Published on *University of Toronto Faculty Association* (https://www.utfa.org)

OCUFA's statement on principles of collegial governance

June 15, 2019

Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Association (OCUFA)

Preamble

At the May 2017 OCUFA Policy Exchange conference, university governance was identified as one of three critical policy issues that are of concern to faculty. In particular, participants noted three main areas of concern: the composition and practices of Boards of Governors/Trustees, lack of transparency in the development of university budgets, and procedures for president, provost and other senior administrator hiring searches.

Over the past few years, OCUFA's member associations have been reporting various barriers to collegial governance for faculty, a lack of meaningful input in university Senate decisions, and frustration with controversial decisions being made by increasingly corporatized Boards of Governors. Concerns about the way universities are being governed and the erosion of collegial governance have been coming up in all facets of OCUFA's work.

To begin to address these concerns, and recognizing the current state of the postsecondary sector in Ontario, OCUFA has decided to develop a set of principles to guide collegial governance at our universities. The guidelines below are informed by the 2018 OCUFA university governance survey completed by every university faculty association in Ontario.

Collegial governance simply means a shared governance model often structured as a bi- cameral system in which both university Boards and Senates take on responsibilities to ensure the health and success of the institution. Further, functional collegial governance deliberations at the level of Board of Governors, include meaningful input from faculty who provide the instruction and research that is at the core of the academic mission.

Ontario universities are, in principle, public institutions; but our gathered data show that they are increasingly managed as if they were corporate entities. Many key decisions are no longer appropriately

addressed through collegial governance models. Coupled with the chronic underfunding of universities and their increased reliance on precariously employed professors who are generally left out of the decision-making process, this failure to implement collegial governance has led universities in Ontario to function much less collaboratively than they have in the past.While postsecondary institutions need to change to adjust to changing political, social, economic, and cultural conditions, these changes need to be determined and implemented through collegial processes that involve the meaningful participation of faculty, staff, and students.

We note that collegial governance models do and must involve staff and students. To respect the autonomy and voice of these groups, however, and to avoid speaking on their behalf, this document is written with particular attention to the role of faculty in collegial governance and from a faculty perspective. The term faculty here refers to all those who hold academic appointments, including academic librarians, and those who teach under precarious employment arrangements.

Policy statement
The following principles have been organized under three main categories: representation on governance bodies, processes and practices of governance, and procedures regarding senior administrator searches and appointments.

1. Representation:
a) University governance should be based on principles of collegiality, inclusivity, meaningful representation, shared participation, and shared accountability.
b) Collegial governance participation should be a right of ALL faculty.
c) On all governance bodies, faculty should be elected by, and accountable to, their constituencies.
d) Faculty must not be expected to relinquish their association or union membership in order to sit on university governing bodies.
e) University Boards' membership should be representative of the diversity of the community in which the university is located, and representatives must be committed to the public mission of the university.
f) Appointments to the Boards should be based on open collegial practices and include an open nomination process.
g) Membership of Board subcommittees should be open to all Board members.
h) Contract faculty should participate in university governance bodies and be fairly compensated for their participation.

2. Processes/practices of governance:

a) University governance practices should be based on principles of shared information, shared responsibility, open processes and planning exercises, open consultation, and shared decision-making.
b) Values of the university are not necessarily the same as those held by the corporate sector.
c) Values of academic freedom, open discussion and respect for the diversity of voices should be at the core of university governance practices.
d) The principles and traditional decision-making practices of Indigenous peoples must be respected.
e) Faculty should be meaningfully included in the budgetary and financial discussions and decisions of the institution, all of which bear upon its academic mission.
f) Faculty should be duly consulted on any contracts with external donors.
g) University Senates must engage in free and open debate on matters under their purview.
h) The in-camera content of governance meetings should be limited and justified. Closed debate should be rare and limited to exceptional circumstances.

i) Conflict of interest policies should be fully enforced with respect to all internal and external members of a governing body.
j) Where one or more members of a governing body may have a conflict of interest regarding matters being addressed, the preferred method for resolving the conflict should be recusal from discussion and voting on those matters rather than general exclusion from that committee. It should be recognized that faculty and other representatives can simultaneously represent the good of the university. The good of the university is not at odds with the good of the university community and its members.
k) Appropriate training and education should be offered to all representatives on governance bodies to ensure informed decision-making and adherence to the public and academic mission of universities.
l) Service should be duly recognized and compensated as a key responsibility of faculty.
m) The chair or speaker of the Board and the Senate should be elected by the membership of each body, respectively. The chair or speaker should not have another administrative post within the university.

3. Searches and appointments

a) All senior administrative hiring searches should be open and transparent.
b) The presidential and provostial search committees should be inclusive and consist of representatives from different constituencies including full-time faculty, contract faculty, students, staff, and the Board.
c) The members on the search committee should be elected by their constituencies and mindful of the role they play in representing them.
d) All members of a search committee should have equal voice and vote.
e) Community consultation should not be limited to the job posting and setting of criteria for searches. Consultation should also include the final review of shortlisted candidates.
f) The shortlist of candidates should be provided to the campus community.
g) The campus community should be provided with an opportunity to meet shortlisted candidates and engage with them.
h) A mechanism for meaningful consultation must be provided to the community and Senate for their assessment of shortlisted candidates.

Source URL (modified on Jun 15 2019):https://www.utfa.org/content/ocufa-s-statement-principles-collegial-governance