

GENERAL RECOMMENDATION FIVE

General Recommendation Five: The committee recommends that the college assess the effectiveness of its internal system of governance to facilitate the successful accomplishment of its mission and goals. Elements to be addressed by the resulting system of governance are:

- Administrators, faculty, staff, and students understand and fulfill their respective roles in the governance system.
- The system of governance ensures that the authority, responsibilities, and relationships among and between the administrators, faculty, staff, and students are clearly described in policy documents.
- The system of governance makes provision for the consideration of faculty, student, and staff views and judgments in those matters in which these constituencies have a direct and reasonable interest.
- The role of faculty in institutional governance, planning, budgeting and policy development is made clear and public. (Standard 6.A.1, 6.A.2, 6.A.3, 6.D)

COLLEGE RESPONSE

Clark College has defined shared governance as follows:

Shared governance at Clark College is a decision-making framework in which institutional policies and priorities are determined in collaboration with those affected. Roles and responsibilities of student, faculty, staff, administrators, and trustees are clearly defined and communicated to ensure accountability. Effective shared governance requires all members of the college community to contribute to an environment of mutual respect and trust.

Clark College has responded to Recommendation Five pertaining to Shared Governance through assessing the methods and roles of administrators, faculty, staff, and students in governance. Clark College has determined that, in order to improve in this area, the College needs to clarify the 1) responsibility for types and breadth of decisions, 2) methods to both solicit and communicate feedback pertaining to decisions in which the college community has direct and reasonable interest, and 3) roles within the governance system. The College has made a focused effort to assess strategies of shared governance, revise its policies and procedures, and elicit feedback from those who will be impacted by decisions. This work has further clarified the roles of administrators, faculty, staff, and students in the shared governance system.

Assessment Strategies

The assessment strategies employed by the College include many different activities. These were:

- Review past climate surveys that identified satisfaction among college employees about their influence in the decision-making process,
- Review of the Clark College 2008 Self-Study,
- Discussions of shared governance at College Council,
- Assessment of goals by the Board of Trustees ,
- Discussions at a Penguin Roundtable, and
- Development of a College Council subcommittee to assess and provide recommendations to improve the governance structure at Clark College.

The results of the assessment found that Clark College must make shared governance a priority for the College and clarify the methods for employees and students to provide input on decisions that affect them.

The results of the past climate surveys and the review of the Clark College 2008 Self-Study made clear that employees do not consistently perceive that their feedback was used in meaningful ways in the decision-making process. In addition, the definition of shared governance, adopted by the College in 2004, was not commonly understood. For example, some members of the college community believe that shared governance is shared decision making.

Based on the information gathered through these college-wide activities and from the October 2008 accreditation evaluation, the College President took the issue to the appropriate advisory group: the College Council. As a representative group of the college community, College Council serves as the President's advisory committee, overseeing institutional planning, budget development, and institutional effectiveness systems. The President brings policies and procedures, budget development concerns, and institutional evaluation findings to the council for their feedback. In fact, as a group created to enact and further the principle of shared governance, College Council is particularly well prepared to address community concerns and confusion regarding the issue. In response to the President's Fall 2008 charge to assist in clarifying roles and improving shared governance overall, College Council updated their Bylaws and developed a chart to identify ways that all members of the college community can influence the decisions made by the President. This process took a significant proportion of the 2008-2009 academic year. The Bylaws were adopted in October 2009 and were updated in the Administrative Procedures. (Appendix 5.1)

The Board of Trustees also spent the 2008-2009 academic year evaluating its role in institutional effectiveness through careful review of the accreditation self-study, assessment of their role and responsibility both to the College and the community, the President's performance review, and the 2009-2014 Strategic Plan. Through their assessment work, the need to improve shared

governance arose as a prevalent theme. Therefore, the Board resolved to “[o]versee the refinement, communication, and implementation of a shared governance system” during the 2009-2010 academic year which is listed in the monthly board reports.

Additional assessment activities occurred at the Fall 2009 Penguin Roundtable, a quarterly event that brings together all the organizational leaders in the college and additional college representatives. Members of the Penguin Roundtable meet to discuss a college-wide issue or initiative.

The Fall 2009 Penguin Roundtable asked participants to identify strengths and weaknesses of shared governance in action over the last year. The feedback from the Fall 2009 Penguin Roundtable identified the following processes as initiatives that used shared governance effectively:

- The 2009-2010 budget development process,
- The development and implementation of the 2009-2014 Strategic Plan, and
- The development of a plan to build a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math building.

Penguin Roundtable participants believed that their feedback and opinions were considered in the decision-making process. However, Penguin Roundtable discussions also identified post-decision communication as a significant weakness in shared governance: decision makers needed to convey to the college community both what decisions were made and what information was used. Participants recommended using the same method of communicating the final decision and related information as was used to gather feedback in advance of decision-making. Penguin Roundtable participants termed this recommended process “Closing the Communication Loop.”

The President brought the findings from the Penguin Roundtable to Executive Cabinet and College Council for discussion during Fall 2009. Executive Cabinet discussed decision-making models and were charged with identifying effective strategies of communicating back to the college community how they used community input and what additional information they used to make the decision. College Council also discussed ways to improve shared governance. The Council revisited the accreditation recommendation and definition of shared governance.

Using the current definition of shared governance, the Council formed a subcommittee whose mission was as follows:

- Address the concerns of the NWCCU Accreditation Team
- Address the College Council recommendations:
 - Provide an organizational chart or schematic demonstrating how information is shared or reported.

- Identify and make public the roles and responsibilities of faculty, staff, and students.

The membership of the shared governance subcommittee included the following:

- 1 Executive Cabinet Member
- 2 Full-time Faculty
- 1 Adjunct Faculty
- 2 Students
- 2 Classified Staff
- 1 Manager/ Administrator

The shared governance subcommittee conducted a literature review, identified work conducted in the past by Clark College, and researched shared governance at other community colleges. Currently, the subcommittee is developing an organizational map clarifying structures that currently influence decision making. In addition, the subcommittee is developing recommendations about how those structures might work most effectively.

The subcommittee reviewed a report pertaining to shared governance produced by another subcommittee of College Council in 2004. The 2004 report provided the definition of shared governance, identified best practices of shared governance, made recommendations, and presented a table of groups and committees that the college community can use to influence decision making. For the most part, the 2004 report was determined to be relevant today by the subcommittee. Therefore, the subcommittee decided to update the report by reviewing the literature, conducting a further investigation of best practices at other community colleges, and updating the shared governance chart by transforming it into an organizational map.

While the 2004 report offered a definition of shared governance, that the definition is not widely known or understood by the larger college community. In addition, the subcommittee hypothesized that the lack of movement in this area may also be due to the lack of stability in the college's top leadership. Now, with a more stable leadership team, the College has the opportunity to implement the necessary strategies to improve both the actual structure and perceptions of shared governance. (Appendix 5.2; Exhibit 5.1)

The subcommittee plans to have the report prepared and recommendations to College Council by April 21, 2010. College Council will then make recommendations to the College President to improve shared governance. Implementation of the recommendations is expected during the 2010-2011 academic year.

Policies and Procedures Revisions

During Summer and Fall 2009, the policy and procedure development and approval process was revised. The purpose of the revision was to align the policies and procedures with the College's current practices and collective bargaining agreements. This revision of existing processes also aimed to engage broader college-wide participation in the review of new and existing policies and procedures. The process is as follows:

1. Prepare a draft of the new or revised policy and submit to the Director of Operations and Auxiliary Services (DOAS) for an initial administrative review. When preparing the draft, Administrative Services asks that the originator also
 - a. Provide a brief cover memo explaining the basis for the new or revised policy
 - b. Check to see if there is already an existing policy or procedure
 - c. Indicate whether the new policy or procedure replaces or amends the existing one, if there is an existing policy or procedure
 - d. Determine if the new policy or procedure necessitates a change in Clark College's Washington Administrative Code (WAC). The College's codes can be found under WAC 132-N.
2. The Executive Assistant to the Vice President of Administrative Services (VPAS) will format the draft policy to ensure continuity and consistency with other College policies/procedures and to clearly identify all additions, deletions, and changes.
3. Once the initial administrative review and formatting is complete, the draft will be returned to the originator for follow up and changes (if needed).
4. The originator will finalize the draft and submit to the VPAS. The VPAS will then present it to the Executive Cabinet (EC) for first reading.
5. At this first reading, EC will determine whether the draft needs additional work before moving it forward. If that is the case, the VPAS will return the draft to the originator with EC's questions and instructions.
6. If, at first reading, EC determines that the draft is ready to move forward, EC will share the policy with College Council for review and feedback. Executive Cabinet will determine whether the draft policy needs to be shared with one or both of the College's collective bargaining units prior to adoption.
7. The VPAS will share any feedback from College Council and/or the collective bargaining units with the policy originator for follow up and changes (if needed).
8. The originator will submit a final policy draft to the VPAS, who will present to Executive Cabinet for discussion and action.
9. Upon Executive Cabinet approval the policy will be returned to Administrative Services for insertion into the policies and procedures manual and for posting on ClarkNet. Policies will be posted as soon as they are approved.
10. The VPAS will send an email to the College Master List, describing the new or revised policy. A link to ClarkNet will be provided in the email.

Ten policies and procedures have been updated using this process during the 2009-2010 academic year. As of March 19, 2010, seven policies and procedures are still going through the development and approval process. The change in process is considered effective because College Council fully engages in the process, asking a significant number of clarifying questions and providing feedback that improves each policy and procedure. The questions and feedback of the policies and procedures are based on the perspectives of the council members and individuals that council members represent. (Exhibit 5.2)

Shared governance was an important component of changing the Student Code of Conduct, which was officially revised in March 2010. The Student Code of Conduct impacts the work and educational experience of both Clark College employees and students. During the 2008-2009 academic year, the Interim Associate Vice President for Student Affairs/Dean of Student Success, Student Code of Conduct Officer, and two students of the Associated Students of Clark College (ASCC) worked to update the code to make it relevant to student processes and experiences. The Code was last updated in August of 1997. In August 2009, the College filed CR 101, which identifies the intent to amend the WAC related to Student Code of Conduct. In the first seven weeks after the CR 101 was filed, changes in the code were presented to various constituency groups including the following:

- Clark College Association of Higher Education (Clark College's Faculty Union),
- ASCC,
- College Council,
- Executive Cabinet,
- Instructional Council,
- Student Affairs Council,
- Student Club Committee,
- Clark College at Washington State University,
- Clark College at Columbia Tech Center, and
- Clark College at Town Plaza Center.

Revisions were made to the Student Code of Conduct based on the feedback from the groups represented above. The draft Student Code of Conduct was then reviewed by the Board of Trustees in November 2009 and underwent legal review. At the February 19, 2010, Board of Trustees meeting, a public hearing was held; the Board of Trustees voted to approve the Student Code of Conduct. The Student Code of Conduct goes into effect March 20, 2010. (Appendix 5.3)

Clark College has deliberately embedded shared governance in the policies and procedures development and approval process. The College recognizes and values the diverse and unique perspectives of the various constituency groups throughout the college community. The College has found, by implementation of this process, that the policies and procedures more accurately reflect both the daily activities of the College and the intent of each policy and procedure.

Invitation to Receive Feedback from Those Affected by Decisions

The College leadership team has been very deliberate in the decision-making process over the past two years. Based on the results of the Penguin Roundtable and the conversations at College Council, Executive Cabinet recognized that leaders must be clear in identifying what aspect of the decision making model they use for a particular decision. For example, for each decision that a leader makes, they should identify if they are making a decision unilaterally, influenced by the feedback offered, or by consensus. Moreover, all leaders are expected to consult with the constituencies that their decision impacts. Over the past year, many instances have occurred in which decision makers have publicly undertaken the gathering of pre-decision input. Decision makers have also provided clear and timely communication regarding both how the input was used and how the decision was ultimately made. Four college-wide examples are provided for this report: 1) budget development, 2) 2009-2014 Strategic Plan development and adoption, 3) Diversity Plan development and adoption, 4) changes in program assessment.

2009-2010 Budget Development

The College faced and continues to face significant budget cuts due to the current economic crisis. The College was confronted with cutting 4.3% of the state budget. The College President regularly kept the college community up to date with new budget information as it became available. The College President also charged College Council to develop a list of Values, Principles, and Guidelines for Executive Cabinet to use in developing the 2009-2010 budget. College Council used a previously developed list and revised it to reflect the current values and principles that the college community believed should guide the budget process.

The College President and Vice President of Administrative Services, responsible for the budget development, sought input on the budget development through a variety of mechanisms, including five open forums, a feedback form on the Clark College intranet, and unit/departmental meetings where budget cuts were discussed. The Vice President of Administrative Services compiled all of the feedback from these mechanisms, which was presented to Executive Cabinet during their two-day budget planning retreat. The budget was prepared using the feedback. (Exhibit 5.3)

Each of the executive cabinet budgets was prepared, and cuts were made, based on the feedback from faculty, staff, and administrators within each organizational areas. The feedback was obtained from all levels throughout the college's organizational structure. Methods to cut the budget were discussed at unit and department meetings, and based on these results, some areas did not hire vacant positions and some were reorganized to gain efficiencies and reduce costs. (Exhibit 5.4)

Clark College 2009-2014 Strategic Plan Development and Adoption

Another example of shared governance pertains to the development and adoption of the *Clark College 2009-2014 Strategic Plan*. Work began to develop the *2009-2014 Strategic Plan* during the 2007-2008 academic year. A task force was formed whose first activity was to conduct multiple focus groups of both the college community and external stakeholders. The feedback was used to draft the vision, mission, five strategic directions (i.e. core themes of the college), and five-year college goals.

As the sections of the strategic plan were drafted, they went out to the college community for critique. Feedback and critique of the 2009-2014 was solicited and gathered through 1) various college forums (e.g., Penguin Roundtable, Board of Trustees work session, and College Council meeting), 2) communication with a member of the Strategic Planning Task force, and 3) comment/critique submission on Clark College's intranet site. The Strategic Planning Taskforce considered the feedback and made revisions to the Strategic Plan at every meeting. A newsletter was distributed to the college community in June 2009, identifying all of the information used to develop and revise components of the Plan. (Exhibit 1.2)

Clark College Diversity Plan Development and Adoption

In 2006, the Clark College Cultural Pluralism Committee was charged to develop a Clark College diversity plan with goals and strategies that support, enhance, and ensure student success. The Cultural Pluralism Committee developed the Clark College Diversity Plan using a process of shared governance that functioned well. Committee membership included faculty, students, staff, and administrators, each of whom had the opportunity to contribute to the development process.

In Winter 2007, the committee administered a college-wide, exploratory survey, attempting to capture some basic themes regarding ways in which the College experiences, supports, and, in some cases, potentially undermines the healthy development of a diverse college community. A report, which is available on the Clark College intranet site, was issued in Winter 2008. The committee also tested the feasibility of student focus groups to gain first-hand qualitative data regarding student experiences at Clark College by holding two focus groups in Spring 2008. In Summer 2008, the Cultural Pluralism Committee convened a broader work group that consisted of the Executive Cabinet, the Instructional Council, Student Affairs' Deans, and staff from Disability Support Services, Multicultural Student Affairs and International Programs.

Prior to developing goals and strategies of the plan, the committee arrived at the vision statement and a definition for diversity. The committee derived the vision, definition, goals and strategies from a review of best practices in higher education, a comprehensive survey administered to the college community in Winter 2007, student focus groups, consultation with content experts, multiple opportunities for the college community to provide feedback, and two years of discussion and deliberation among the members of the Cultural Pluralism Committee.

Vision for Diversity

Clark College recognizes, understands, confronts and challenges the institutional systems of privilege, power and inequality so that all members of the Clark College community can support student success.

Definition of Diversity

Diversity at Clark College is defined as the participation of a rich variety of social groups in the college community with particular emphasis on including historically disadvantaged groups in the college. A diverse college community enhances learning through individuals working collaboratively with people from other social groups and backgrounds. Social groups that perpetuate personal or institutional systems of privilege, power and inequality are inconsistent with the intent of this plan.

The draft of the Diversity Plan was presented to the college community and the external community during Winter 2009. The college community provided feedback through the intranet website, organizational unit meetings, and various standing internal groups such as Executive Cabinet. In addition, focus groups were held to discuss the contents of the Diversity Plan and its possible meanings for/to the external community. Revisions were made based on this feedback. The Diversity Plan was presented to the Board of Trustees as a final product in June 2009. (Appendix 5.4; Exhibit 5.5)

Changes in Program Assessment

The program review and enhancement process, i.e., program assessment process, is negotiated in the Clark College Association of Higher Education (AHE) faculty union contract. The program review and enhancement process is governed by the Instructional Planning Team (IPT), a contractually defined committee including two faculty members from each unit, one adjunct faculty member, the registrar, instructional deans, the Vice President of Instruction (VPI), the President of Clark College Association for Higher Education (AHE, the faculty union), and up to two students.

Any changes in the program assessment process must be approved by IPT in the form of a recommendation to the Vice President of Instruction. The faculty position description in the AHE 2009-2011 contract states that “. . . faculty members at Clark College . . . in accordance with IPT-defined process, participate in program review and outcomes assessment activities that impact student success.” The purpose of this contract language is to institutionalize and formalize shared governance in decisions that affect the work of faculty.

After the results of the 2008 accreditation self-study evaluation, it was clear that the definition of program needed to change from the area of study within a department/discipline to the area of study that leads to a degree or certificate. A subcommittee of IPT was formed to research and draft a definition of program that focuses on student learning outcomes and experiences and

aligns with the accreditation standards. The subcommittee was composed of faculty members throughout the college and led by an instructional dean. IPT adopted the definition of program during June 2009.

Since that time, two other IPT subcommittees have been formed to develop the learning outcomes and program assessment process, specifically associated with the Associate of Arts (AA) Degree. The learning outcomes associated with the AA degree were approved at IPT in January 2010. The assessment methodology is currently being refined. In addition, IPT charged career and technical education programs with identifying both the learning outcomes associated with the program as well as the assessment methods to determine if students are meeting the outcomes.

All of the changes to program review and assessment since the October 2008 accreditation self-study visit have been made through a system of shared governance. Faculty and deans have participated in the process throughout the entire creation and revision process. While it might seem laborious or slow, the institutionalization of shared governance in this situation has provided results that are both owned and embraced by the college community.

Conclusion

Clark College continues to work on improving shared governance. Both the Board of Trustees and the College have identified further work on improving the college-wide common and shared definition of shared governance as one of the most significant goals/priorities for the 2009-2010 academic year. In addition, shared governance is represented in one of the College's five-year goals in the 2009-2014 Strategic Plan. Over the next year, the College expects to

- Implement the recommendations of the College Council subcommittee of shared governance;
- Conduct another climate survey in Winter 2011 to measure change in employees perceptions of their influence in decision-making;
- Clarify the decision-making model by identifying for each decision whether it is a decision that will be made based on consensus or influenced by feedback; and
- Develop and formalize processes to "close" the communication loop in the decisions that are made.