

An Open
Conversation
About
**Shared
Governance**
at





MANCHESTER HALL

Welcome to the

Shared Governance Conversation
at San Diego State University



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When I heard that this conversation was taking place at SDSU, I was thrilled.

Shared Governance is ultimately about trust, a value central to my leadership.

I am a Shared Governance advocate, and my hope is that you will be one too.

*– Adela de la Torre, Ph.D.
President, SDSU*



To me, shared governance is about connecting and communicating.

I'm excited about being part of the process of working with students, staff, faculty and administrators as SDSU tackles current challenges and identifies new opportunities.

Shared governance is central to progress and how the campus develops and evolves, becoming a stronger and better University.

Rebecca Lewison, Ph.D.



In the absence of shared governance, successes occur in spite of the institution, not because of the institution. Our collective capacity to achieve meaningful goals is influenced primarily by our success in creating a culture in which we listen to, respect, trust, and value each other.

*Joseph Johnson, Ph.D.
Interim Provost*

CONTEXT

This living document is the outcome of ongoing and open conversations among campus stakeholders who believe that a culture where everyone understands and champions the principles of shared governance is a key ingredient for the success of SDSU.

This initiative began in Fall 2017 as a series of grassroots discussions among a small group of faculty members.

JOIN THE CONVERSATION!

If you are interesting in being a shared governance advocate or talking more with SDSU community members about shared governance, email a shared governance advocate (pg. 23-24)

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Structured conversations began in Spring 2018, when President Sally Roush invited the Senate Executive Committee to spearhead a series of open discussions to engage people across the SDSU community to define SDSU's practice and commitment to shared governance in preparation for the arrival of our new president, Dr. Adela de la Torre. In support of this process, students, staff, faculty and administrators have been meeting to set the stage for campus engagement.

President de la Torre participated in shared governance meetings upon her arrival to SDSU and was clear about her unwavering support. She has already become an active supporter for shared governance, exemplified in her All University 2018 Convocation remarks.¹

This document, which also draws from a number of established sources², is a synthesis of ongoing conversations.

It is designed to support the understanding and practice of, and commitment to shared governance, and to serve as a catalyst for change in the execution of shared governance at SDSU moving forward.

Trust: A Vision for Shared Governance

+ Respect

+ Communication

+ Responsibility

01

A VISION OF SHARED GOVERNANCE

Community members have identified three key principles for shared governance at SDSU that all rely on the fundamental ingredient of TRUST:

Respect

- Early and meaningful constituent engagement in key decision-making;
- Dialogue and communication that is two-way, symmetrical, participatory, and reliable;
- Nurturing a culture of representation, strategic engagement, and planning.

Communication

- Identifying and articulating shared values, mission, and vision.
- A negotiated balance among participation, consultation, and decision-making.
- Transparency in decision making, including clear communication about process, timeline, and outcomes.
- Representation from, and collaboration within and among, different constituencies.

Responsibility

- Trust built through follow-through (actions mirror words); commitment affirmed through feedback and transparency.
- Personal accountability, ownership, and acceptance of responsibility to shared goals, vision and practices, leaders demonstrate commitment to shared governance through actions.
- Honesty, openness, and reliability.

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Bottom Line: Trust



I wanted to be part of the conversation.

Shared Governance is also about respect, transparency, and personal responsibility.

These are values we share.

*Chris Thomas
President, AS*



To me shared governance is about transparency, active listening, respectful communication, constructive input and consideration of compromise.

*— Cathie Atkins, Ph.D.
Professor,
Psychology*



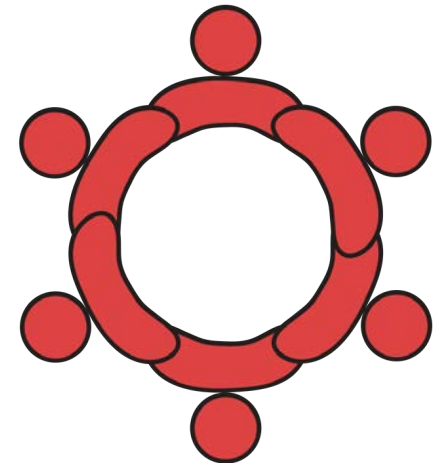
Sharing governance is important because doing so acknowledges that all of us are on the same team, that we each have valuable perspectives to add to the conversation, and that we each accept responsibility for making our contributions in timely, thoughtful, and respectful ways. Ultimately, sharing governance is about moving forward, together

— Bey-Ling Sha

Professor, Journalism

TRUST is recognized as a fundamental ingredient that is essential for effective shared governance and is both directly influenced by, and a force that influences the previously described features of respect, communication, and responsibility.

Without trust, the practices of partnership, inclusion, open communication, ownership, and accountability are likely to break down.



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Why Shared Governance

- + *SDSU's Commitment*
- + *Our Community*
- + *Our Stakeholders*

02

WHY IS SHARED GOVERNANCE CENTRAL TO SDSU'S MISSION?

SDSU has a longstanding commitment to shared governance that is reflected in both policy and practice. The SDSU University Senate Policy File makes this commitment evident:

“San Diego State University shall perform its educational mission guided by the principles of shared governance.”

Historically, the various university constituents have viewed themselves as leaders, consistent with our motto that “leadership starts here,” and exercised their autonomy, within reasonable limits, in pursuit of the university mission.

Shared governance is an integral part of the SDSU identity and a point of pride for many community members. SDSU is a complex and diverse community. No one person or constituency can or should control all of the information or make all of the decisions that may affect various sectors.

The many individuals and groups that constitute SDSU recognize that sharing in the governance of our community, through respectful, responsible and effective engagement, is the best way to ensure that we flourish, both individually and as a university. Indeed, many members of SDSU believe that sharing governance is essential for a well-functioning campus.



“In these increasingly complex and rapidly changing times, this effort to strengthen and broaden our concept of shared governance has identified some key principles—respect, communication, and responsibility—that should serve us well as we move forward in our shared commitment to students success and achievement.”

*Stephen Schellenberg, Ph.D.
Assistant Vice President
for Educational Effectiveness*

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The Notion of Shared Governance

- + What Shared Governance Is*
- + What Shared Governance Is Not*
- + Features of Shared Governance*

03

THE NOTION OF SHARED GOVERNANCE: A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

The notion of shared governance is often invoked, but not easily defined.³

The SDSU University Senate Policy File refers to shared governance in the preamble to its constitution, but the term is not clearly conceptualized.

In the following pages, we aim to do just that.

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“Shared governance embodies and affirms a true commitment to respect and trust.”

*Donna Conaty
Interim Dean*

*College of Professional
Studies and Fine Arts*

WHAT SHARED GOVERNANCE IS

In short, "shared governance" is about sharing governance.

Shared governance is the product of cooperation and collaboration among all community members (staff, faculty, students, and administration), based on the premise that shared goals and collaboration within and among the university community are vital to a high-functioning campus, and that no unit within an organization (division, college, or department) can achieve excellence without engaging its community. While shared governance may be defined in many ways, three working definitions are:

1. A system of partnership, equity, accountability, and ownership that forms a culturally sensitive, inclusive and empowering framework, enabling sustainable and accountability-based decisions;
2. A dynamic constituent-leader partnership that promotes collaboration, shared decision making and accountability;
3. An ongoing process in which faculty, staff, students, and administrators actively engage to share responsibility for identifying and pursuing an aligned set of mission-driven sustainable outcomes and priorities. This process also includes active monitoring and evaluation of the shared governance successes and pitfalls.

Sharing governance involves two complementary and sometimes overlapping concepts:

Giving all community members an effective voice in key decision-making processes, often through elected representation, while also allowing administrators to exercise primary responsibility for specific areas of decision making.

The tension between a high degree of participation in decision making and the need for accountable, administrative authority points to the complexities of shared governance.

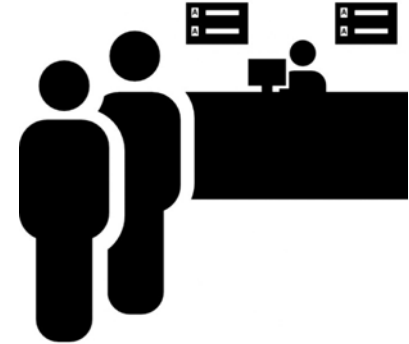


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WHAT SHARED GOVERNANCE IS NOT

Sharing governance does not mean that everyone gets to participate at every stage of planning or in every decision, nor does it mean that anyone exercises complete control over the process.

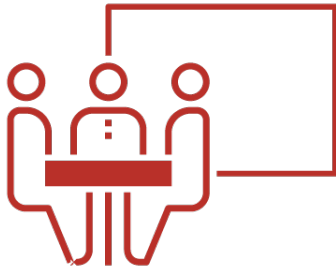
It also does not mean that decision-making is always the result of a vote. Importantly, shared governance aims to ensure that no one person is arbitrarily making important decisions absent the input and feedback from key constituents.



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FEATURES OF SHARED GOVERNANCE

Salient features of effective shared governance models that have been identified by organizations and institutions include:



- Partnerships between community constituents and leadership.
- Including and integrating input from all impacted stakeholders.
- Being facilitative rather than directive (e.g. mutually planned agendas for meetings).
- Embracing flexibility within boundaries.
- Listening to all perspectives as much as possible.
- Sharing accountability and ownership.
- Establishing a charter, or public document, that outlines the process of engagement, collaboration, and decision-making within the community.
- Establishing guidelines for how to practice shared governance.
- Ensuring formal and informal opportunities to communicate within the community.

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Discussion, Reflection, and Participation

- + *Community Ground Rules for Reflective & Respectful Discussion*
- + *Questions for Discussion and Reflection*
- + *What Happens Next?*
- + *Connect with a Shared Governance Advocate*

04

A FRAMEWORK TO FACILITATE A SHARED GOVERNANCE CONVERSATION⁴

Community Ground Rules for Reflective and Respectful Discussion

- Everyone participates; no one dominates (step up/step back)
- There are no “right answers”
- Listen with an open mind and an open heart
- It’s okay to disagree, but don’t be disagreeable
- Focus on *this* conversation (create a “parking lot” for other topics that come up, for a future conversation)

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Questions for Discussion and Reflection

- What are some ways in which our unit/group/department *currently enacts* principles of shared governance? What are some ways in which our unit/group/department might *better* enact principles of shared governance?
- How do we feel about this focal document and the principles of shared governance it outlines?
- What might be some additional/different principles that we feel are foundational, generally speaking, to sharing governance at SDSU?
- What encouragement do we think would help people to actively *want* to share in governance, at any "level" or in any "area" of campus?
- What are some campus topics/issues regarding which the intentional enactment of principles of shared governance could lead to constructive conversations?
- What other perspectives do we/I need to hear, to more fully reflect on sharing governance?

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Join the conversation!

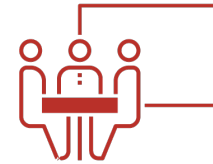
Add your voice to the SDSU Shared Governance Conversation. There are many ways to provide your thoughts or feedback. You can email one of the individuals on pages 23-24. Provide feedback via [An Open Conversation About Shared Governance](#).



Share this document with others



Join the Shared Governance Conversation



Attend an upcoming conversation meeting (pg. 22-23)



Email your questions or feedback to a Shared Governance Advocate (pg. 23-24)



Invite a shared governance ambassador to facilitate a conversation with your group (pg. 22-23)



I want to be part of an organization with a common vision and one that gives voice to its stakeholders; my contribution is becoming a shared governance advocate and giving voice to staff.

– Bann Attiq,
Appointment Analyst,
College of Sciences



Shared governance is about seeing each and every person on campus as a colleague and partner.

– Marcie Bober-
Michel, PhD
Professor,
Journalism



Shared governance requires continuous effort. It is a responsibility that gives us a say in our collective future.

– Karen May-
Newman, PhD
Professor,
Mechanical
Engineering

SHARED GOVERNANCE ADVOCATES (1 OF 2)

Connect with a current member of the shared governance open conversation.



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SHARED GOVERNANCE ADVOCATES (2 OF 2)

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LINKS TO REFERENCES & FURTHER READING

| <i>Reference #</i> | <i>Source</i> |
|--------------------|--|
| 1 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=blwsC25WeH8&t=27s |
| 2 | https://www.aaup.org/our-programs/shared-governance/resources-governance |
| 3 | https://ww2.mc.vanderbilt.edu/shared%20governance/23733 |
| 4 | See page 13 of “All-America Conversations Toolkit” for list of characteristics of good discussion facilitators, as well as page 14 for “Tips for Facilitators.” http://www.nationalcivicleague.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/All-America-Conversations-Toolkit-2017-FINAL.pdf |
| 5 | To report an error or omission in this document, contact Maria Keckler mkeckler@sdsu.edu |



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Thank You



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