executive Summary

In 2015 VCU commissioned Harvard University’s School of Education to carry out a Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey of Virginia Commonwealth University. The results of that survey showed that VCU was in the lower 33% among peer institutions in overall satisfaction in shared governance. In the absence of a follow-up survey, the VCU chapter of the American Association of University Professors sent out a faculty climate survey in spring 2021 to more than 2500 VCU faculty. There were 664 respondents for a 26% response rate. Faculty of all ranks and in every unit responded to the survey. (See appendix for details.).

The survey highlights a very troubling trend at VCU: **74% of faculty said that most or all decisions affecting them are made by administrators, and 50% said there is little or no shared governance.** In recent conversations with faculty, the level of distrust and perceived lack of shared governance is leading to burnout among faculty and contributes to disengagement from the university. This has a significant impact on the overall ability of faculty to continue to meet the educational mission and goals of the university.

Over and over again, VCU administration appears “tone deaf” when it addresses faculty concerns. Although it occurred after the survey was sent, on April 27 the Provost’s office emailed faculty a rubric for online courses. To many this was considered “a slap in the face” to faculty, with the implication that we are not making high quality online courses. We hear over and over again of the “Herculean effort” being accomplished to meet the challenges presented in the current situation (now more than a year into the global pandemic), yet seemingly in each communication there is a disturbing trend of disrespect toward the faculty and additional demands which increase our workload. We are the face of the university to the students. We deserve to be treated as highly qualified partners, not just the hired help.

Our survey revealed that only 28% of faculty said they feel supported by upper administration. Perhaps even more troubling is that 56% of faculty respondents indicated that they believe their dean's offices do not value their opinions. While there is an attempt to engage with the faculty, there is skepticism that their opinions will be considered; therefore, the faculty become dissatisfied and detached from shared governance. Almost one-third expressed fear that participation in shared governance will negatively impact their chances for promotion or tenure. Nearly all of the untenured faculty respondents expressed a reluctance to get involved with shared governance. Unfortunately, their fears might not be unfounded. We see that of the tenure-eligible faculty who have gone through the tenure and promotion process, 30% report that during the process, the dean's office overruled the recommendations of the peer committee and/or the department chair--this is, of course, in direct violation of the established university policy on tenure and promotion.

Over 60% of the non-tenure-eligible faculty report being at VCU for over eight years, indicating that VCU inappropriately and too-heavily relies on contingent labor to do jobs that should be filled by permanent employees. Three-quarters of faculty reported supporting more job security for both adjuncts and term faculty who have been employed at the university for longer than eight years, considered too long to be without greater job security or benefits. There needs to be some significant revisions to the policies for transitioning adjuncts into full-time positions and ensuring workers who remain part time earn per-credit wages commensurate with their full time peers teaching similar courses. **Faculty who have demonstrated success while working at VCU deserve a fair chance to transition to a more long-term appointment.** The current policy propagates the notion that term or adjunct faculty are "second class citizens." We have term and adjunct faculty who are doing incredibly innovative practices in the classroom (sometimes more than their tenured/tenure-eligible counterparts), but they still live year-to-year, or even semester-to-semester, wondering if they will have a job. They deserve better. We all deserve better treatment than we are currently receiving.

We, the VCU chapter of the AAUP, are seeking:

- **True shared governance where faculty voices are not just suggestions to be ignored.** There must be greater involvement and transparency in decisions, processes, and policies which impact the faculty.
- **The creation of a task force to perform a comprehensive review and make recommendations regarding the ratio of tenured and tenure-eligible faculty versus term and adjunct faculty.** Reliance on contingent faculty leads to increased strain to meet the educational and research mission of the university, as well as create a large workforce with few or no guarantees of employment stability or healthcare coverage.
- **A more fair and consistently applied evaluation process for all faculty, including annual evaluations and evaluations for tenure and/or promotion.** There is currently

an over-reliance on the opinions and judgements of administrators removed from teaching and scholarship, leading to unfair treatment of faculty during the promotion process.

- **A clear and fair pathway for our many contingent faculty to be able to transfer to tenure-eligible full time positions if they chose.** The overall educational and research mission of the university will be dramatically improved by providing greater job security and career development options for our contingent faculty.

We believe these requests are essential for VCU to be able to successfully meet its educational and research goals moving forward.

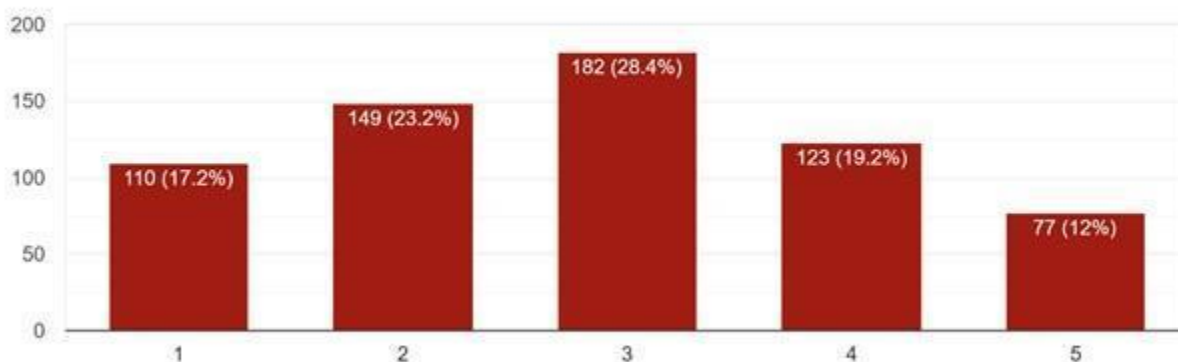
*Everett E. Carpenter, Ph.D., MBA
President of the VCU chapter of the
American Association of University Professors.*

Survey Results

Most questions responses were on a Likert scale with **1 =Strongly Disagree**, **2 = Disagree**, **3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree**, **4 = Agree**, and **5 =Strongly Agree**.

The dean of my school or college values my opinion.

641 responses

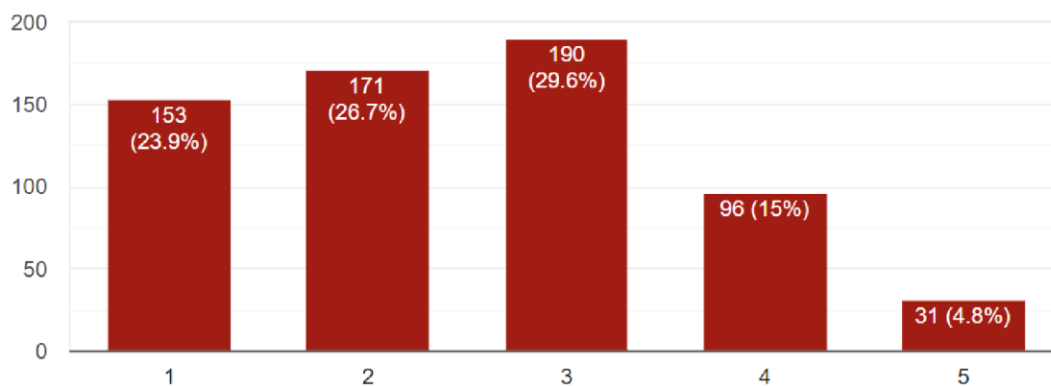


1) Shared Governance

More than forty percent of the faculty respondents disagree or strongly disagree with the statement "The dean of my school or college values my opinion." When this is broken down, there is no meaningful difference between male and female respondents. When collapsed, over 56% disagree or strongly disagree with that statement. Tenure track faculty were more likely to disagree or strongly disagree that they feel supported by their dean, as opposed to term or adjunct faculty (62%, 51%, and 52% respectively) but more of the faculty with those appointments also answered more (3 neither agree or disagree). This is troubling since it indicates that non-tenured faculty have fewer interactions with the dean's office and thus participate less in shared governance. When looking at the results by school or college, we see that the faculty in the College of Humanities and Sciences, School of Medicine, and the School of Education say they strongly disagree with the statement that their opinion is valued by their respective deans' offices. No unit reported less than 50% disagreement with the statement, meaning that overall, across VCU, the majority of faculty who responded say they are not heard by their deans' offices.

Currently, I believe that shared governance is practiced at VCU.

641 responses



Almost three-quarters (72%) of respondents disagree/strongly disagree with the statement that they believe shared governance is practiced at VCU. Nor do they say that administration follows through with shared governance when practiced: **Over 70% of the faculty say decisions within their school or college are being made entirely or mostly by administration.** It is the view of VCU AAUP that this is not *shared* governance, but at best *participatory* governance. What may be more concerning is that more than half of the faculty said they do not feel supported by upper administration. When broken down by school or college the results are very disturbing: School of the Arts (79%), School of Education (68%), and College of Humanities and Sciences (65%) feel most unheard by the administration.

VCU administration routinely says it is committed to shared governance. President Rao once said, “Shared governance at VCU is an important part of our success. It provides a forum to foster communication and engagement for the betterment of the university and the advancement of its mission.” However, shared governance is a structure and process for partnership, equity, accountability, and ownership. It puts the responsibility, authority, and accountability for practice-related decisions into the hands of the individuals who will operationalize the decision. In 1966, the AAUP jointly formulated with the American Council on Education (ACE) and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB) a statement on Government of Colleges and Universities. It states:

The faculty has primary responsibility for such fundamental areas as curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction, research, faculty status, and those aspects of student life which relate to the educational process. On these matters the power of review or final decision lodged in the governing board or delegated by it to the president should be exercised adversely only in exceptional circumstances, and for reasons communicated to the faculty. It is desirable that the faculty should, following such communication, have opportunity for further consideration and further transmittal of its views to the president

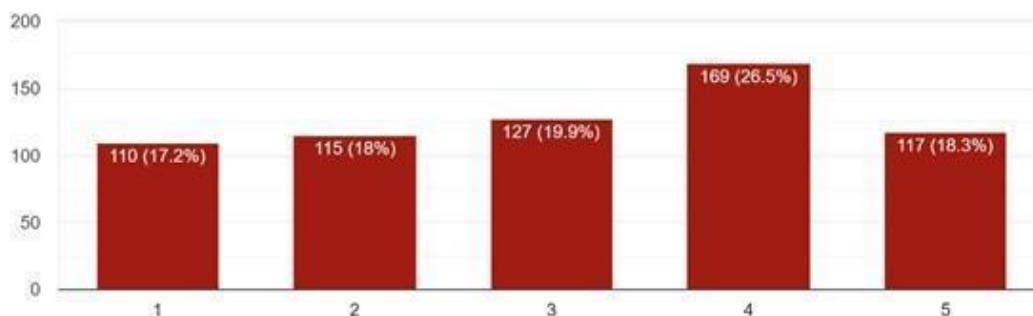
or board. Budgets, personnel limitations, the time element, and the policies of other groups, bodies, and agencies having jurisdiction over the institution may set limits to realization of faculty advice.

It follows that VCU is not practicing *shared* governance, but at best *participatory* governance, where select college faculty, staff, and students are afforded some opportunities to participate in significant decisions concerning the operation of their institutions through discussions, but not by vote and often prohibited from sharing with the broader faculty community. They provide recommendations, but ultimately, decisions are made by the administration. The participation is often referenced by administration, but there is no transparency or record of the participation. All too often, administration will involve a few faculty in a decision and keep no minutes or agenda of the meeting and tout that they involved faculty. *At a minimum, shared governance requires transparency in the decision-making process.*

2) Work-Life balance

In general, I am able to complete my assigned duties within the time constraints of my contract (e.g., within the timeframe of a 9-month faculty contract)

638 responses



Regarding the ability to complete assigned duties within the time constraints of my contract, in general, nearly twice as many female faculty compared to their male counterparts say they are not able to complete their assigned duties in the needed time (133 vs 80). Tenured and tenure-track faculty say they feel the most pull on their time as they work to balance the competing demands of scholarship, teaching, and service, with fully 42% disagreeing/strongly disagreeing that they are able to complete their assigned duties within the time constraints of their contract period. By comparison, 32% and 20% of term and adjunct faculty respectively indicated similar concerns.

Given the number of tenure track faculty lines which have been replaced with term faculty positions at VCU, full and associate tenured professors were the most likely to say it is difficult to get everything done in nine months due to increased service and administrative demands. In email to the deans on April 28th, the Provost called for the enforcement of the directive to limit

adjunct teaching to just two classes per semester. This was a directive, not a policy. This unfairly targets adjuncts trying to argue for better working conditions, increases the teaching loads on term and tenure track faculty, and jeopardizes the educational mission of the university. By calling on deans to enforce this directive departments will be forced to scramble to find instructors to cover the courses. Responding to the open-ended questions, several full and associate professors attributed this to markedly increased demands for service and administrative demands on their time.

In the open comments section faculty expressed the following comments:

“Life - work balance is out of whack”

“Currently feeling like I am spending way more time on the weekends than I should be doing things that are required for courses”

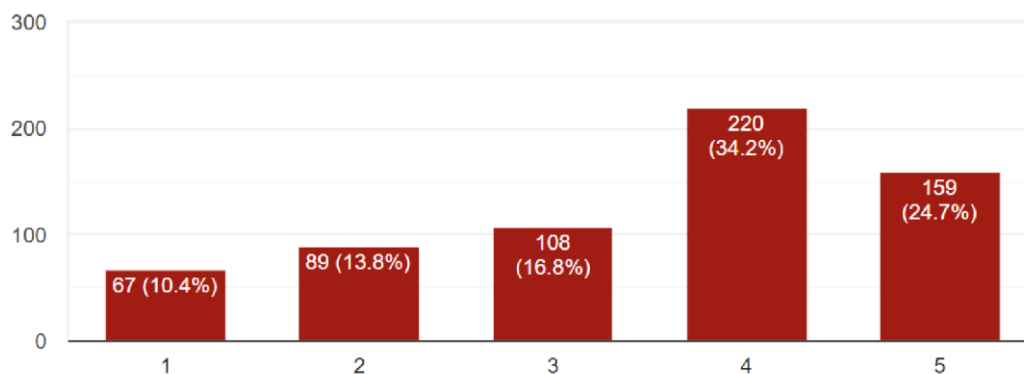
3) Annual evaluations and promotion process

When it comes to the criteria which faculty are evaluated on,

I understand the criteria for which my work is evaluated for my annual review. (For example, I understand what I need to do for an excellent in teaching, service, or scholarship.)

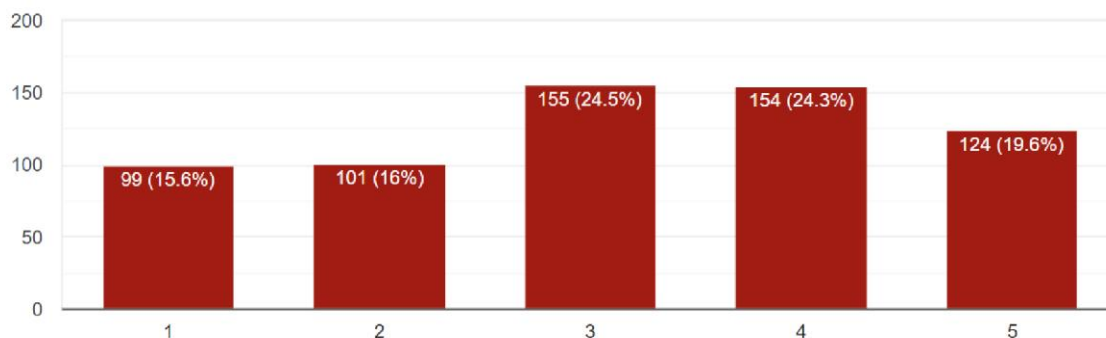


643 responses



I believe that the criteria by which my work is evaluated for my annual review are consistently applied to all members of my department.

633 responses



Almost three-fourths of responding faculty said they understood what criteria they are being evaluated on for their annual reviews. But, it was alarming that almost a third said the criteria is not being applied consistently within their individual departments. More than three-quarters of faculty said the criteria for promotion should be applied to both term and tenure-track faculty in the areas where they are being evaluated. In contrast, only 24% felt that the criteria for promotion should be different.

An overwhelming 90% of the faculty said the same criteria on their annual evaluations should be used when being reviewed for promotion. And over 90% of the faculty agree that term faculty should be given the same opportunities for rank advancement as tenure track faculty. Over 93% of faculty said they agree that more consideration should be given for activities not specifically defined by their workload such as service.

Faculty said that under the current system, heavy service or teaching obligations do not receive appropriate weight during annual evaluations (78% agree/strongly agree). More than half of the tenure-eligible faculty respondents said they are concerned that university-wide promotion and tenure policies are not consistently applied across campus, while 67% said that promotion and tenure policies are not applied consistently within their department.

A very concerning finding is that close to a third of those who have gone through the promotion and tenure process said their dean's office overruled the recommendations of the chair and/or the peer review committee, either in a favorable or unfavorable direction, in direct contradiction to the published university promotion and tenure policy. This policy says, "The dean shall review the file and add a recommendation addressing the fiscal and programmatic impact of the proposed academic personnel action on the school and forward the original file to the provost or vice president for health sciences."

It is important to note that this is the percentage of respondents who report an exception, and does not imply unique incidents and does not specify a time frame for exceptions. Overall this suggests that it is a common practice to have the dean's office overrule peer and chair decisions. This further erodes the goals of shared governance and enhances the perception that the promotion and tenure processes do not occur as prescribed in published university documents, but rather, too often rely on a dean's discretion.

It is important to note that a shift to more quantitative measures for annual evaluations and promotion decisions is not what VCU AAUP is advocating for in response. That would only shift the weight from qualitative metrics to more quantitative measures, which would further enhance the number of times that exceptions are made. Instead we are seeking only for the current policies to be enforced consistently across departments and units throughout the university.

Among tenure-eligible faculty, 60% of the respondents said their participation in shared governance will impact their chances for tenure. Over 75% of the tenure-track faculty said they felt comfortable speaking up regarding policy issues within their units, while faculty who already have tenure are twice as likely to speak up than those who don't. Male faculty are 10% more likely than female colleagues to voice their opinions about policy issues (54% vs 46%). From the responses to the open-ended questions, it is clear that faculty are frustrated with the tenure and promotion process because of the constantly changing criteria or deliberately vague policies. Some representative comments:

"Policies seem deliberately vague, making it difficult for candidates to understand if they are being successful or not"

"the tenure policies within my unit are completely ignored"

"There were no guidelines for tenure/promotion in my department"

"constantly change criteria leaving us confused on whether we are ready to apply for promotion"

4) Career Pathways for Term and Adjunct Faculty

While we understand that most contracts are annual, **over 90% of faculty say term faculty of higher rank should be given some version of a longer-term contract.** This can be coupled with later questions to reveal that over three-fourths of faculty say term faculty should have a clearer pathway and receive greater consideration for a tenure track position. The same can be said about adjunct faculty. **According to our survey, nearly half of adjunct faculty have been at VCU for over 8 years. It is the position of the VCU chapter of the AAUP that adjunct faculty should not be used for long-term positions.** For adjunct faculty who wish to move into more permanent positions, eight years is too long. There must be a clear pathway to permanence by streamlining the transition to a term faculty or tenure-eligible faculty position. In general,

faculty agree that if a candidate has the qualifications to be hired, then they deserve the right to be promoted.

Among term faculty respondents, over 60% had not heard of the Term Faculty Task Force Report released in April 2020. That task force was composed of ten members from six units: three were tenured faculty and one was an associate dean. It was charged with evaluating the current status of term faculty, identifying challenges and opportunities, and making recommendations to the Provost. However, that task force did not survey term faculty to collect data, and nor were they provided the results from the COACHE Faculty Climate Survey which VCU took part in 2015.

In response, the VCU AAUP chapter created a task force, composed of term faculty, to develop a survey to determine the areas most important. We identified the following areas of particular importance. Most notably, term faculty who have the credentials to be hired should be eligible for promotion. Term faculty say the service activities for primarily teaching faculty should be monitored more closely to prevent overloading the faculty. The one key portion of the task force report that we agree with is that the *“Term faculty are a key group required for the success of this strategic plan. We must recognize term faculty contributions in a systematic and inclusive way. This requires our term faculty be provided with the respect and career opportunities that our tenure-track faculty receive.”*

The term faculty are doing the exact same, if not more, than their tenured/tenure-eligible counterparts. Over 60% of term and adjunct faculty have been at VCU over eight years, with 30% for over 13 years. Yet, these faculty who are the face of the university to so many students live year to year, wondering if their contracts are going to be renewed. The AAUP national office recently reported that permanence of the workforce directly contributes to the overall bond rating a university receives. There should also be a clear path for term faculty to make the transition to tenure-eligible positions if that is what they want, as well as a clear differentiation between the job descriptions of term and tenure-eligible faculty. Adjunct faculty are a vulnerable group who have fewer career development options and fewer benefits compared to their term, tenured, and tenure-eligible counterparts. Some representative comments from term faculty:

“Tasks completed by faculty that are directly associated with student success should be evaluated.”

The promotion process “was unnecessarily onerous for term faculty based on the nature of our job description.”

CONCLUSIONS

The VCU Chapter of the AAUP is seeking the following:

1) Shared Governance

We are seeking true shared governance where faculty voices are not just suggestions to be ignored. Faculty must be part of all decisions which relate to the educational process, including but not limited to curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction, and faculty status. While final decisions ultimately lie with the governing board or delegated to the president, we deserve to have our voices heard in those areas, and only in exceptional circumstances should our recommendations not be implemented. When the faculty recommendations are not implemented, we deserve to know why. **There must be greater involvement and transparency in decisions, processes, and policies which impact the faculty.**

2) Reliance on Contingent Faculty

We are seeking the creation of a task force to perform a comprehensive review and make recommendations regarding the ratio of tenured and tenure-eligible faculty versus term and adjunct faculty. According to a report by the national AAUP office, **the percentage of non-tenure or tenure-eligible faculty should not be over 25% of the total number of teaching faculty.** According to VCU, adjunct faculty alone currently account for more than 20% of all faculty, and this does not include term or tenure-eligible faculty. Reliance on contingent faculty leads to increased strain to meet the educational and research mission of the university, as well as create a large workforce with few or no guarantees of employment stability or healthcare coverage. The use of contingent faculty in leadership roles such as assistant deans or department chairs put those faculty in a precarious position where they cannot effectively advocate for the faculty they represent but instead just become puppets of the dean with whom they depend on for their contracts. Having non-tenured faculty in those roles seriously undermines shared governance and centralizes more decision making ability in the dean's office.

3) Annual Evaluations and Promotion

We are seeking a more fair and consistently applied evaluation process for all faculty, including annual evaluations and evaluations for tenure and/or promotion. This will create clear expectations for tenured/tenure-eligible faculty, as well as lead to clearer pathways to promotion for term and adjunct faculty. There is currently an over-reliance on the opinions and judgements of administrators removed from the classroom, leading to unfair treatment of faculty during the promotion process. These clear pathways must be consistently applied.

4) Career Pathways for Term and Adjunct Faculty

VCU currently has many term and adjunct faculty who are both imminently qualified and very interested in becoming permanent faculty members. VCU must work to create career pathways for these now-contingent faculty members to more securely contribute to the university. Such an

effort would also have positive implications for the university's status as a research-intensive institution.

Appendix

Selected Phrases from the Open Comment Section

This section includes phrase bubbles from the responses in the open comment section: the bolder the text, the more times that phrase occurred in the comments.

Comments from Tenure Track Faculty



Comments from Term Faculty

a clear path in career development
 and other fmla leave
 disability
 hired help
 life - work balance is out of whack
 more support for infrastructure
 open and transparent lines of communication
 promotion process not applicable to term faculty
 service duties seem to be undervalued
 should be serious review of term faculty salaries
 term faculty are just the
 term faculty need sabbaticals and other benefits like maternity
 term faculty should have the same career opportunities as tenured faculty
 the job security and support is lacking toward term faculty
 workload should be reassessed

Survey Respondent Information

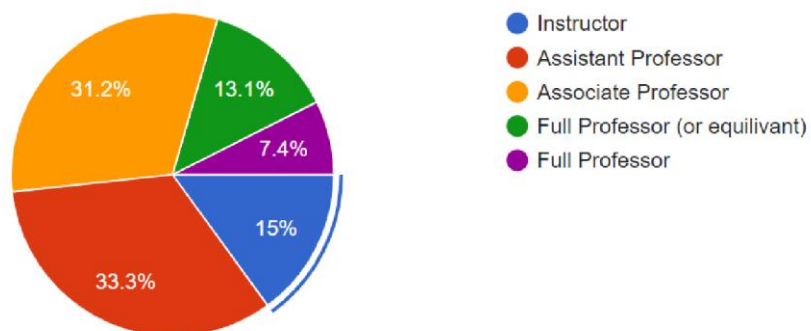
General Survey Information	
Survey dates	March 24 - April 2, 2021
Number faculty email sent	2549
Number emails opened	1230
Number completed surveys	664
Response Rate	26%
General Demographics	
With what gender identity do you most identify?	

Female	45.5%
Male	44.1%
Non-binary	1.9%
Prefer not to say/Other	8.5%
How would you describe yourself?	
White	71.6%
Hispanic/Latino	2.8%

Black or African American	5.2%
Prefer not to answer/Other	20.4%

What is your current rank?

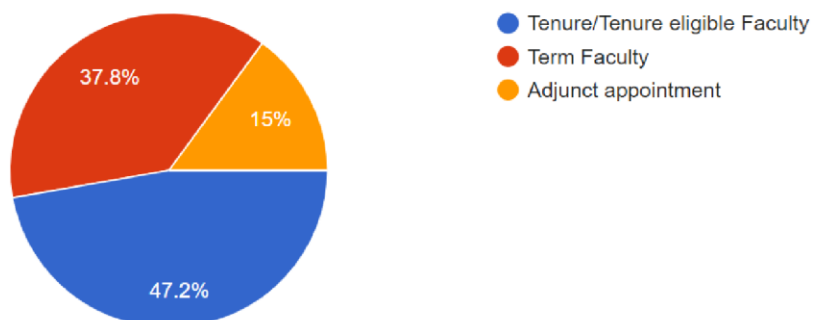
648 responses



What type of appointment do you currently have?

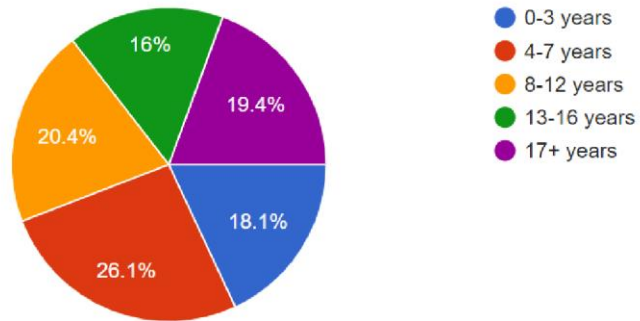


648 responses



How many years have you been teaching at VCU

648 responses



Appendix C

Focus Group Survey

VCU Shared Governance Focus Group Interest Form

STUDY TITLE: Shared Governance at Virginia Commonwealth University: Increasing Awareness of Shared Governance Among Faculty

VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY (VCU) RESEARCHERS:

Andrea Becker, EdD Student and Associate Director for Residential Initiatives, VCU, ahbecker@vcu.edu

Carlton Goode, EdD Student and Academic Advisor, Lead Faculty for Men of Color Initiative, VCU, chgoode@vcu.edu

Jennifer Rivers, EdD Student and Director of Student Services, College of Engineering, VCU, jcrivers@vcu.edu

Melissa Tyler, EdD Student and Assistant Dean for the VCU Graduate School, mtyler@vcu.edu

*Faculty advisor: Jonathan D. Becker, J.D., Ph.D. Associate Professor, Educational Leadership

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to document faculty understanding and perceptions of shared governance at VCU. We will examine relevant literature, trends, and best practices. The focus groups are one way we will gather data about current faculty perceptions of shared governance at VCU, and how awareness of shared governance can be increased at the institution.

ABOUT THIS CONSENT FORM

You are being invited to participate in a focus group study. It is important that you carefully think about whether being in this study is right for you. This consent form is meant to assist you in thinking about whether or not you want to be in this study. Please ask the researcher or the study staff to explain any information in this consent document that is not clear to you.

PARTICIPATION

Your participation is voluntary. If you do participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time. Your decision not to take part or to withdraw at any time will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Your membership status and involvement in the VCU faculty is wholly unrelated to your decision to participate or to not participate in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Information that you give us will be kept as confidential as possible by storing it in secure databases accessible only to the following people: study personnel and authorized people at VCU or VCUHS who oversee research. The online focus groups will be video-recorded using Zoom, in-person focus groups will be audio-recorded.

RESULTS

Once the focus group sessions have been completed, you may request a summary of all of the study results and what they mean.

CONSENT

I have been provided with an opportunity to read this consent form carefully. All of the questions that I wish to raise concerning the focus group participation have been answered.

The respondent's email (**null**) was recorded on submission of this form.

* Required

Email * _____

Please indicate whether or not you wish to participate in the Focus Group *

- Yes Skip to question 3
- No Skip to question 16

Focus Group Participation Interest - Thank you for your interest in participating in a focus group to help us better understand shared governance at VCU. Please complete the following questions.

What College or School are you affiliated with? *

- College of Engineering
- College of Health Professions
- College of Humanities and Sciences
- Honors College
- L.Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs
- Office of Research and Innovation
- School of the Arts
- School of Business
- School of Dentistry
- School of Education
- School of Medicine
- School of Nursing
- School of Pharmacy
- School of Social Work
- School of World Studies
- University College
- VCU da Vinici Center
- VCU Graduate School

- VCU Life Sciences
- Richard T. Robertson School of Media and Culture

Which gender identity do you most identify with?*

- Woman
- Man
- Non-binary
- Transgender
- Prefer not to answer
- Other: _____

How do you describe yourself? (select all that apply) *

- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic
- Latinx
- Middle Eastern or Northern African
- Native American or Alaskan Native
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- White
- Prefer not to answer/Other
- Other:

What is your current faculty rank? *

- Instructor
- Assistant Professor
- Associate Professor
- Full Professor (or equivalent)

What type of appointment do you have? (select all that apply) *

- Tenured Faculty
- Tenure eligible Faculty
- Term Faculty
- Adjunct

How many years have you been employed as faculty in some capacity in your career? *

- 0-3 years
- 4-7 years
- 8-12 years
- 13-16 years
- 17+ years

Are you currently a member of the VCU AAUP Chapter (voting or non voting) *

- Yes
- No

Have you ever been a member (voting or non voting) of the AAUP Chapter at VCU or at another institution? *

- Yes
- No

Do you currently, or have you ever, held an administrative position at VCU while maintaining your faculty rank? This may include, but not limited to Dean, Associate/Assistant Dean, Department Chair, Program Director, etc. *

- Yes
- No

Please select which type of focus group session you would like to participate in (you may select all that apply). (Focus groups will occur in November or December) *

- In person, Monroe Park Campus Location
- In person, MCV Location
- On-line, via zoom

For scheduling purposes, please indicate which days of the week and times that you are generally available for focus groups during the month of November (please select all that apply or skip this question if none apply).

Check all that apply.

	12:00 pm	4:00 pm
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		

As part of the study we will be conducting a small number of individual interviews as well. Are you willing to participate in a one on one interview, if requested? *

- Yes
- No

Participant Acknowledgement *

- I acknowledge that participating in this focus group, I have not waived any of the legal rights or benefits I otherwise would be entitled to. Selecting yes indicates that I freely consent to participate in this research study. I will receive a copy of the consent form for my records.

Thank you for your time- While we understand you are not interested in formal focus group participation, we would appreciate it if you could take a few moments to share some demographic information to assist in our research.

What College or School are you affiliated with? *

- College of Engineering
- College of Health Professions
- College of Humanities and Sciences
- Honors College
- L.Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs
- Office of Research and Innovation
- School of the Arts
- School of Business
- School of Dentistry
- School of Education
- School of Medicine
- School of Nursing
- School of Pharmacy
- School of Social Work
- School of World Studies
- University College
- VCU da Vinici Center
- VCU Graduate School
- VCU Life Sciences
- Richard T. Robertson School of Media and Culture

Which gender identity do you most identify with?*

- Woman
- Man
- Non-binary
- Transgender
- Prefer not to answer
- Other: _____

How do you describe yourself? (select all that apply) *

Check all that apply.

- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic
- Latinx
- Middle Eastern or Northern African
- Native American or Alaskan Native
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- White
- Prefer not to answer/Other
- Other:

What is your current faculty rank? *

Mark only one oval.

- Instructor
- Assistant Professor
- Associate Professor
- Full Professor (or equivalent)

What type of appointment do you have? (select all that apply) *

Check all that apply.

- Tenured Faculty
- Tenure eligible Faculty
- Term Faculty
- Adjunct

How many years have you been employed as faculty in some capacity in your career? *

Mark only one oval.

- 0-3 years
- 4-7 years
- 8-12 years
- 13-16 years
- 17+ years

Appendix D

Focus Group Protocol

VCU Shared Governance Focus Group

Thank you for your participation

- **We will be recording today's session to allow for us accurate transcription and theming of responses across the focus groups. (START RECORDING)**

Introductions of facilitators (I am...)

We are here today to gather your thoughts related to shared governance as the purpose of our study is to document faculty understanding and perceptions of shared governance at VCU. We will examine relevant literature, trends, and best practices. The focus groups are one way we will gather data about current faculty perceptions of shared governance at VCU, and how awareness of shared governance can be increased at the institution.

Protocol

- **For ZOOM only: Please remain muted, raise your hand and we will call on you to unmute and answer, in order for those with a hand raised and then return to those who did not to ensure we hear from all participants. If you agree with something others have shared but do not have anything additional to add, you can simply say that as well**
- **Any time you respond to a question, please state your name then your response. When transcribing we will use this to identify comments but will change the name to pseudonym when reporting**
- **Please introduce yourselves and your department**

We know that...

1. Shared governance is not an entirely clear term. Based on your experience, how would you describe shared governance at VCU?
 1. PROMPT- How would you describe the relationship between VCU faculty and administration?
 2. PROMPT- Describe a time when you felt like a decision was made based on a common understanding among university stakeholders?
2. To what extent are faculty free to express their opinions at VCU?
3. How are faculty rewarded for engaging in shared governance?
 1. PROMPT- If so, how?
 2. PROMPT- If not, how might they be?
4. Describe how administrators share decisions at the conclusion of a shared governance process? (for example a search committee)
 1. PROMPT- Can you give an example of that?
 2. PROMPT- How did that influence your view of shared governance?
5. Based on your experience at VCU with shared governance, how can we collectively work to make shared governance better here?
 1. PROMPT - Are there any barriers that faculty face in engaging with shared governance?
6. We've been talking about shared governance today, is there anything else you would like to share before we leave?

Appendix E

Focus Group Email Invitation

Good Afternoon << title>>>,

I am reaching out as a member of a team of doctoral students in the Education Leadership Program in the VCU School of Education. For our capstone project, we are conducting a naturalistic study seeking to learn more about how faculty at VCU understand and perceive shared governance. We would greatly appreciate it if you would be willing to disseminate the message below for focus group participants to your college/school

We are hoping to gather information from a wide variety of faculty stakeholders across the institution. We would very much appreciate your assistance in sharing the below information with your area. If you have any questions or would like more information, please feel free to reach out.

Best,
<team member>

Subject: VCU Shared Governance Focus Group Opportunity

Greetings VCU Faculty,

We are reaching out as a team of doctoral students in the Education Leadership Program in the VCU School of Education. For our capstone project, we are conducting a naturalistic study seeking to learn more about how faculty at VCU understand and perceive shared governance. We are inviting you to take part in a focus group to discuss the topic of shared governance at VCU. We are planning on holding 2 virtual focus groups and 8 focus groups in person (4 on Monroe Park Campus and 4 at MCV). This may change, though, depending on faculty preferences. We anticipate each session will be one hour in length. If you would like to take part in a focus group, [please fill out the google survey linked here by November 5](#).

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to document faculty understanding and perceptions of shared governance at VCU. We will examine relevant literature, trends, and best practices. The focus groups are one way we will gather data about current faculty perceptions of shared governance at VCU, and how awareness of shared governance can be increased at the institution.

Focus Group Participation: The discussion will be completely confidential and focus on topics such as your experience, knowledge, and perception of shared governance at VCU. Your participation is completely voluntary and all of your responses will be coded to ensure anonymity. Further information about date, time, and location will be sent to you upon completion of the linked google form. If you have any questions or require more information, please contact us.

Thank you for your consideration,

The VCU Shared Governance Capstone Team

Andrea Becker, EdD Student and Associate Director for Residential Initiatives, VCU,
ahbecker@vcu.edu

Carlton Goode, EdD Student and Academic Advisor, Lead Faculty for Men of Color Initiative,
VCU, chgoode@vcu.edu

Jennifer Rivers, EdD Student and Director of Student Services, College of Engineering, VCU,
jcrivers@vcu.edu

Melissa Tyler, EdD Student and Assistant Dean for the VCU Graduate School, mtyler@vcu.edu
Faculty Advisor: Jonathan D. Becker, J.D., Ph.D. Associate Professor, Educational Leadership

Appendix F

Interview Protocol

VCU Shared Governance Interview

Thank you for your participation

Introductions of facilitators (I am...)

I am a member of a capstone team that is working to better understand faculty knowledge and perceptions of shared governance at VCU. Our team will examine relevant literature to understand the history, trends, and ideas for best practices. We have also conducted a series of focus groups and are engaging several individuals in interviews as a way to gather data about current faculty perceptions of shared governance at VCU, and how awareness of shared governance can be increased at the institution. We are here today to gather your thoughts related to shared governance as an individual who is engaged with governance practices at VCU. Protocol

- **We will be recording today's session to allow for us accurate transcription and theming of responses across the focus groups. (START RECORDING)**
- **I have a series of 6 questions and some time for any additional thoughts or suggestions you have. I anticipate our time together will last about one hour.**
- **Please introduce yourselves and your department**

We know that...

1. Shared governance is not an entirely clear term. Based on your experience, how would you describe shared governance at VCU?

1. PROMPT- How would you describe the relationship between VCU faculty and administration?
2. PROMPT- Describe a time when you felt like a decision was made based on a common understanding among university stakeholders?
2. To what extent are faculty free to express their opinions at VCU?
3. How are faculty rewarded for engaging in shared governance?
 1. PROMPT- If so, how?
 2. PROMPT- If not, how might they be?
4. Describe how administrators share decisions at the conclusion of a shared governance process? (for example a search committee)
 1. PROMPT- Can you give an example of that?
 2. PROMPT- How did that influence your view of shared governance?
5. Based on your experience at VCU with shared governance, how can we collectively work to make shared governance better here?
 1. PROMPT - Are there any barriers that faculty face in engaging with shared governance?
6. We've been talking about shared governance today, is there anything else you would like to share before we leave?
0. Our capstone team has conducted several focus groups and we are in the process of meeting with individuals such as yourself who are involved in governance at VCU to understand their experiences, knowledge, and perceptions. Are there any additional faculty you can think of that we should reach out to to gather more information about their perceptions of shared governance?

Appendix G

Interview Survey

VCU Shared Governance Interview Request

STUDY TITLE: Shared Governance at Virginia Commonwealth University: Increasing Awareness of Shared Governance Among Faculty

VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY (VCU) RESEARCHERS:

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to document faculty understanding and perceptions of shared governance at VCU. We will examine relevant literature, trends, and best practices. The interviews are one way we will gather data about current faculty perceptions of shared governance at VCU, and how awareness of shared governance can be increased at the institution. We would like to interview you based upon your specific engagement and participation with governance processes at VCU.

ABOUT THIS CONSENT FORM

You are being invited to participate in an individual interview. It is important that you carefully think about whether being in this study is right for you. This consent form is meant to assist you in thinking about whether or not you want to be in this study. Please ask the researcher or the study staff to explain any information in this consent document that is not clear to you.

PARTICIPATION

Your participation is voluntary. If you do participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time. Your decision not to take part or to withdraw at any time will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Your membership status and involvement in the VCU faculty is wholly unrelated to your decision to participate or to not participate in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Information that you give us will be kept as confidential as possible by storing it in secure databases accessible only to the following people: study personnel and authorized people at VCU or VCUHS who oversee research. The interviews will be video-recorded using Zoom.

RESULTS

Once the research has been completed, you may request a summary of all of the study results and what they mean.

CONSENT

I have been provided with an opportunity to read this consent form carefully. All of the questions that I wish to raise concerning the focus group participation have been answered.

Please indicate whether or not you wish to participate in the Focus Group *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

Interview Participation Interest - Thank you for your interest in participating in an interview to help us better understand shared governance at VCU. Please complete the following questions.

What College or School are you affiliated with? *

Mark only one oval.

- College of Engineering
- College of Health Professions
- College of Humanities and Sciences
- Honors College
- L.Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs
- Office of Research and Innovation
- School of the Arts
- School of Business
- School of Dentistry
- School of Education
- School of Medicine
- School of Nursing
- School of Pharmacy
- School of Social Work
- School of World Studies
- University College
- VCU da Vinici Center
- VCU Graduate School
- VCU Life Sciences
- Richard T. Robertson School of Media and Culture

Which gender identity do you most identify with?*

- Woman
- Man
- Non-binary
- Transgender
- Prefer not to answer
- Other: _____

How do you describe yourself? (select all that apply) *

Check all that apply.

- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic
- Latinx
- Middle Eastern or Northern African
- Native American or Alaskan Native
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- White
- Prefer not to answer/Other
- Other:

What is your current faculty rank? *

- Instructor
- Assistant Professor
- Associate Professor
- Full Professor (or equivalent)

What type of appointment do you have? (select all that apply) *

- Tenured Faculty
- Tenure eligible Faculty
- Term Faculty
- Adjunct

How many years have you been employed as faculty in some capacity in your career? *

- 0-3 years
- 4-7 years
- 8-12 years
- 13-16 years
- 17+ years

Are you currently a member of the VCU AAUP Chapter (voting or non voting) *

- Yes
- No

Have you ever been a member (voting or non voting) of the AAUP Chapter at VCU or at another institution? *

- Yes
- No

Do you currently, or have you ever, held an administrative position at VCU while maintaining your faculty rank? This may include, but not limited to Dean, Associate/Assistant Dean, Department Chair, Program Director, etc. *

- Yes
- No

Participant Acknowledgement

- I acknowledge that participating in this focus group, I have not waived any of the legal rights or benefits I otherwise would be entitled to. Selecting yes indicates that I freely consent to participate in this research study. I will receive a copy of the consent form for my records.

Appendix H

Charrette Survey

Shared Governance Workshop for AAUP Members

Thank you for your interest in participating in a design thinking workshop to gather your knowledge of, thoughts on, and ideas for shared governance at VCU. The workshop will take place on Friday January 14 from 1-4pm in the Residential Leadership Center of Gladding Residence Center (located at 30 South Pine St across from Monroe Park in between Main and Cary). We invite anyone who is able to retreat after the workshop to join for happy hour at Postbellum to kick off the new year.

If you agree to participate, please fill out this form. Calendar invitation and reminder email to follow.

The respondent's email (**null**) was recorded on submission of this form. * Required

1. Email *
2. First Name *
3. Last Name *
4. Email Address *

5. Which format would you be willing to participate (please select all that apply) *
 - Online virtual format
 - In-person format
 - Either format: virtual or in-person

6. College or School are you affiliation *
 - College of Engineering
 - College of Health Professions
 - College of Humanities and Sciences
 - Honors College
 - L.Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs
 - Office of Research and Innovation
 - School of the Arts
 - School of Business
 - School of Dentistry
 - School of Education
 - School of Medicine
 - School of Nursing
 - School of Pharmacy

- School of Social Work
- School of World Studies
- University College
- VCU da Vinici Center
- VCU Graduate School
- VCU Life Sciences
- Richard T. Robertson School of Media and Culture

Appendix I

Modified Charrette Protocol

Welcome and thank you for being here

- Purpose of this Charrette – to have the voice of stakeholders be included in **redesigning shared governance at VCU, generate ideas for future plans**
- Introduction of capstone team

Guidelines

- Remind participants that this is a safe space
- Respect for one another
- If face to face- come and go as you need (restroom, take off mask, etc) if virtual- turn off camera/mic as needed)
- Anonymity – While the session will be audio recorded there will be no identifying information
- Session length – **2 hours** (this is what is in the literature that we have read for a modified charrette)

Step One: The capstone team presents the “scope of the project.” (15 minutes)

- Modified presentation of prospectus (The presenting team outlines the context of the work to describe its processes, and/or methods of implementation. It can be helpful to describe how the structure of the team supports the work in progress.)
- At the end of the presentation, the team will ask the audience a focus question. **How can VCU promote shared governance practices within its community?** It can be as general as How can make this better?” or “What is our next step?”
- The audience now has an opportunity to ask one round of clarifying questions. Avoid suggestions and probing questions. (2-3 minutes)
 - Probes (use only as needed and make general as possible)
 - The presenting team restates their focus question as the audience moves to take over the work. **How can VCU promote shared governance practices within its community?**

Break

Step Two: The audience takes on the “redesign of shared governance at VCU.” (25 minutes)

- The audience selects a recorder and a presenter to report their findings.
- The presenters do not join the conversation (if virtual, capstone team member per breakout room but does not participate- recorder to share notes with team, google folder?)

- Remind the audience to stay centered on the presenting team's work and refrain from discussing their own work or context. Probing questions are also key to this step of the process, if necessary.
- Possible Probing Questions:
 - What issues/challenges does this team need to know about?
 - What ideas/solutions should this team consider?
 - What adjustments can be made by the team to make the work even better?

Break

Step Three: The audience returns to report their findings (15 minutes)

Step Four: Debrief (20 minutes)

- Capstone Team can ask clarifying questions based on the deliverable. Clarifying questions do not solicit new information but expand the understanding of the information that has been presented.

Appendix J

Qualitative Themes from Study

<i>Research Question 2: What are the current faculty perceptions of shared governance at VCU?</i>	Themes	Subthemes	Codes
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Top-down decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● administration, administrative bloat, top-down decisions, structure, silos, trust, distrust, transparency, communication, not-included, power, decision making
	Too Much Administrative Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Futile governance structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● wanting trust, distrust, transparency, structure communication, frustration, apathy, disconnected, tenure status, not-included, not-heard, perception, power, decision making
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bylaws and constitutions not followed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● structures, silos, not included, tenure, frustration, communication, transparency
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Being valued 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● perception, not included, not heard, not agreed with, devalued, apathy, disconnected, communication, expendable
	Devalued Faculty Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● High risk, low reward (fear of retribution, apathy from lack of trust, lack of reward) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● perception, reward, not rewarded, anger, frustration, apathy, tenure status, administration, silos, lack of faculty knowledge, retribution, intimidation,

			marginalization obstructive, risk, human resources, trust, distrust, wanting trust
		● Being engaged effectively	● perception, disconnected, structures, silos, communication, not rewarded, decision- making, lack of faculty knowledge
	A Desire for Change		Hopefulness, structures, communication, trust, distrust, power, retribution, risk, recommendation, lack of communication, transparency
Research Question 3: How can Awareness of Shared Governance be Increased at the Institution?	Themes	Subthemes	Codes
		● Common Definition	● recommendation, communication, definition, structure, silos, mixed messages, transparency
		● Common engagement structure	● in-fighting, communication, trust, silos, structure, transparency, administration
	Create a collective understanding	● Common engagement expectations	● Structure, reward, not rewarded, tenure status, silos, in-fighting, trust, HR, risk
		● University structure and engagement	● definition, reward, not rewarded, devalued, administration, top-down decisions, expendable, structure, silos
		● Building trust	● trust, distrust, wanting trust, lack of faculty knowledge,

		administration, communication, transparency, top-down decisions, power, decision making, risk, retribution
Increasing Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • communication, transparency, trust, structure, power, top-down decisions, decision making, administration, recommendation, hopefulness
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing transparency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • communication, lack of communication, trust, distrust, administration, transparency, mixed messages, power, not included, structure

Appendix K

Revised Faculty Climate Survey

1. Please indicate whether or not you wish to participate in this AAUP survey:

- I wish to participate in this survey.
- I do NOT wish to participate in the survey.

Section 1: Demographics

2. Where is your faculty appointment?

- College of Engineering
- College of Health Professions
- College of Humanities and Sciences
- Honors College
- L.Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs
- Office of Research and Innovation
- School of the Arts
- School of Business
- School of Dentistry
- School of Education
- School of Medicine
- School of Nursing
- School of Pharmacy
- School of Social Work
- School of World Studies
- University College
- VCU da Vinci Center
- VCU Life Sciences
- Richard T. Robertson School of Media and Culture

3. Which gender identity do you most identify with?*

- Woman
- Man
- Non-binary
- Transgender
- Prefer not to answer
- Other: _____

4. How do you describe yourself? (select all that apply) *

- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic
- Latinx
- Middle Eastern or Northern African
- Native American or Alaskan Native

- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- White
- Prefer not to answer/Other
- Other:

5. How many years have you been teaching at VCU?

- 0-3 years
- 4-7 years
- 8-12 years
- 13-16 years
- 17+ years

6. What is your current faculty rank? *

- Instructor
- Assistant Professor/Associate Professor
- Full Professor (or equivalent)

7. What type of appointment do you have? (select all that apply) *

- Tenured Faculty
- Tenure eligible Faculty
- Term Faculty
- Adjunct appointment

Section 2: Relationships

Please select your agreement with each of the following statements in relationship to each of the entities listed: VCU Administration, Governance Groups at VCU (such as Faculty Senate, AAUP, School/College Council) The Dean of my college/school, My Department Chair, Colleagues.

Scale: 5-point, Likert scale where 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree.

- I am valued by...
- I am supported by...
- I am heard by...
- I am connected to...
- I am engaged with...

*consider adding an open ended, optional text box for “If you would like, please share more about why you answered the way you did for the section above or provide any additional detail that might be helpful.”

Section 3: Communication

Please select rank your agreement with each of the following statements in relationship to each of the entities listed: VCU Administration, Governance Groups at VCU (such as Faculty Senate, AAUP, School/College Council) The Dean of my college/school, My Department Chair, Colleagues

Scale: 5-point, Likert scale where 1= never, 2= rarely, 3=sometimes, 4= often 5= always.

- I receive communication from....
- I receive the rationale for decisions made from....
- The lines of communication are open from...
- Information necessary to complete my day to day work is shared....
- Information related to my school or college is shared...
- Information related to the larger university is shared...
- Communication requesting my input on a topic/decision is received...
- I feel I know who to speak with about decisions being made...

Which method(s) do you rely on to receive information? (select all that apply)

- Telegram
- VCU News
- Official VCU social media channels
- Non VCU social media channels
- Departmental email or listserv
- College/school email or listserv
- Department meeting
- Faculty Senate Representative/Minutes
- AAUP meetings
- AAUP listserv
- College/School Council Representative/Minutes
- Colleagues within my college/school
- Colleagues outside of my college/school

*consider adding an open ended, optional text box for “If you would like, please share more about why you answered the way you did for the section above or provide any additional detail that might be helpful.”

Section 4: Shared Governance

For this section, please note we define shared governance as “the collective responsibility among faculty and administration for university decisions and general policies that reflect the customs and practices of VCU.”

Scale: 5-point, Likert scale where 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree.

- Currently, I believe that shared governance is practiced at VCU.
- I am aware of how to be involved in shared governance at VCU.
- I believe I am prepared to be involved in shared governance at VCU.
- I value being involved in shared governance at VCU.
- I feel comfortable engaging in shared governance.
- I am likely to speak up regarding issues or concerns.
- I believe my involvement in shared governance would be valued by my colleagues.
- I believe my involvement in shared governance would be valued by my school/college.
- I believe my involvement in shared governance would be valued by the university.
- I believe the appropriate stakeholders are involved in informing/contributing input to decision making at VCU.
- I believe the appropriate stakeholders are involved in the final vote/ decision making process at VCU.
- When a university decision is made, my opinions are represented.
- When a university decision is made, the rationale is shared with me.
- I am likely to speak up regarding policy issues in my unit.