Collegiality in the California State University System

Introduction

The smooth and effective operation of a complex multipurpose university system requires a spirit of collegiality that both reflects and fosters mutual respect among all groups within the system. Collegiality consists of a shared decision-making process and a set of attitudes which cause individuals to regard the members of the various constituencies of the university as responsible for the success of the academic enterprise.

Fundamental to this concept is the understanding that a university is a community of scholars who, out of mutual respect for the expertise and contributions of their colleagues, agree that shared decision-making in areas of recognized primary responsibility constitutes the means whereby a university best preserves its academic integrity and most effectively attains its educational mission.

During the past two-and-one-half decades, the California State University evolved from what had been a collection of teachers colleges operated by the State Department of Education into one of the largest university systems in the world. This development brought profound changes in the organization, size, and mission of the 19 institutions. The California State University has emerged as a complex institution with multiple, and sometimes conflicting, goals. These goals include providing an outstanding education for its students, assuring equal access for all qualified students, maintaining maximum opportunities for faculty professional development, protecting freedom of inquiry, advancing the cause of equal opportunity and affirmative action, and planning effectively for changing social, economic, and demographic realities. Achieving and reconciling these goals constitute a considerable challenge.

In the California State University, governance must combine two often conflicting types of authority. The faculty, by virtue of its expertise, has a responsibility for resolving a wide range of academic issues, including curriculum planning, peer evaluation, and academic policy. The Board of Trustees and administrators acting on its behalf have a responsibility to oversee the university in accord with the law and administrative code. The exercise of these legitimate responsibilities sometimes has led to conflict in university governance.

The state of mind of participants in collegial decision-making is an important determinant of the success of the process. Participants should consider one another as colleagues and should respect each other’s individual expertise and contributions. The adversarial implications of collective bargaining terminology must be left at the bargaining table and the grievance hearing and must not enter into the collegial decision-making process. Academic administrators should consider themselves “management” only in the context of collective bargaining.

Critics sometimes compare the functioning of a university to that of private enterprise, but such analogies are misleading. The basic objectives of a business are to maximize profits, to produce a
measurable commodity at a minimal cost, and to increase market share; a university strives for alternative and often conflicting achievements. Because of these differences, and because of the special role of faculty and students, decision-making in a university is a more diverse process than that of private industry. A collegial approach to decision-making is the means whereby the fundamental values of the university can be preserved, its conflicting objectives balanced, and its legal obligations to the state met.

Collegiality in the modern public university recognizes that the faculty, the Board of Trustees, and the administration are not the only entities which should participate in decision-making. Student views are particularly important on questions of extracurricular activities, recreational events, and student facilities planning. Obviously, students should participate when decisions are being made regarding curriculum development, program initiation or discontinuance, grading standards and practices, academic disciplinary policies, and student conduct codes.

Alumni, whose interest in and closeness to the university are recognized, also must have the opportunity to communicate their concerns and ideas to the university. The university community recognizes the vital help alumni give to it by fundraising, political action, suggestions for educational improvement, and support for community activities sponsored by the university.

Collegial decision-making encourages all constituencies within the university to participate in ways appropriate to their knowledge and responsibility. As the process proceeds, the parties should be sensitive to the concerns of others and should avoid acting unilaterally.

This document is part of the continuing efforts by the Academic Senate to develop appropriate governance procedures. Its formulation was precipitated by: (1) the concern of faculty, administrators, and students about how best to meet the primary function of the California State University—excellence in classroom instruction—within the context of providing increased access to all segments of society in the state; (2) the widely held belief by the faculty that some of its prerogatives and professional responsibilities have been abrogated; (3) the emergence of collective bargaining as an operational reality in the California State University; (4) significant changes in the administration’s view of its function as illustrated in the adoption of the Management Personnel Plan in 1985; and (5) a continued sense of frustration among faculty, and perhaps among administrators and students, over the inability of the California State University to develop a coherent, shared view of the university and its governance.

**Historical Development of Collegial Patterns of Decision-Making**

Shared decision-making in universities is unique among the administrative systems of large, modern organizations. Universities are complex, pluralistic institutions. Their structures, including their power structures, are loose, ambiguous, and constantly changing. In the evolution of modern universities, greater authority and responsibility have been granted to faculty than most employees in private industry or government service enjoy. The historical origins of faculty authority and responsibility can be found in the universities of the late medieval period.
European University Governance Patterns

The often cited ideal of the university as a free, independent community of scholars has seldom existed in reality. From their inception in medieval Europe, universities have contained four competing authorities: faculty, internal administration, students, and external lay governing bodies. There is no consistent historical precedent from the medieval period favoring the exclusive authority of one over the others.

The universities of northern Italy and Paris, dating from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, created the pattern for subsequent universities. In the case of Paris, the masters or faculty of these institutions generally came to control the curriculum. By the fourteenth century, however, ultimate authority resided with external bodies created to protect the interests of those—who authorized the existence of the university and who, in many cases, paid the faculty. Protestant universities created after the Reformation did not significantly depart from this pattern. The Calvinist founders of universities such as Geneva, Leyden, and Edinburgh subscribed to the Calvinist belief that all social institutions, including universities, should be overseen by laymen. They therefore created governing boards with final responsibility. However, they also made specific provision for initial faculty authority in academic matters.

The English universities of Oxford and Cambridge followed the continental pattern. While their charters provided for external boards (“visitors”), they also dramatically extended the authority of the faculty, who elected the heads of the colleges and were constituted as a formal governing body exercising internal legislative powers. For some two hundred years beginning about 1650, the faculty ran the colleges of these universities almost entirely free of external interference. In 1850, however, the English government stepped in and began to change the organization of Oxford and Cambridge; by 1870 the faculty had lost much of its power to rectors and lay boards.

The charters for every other English university founded in the preceding two centuries already had permitted strong external control through governing boards, although most included provision for faculty responsibility in educational matters.

The German universities of the nineteenth century broke from the tradition of external governing boards. Prior to that time, German universities had been subject to strong control by civil authorities. The University of Berlin, founded in 1810, set a new standard for the governance of German universities; its founders deliberately granted complete authority for academic matters to the faculty, hoping thereby to create a true community of scholars, free to study and teach without external control. The University of Berlin and subsequent German universities were governed by faculty boards composed of full professors who elected the rectors and deans. Civil authorities retained powers of faculty appointment and salaries, but the faculty had complete control over internal matters. Greatly admired by academics in other countries, these German universities provided a model for the transformation of American universities in the late nineteenth century. They also form the historical basis for the modern view that a university is a community of scholars and that the faculty should properly have primary responsibility for academic matters.
University Governance Patterns in the United States

Prior to the Civil War, university governance in the United States drew upon European and English patterns. The charter of Harvard College (founded in 1636) provided for a “Board of Overseers,” and the charters of all subsequent American universities contained similar provisions. Those who founded universities retained control over them and exercised that authority through rectors. At the same time, the Calvinist pattern of faculty control of academic matters and the model of Oxford and Cambridge resulted in significant delegation of responsibility to the faculty. Both Harvard and the College of William and Mary (founded in 1693) originally had dual boards, faculty and trustee, an arrangement that ensured significant faculty involvement in governance. Over time, however, the growth of the power of the external boards resulted in a decline in faculty authority.

The tradition of strong trustee authority continued into the nineteenth century. There were some exceptions: Yale University (founded in 1701) provided for extensive faculty control, and Thomas Jefferson made specific provisions for faculty control of the curriculum when he founded the University of Virginia (1819). Throughout the nineteenth century, patterns of governance varied from university to university depending upon individual traditions and the style of trustee boards, rectors or presidents. Universities were simple organizations, faculties were small, and the curriculum was standard. The faculty constituted nearly the entire university staff and was generally conceded to have some responsibility for curriculum. Trustee authority, however, was supreme. No American university resembled the Oxford-Cambridge model of a corporation of research and teaching fellows; none emulated the German model of near-complete control by faculty.

These conditions changed dramatically after 1860. Over the next four decades, a revolution in American higher education accompanied the emergence of industrial, urban, multi-ethnic America, so that the universities of 1900 bore little resemblance to those of 1860. Universities grew larger and structurally more complex, reflecting changes in the curriculum, especially the emergence of majors and electives.

The increasing size of universities and the need of university presidents and trustees to make informed decisions regarding increasingly diverse and specialized activities prompted the creation of middle-level administrative units and officers in a fashion analogous to the middle management in the concurrently emerging industrial corporations. At the same time the appearance of academic departments, each organized around an increasingly specialized discipline, brought a decentralization of authority over academic matters; the downward shift of such authority increased the power of the faculty, particularly in the older, elite, liberal arts institutions. Simultaneously, there came an even greater increase in the power of university presidents, who began to exercise many responsibilities formerly wielded by external boards. Trustees retained legal authority but, due to the growing size and complexity of universities, found themselves increasingly dependent upon the university president to summarize information and to present policy proposals, and the trustees thereby became more and more remote from the details of administration.
By the end of the century, it was generally recognized that the faculty had primary responsibility for academic matters. William Rainey Harper, president of the University of Chicago from 1891 to 1906, stated that it was the “…firmly established policy of the Trustees that the responsibility for the settlement of educational questions rests with the Faculties.” This authority found organizational expression in the creation of academic senates during the 1890s. Cornell University established the first senate, composed of the president and full professors, in 1889.

By 1900, American universities were organized much as they are today. Changes since then have been largely the result of an increase in size, structure, and complexity. The rapid growth of universities served to reinforce the patterns of the second half of the nineteenth century. Faculty tended to lose responsibility in administrative areas to presidents and to a rapidly increasing number of middle-level administrators. At the same time, the growing size and complexity of universities necessitated greater delegation of authority over educational matters to faculty and academic departments where expertise would facilitate decision-making and maximize the academic integrity of the university.

While the tradition of faculty authority over educational policy has been characteristic of elite, private institutions since the late nineteenth century, the past half century also has seen a significant movement toward collegial governance in publicly supported colleges and universities. In 1980, the Association of California State University Professors published a list of 100 colleges and universities in the United States in which the faculty had been granted authority in academic, educational, and professional matters. Among the many state-supported institutions on the list are University of California, University of Illinois, University of Michigan, Ohio State University, Pennsylvania State University, University of Texas, and University of Washington.

The growth of faculty influence in university governance accelerated after World War II. Faculty increasingly have come to regard themselves as professionals with expertise which, along with tradition, justified a major role in educational policy, research, personnel decisions, athletics, libraries, and auxiliary organizations. They see their authority as functional, i.e., based upon competence, and, as professionals, they believe their standards, integrity, and dedication are sufficient to justify their primary control of academic policy.

By the 1960s, this professionalism, combined with the tradition of faculty governance, produced a general acceptance of the ideal of a collegial university administrative structure based upon meaningful consultation within a formal governance structure on all matters of educational policy. The extent of demonstrated collegiality, however, varied among universities. If the influence of the faculty had generally grown, so also had the size of university administrations. Thus, there developed two bureaucracies within most large universities: the administration (president, vice presidents, provosts, and deans) and the faculty governance structure (senates, councils, and committees). The potential for conflict is inherent in such a bifurcated organization, but the spirit and reality of collegiality between administrative professionals and
academic professionals, despite their correspondingly different values based on varied responsibilities, can lead to satisfactory resolution of these conflicts.

**Governance Patterns in the California State University**

Preserving collegiality (shared governance) in the California State University is possible despite a bifurcated decision-making structure established in law and administrative code. The subchapter of title 5 which considers “Educational Programs” defines “Appropriate Campus Authority” as “…the president of the campus acting upon the recommendation of the faculty of the campus.” Similarly, state legislators noted in the Higher Education Employer-Employee Relations Act that:

The Legislature recognizes that joint decision-making and consultation between administration and faculty or academic employees is the long-accepted manner of governing institutions of higher learning and is essential to the performance of the educational missions of such institutions [Section 3561(b)]

Most recently the concept of joint decision-making was expressed in the statement by the Academic Senate of the California State University on “Responsibilities of Academic Senates Within a Collective Bargaining Context,” which received the endorsement of the Chancellor and some campus senates and presidents.

**Recent Changes in Governance Patterns**

In 1960 the Donahoe Higher Education Act transformed what had started as a few small-sized and medium-sized teachers colleges into the multi-purpose California State University system, now one of the largest systems of higher education in the nation. Its institutions began receiving closer legislative scrutiny of both budget and program, and increased centralization of administration brought a greater need for information and a greater emphasis on reporting responsibilities.

Ironically, some university officials have adopted a hierarchical managerial approach to the administration of universities at the very time when such management increasingly is seen as outmoded in private industry. This managerial approach is prone to regard collegiality as inefficient and imprecise. Administrators who see themselves as managers of the university emphasize resource management and efficiency and feel frustrated by collegiality because it does not allow them to do their job unfettered by the faculty. In many cases such administrators lose touch, or are perceived by the faculty as having lost touch, with the unique character of university governance and with the very purpose of the university.

Faculty are frustrated and ultimately alienated by demonstrations of hierarchical management. Like all professionals, faculty do not comfortably accept managerial control. The hallmark of a professional is self-direction; such an individual is not susceptible to being managed. Nor are faculty inclined to regard managers as colleagues, thus further reducing the level of mutual respect necessary for collegiality.
When hierarchical management occurs, a line is drawn between the faculty, who see themselves as defending the traditional values of higher education and the academic integrity of the institution, and the administrative managers, who see themselves as fostering the welfare of a large, complex business. This split has occurred on many campuses in the United States, and examples can be found in the California State University system.

This erosion of the spirit of collegiality has helped introduce, and on occasion has been exacerbated by, collective bargaining in higher education. Collective bargaining in higher education is the direct product of (1) the remarkable increase in the size of universities in the United States and the appearance of multiversities, (2) the shift to professional management techniques, and (3) fiscal retrenchments made necessary by reduced budgets. Because of these developments, some faculty across the nation, including those in the California State University, embraced unionization as a means to supplement—and occasionally supplant—patterns of academic governance and collegiality. As a result, the traditional division between faculty and administrators recently has grown wider on some campuses. Presidents, instead of being first among their academic peers, too frequently appear to be managers and chief executive officers. Faculty who once took pride in the professorial ideal of unselfish and underpaid dedication to the university and to teaching and research are now increasingly inclined to regard the same issues as working conditions. The institutions and the students of the California State University are the losers.

Maintaining and Improving Shared Decision-Making in the California State University

The Academic Senate of the California State University does not believe that the shared decision-making of the collegial model and the shared decision-making of the collective bargaining mode are inherently incompatible. They represent different approaches to different types of decisions. By outlining the types of decisions appropriate to the collegial process and the usual steps involved in the collegial process for these decisions, the Academic Senate hopes that this statement will help to keep separate the two approaches to decision-making and simultaneously will help to maintain and improve the collegial process of shared decision-making. The three major types of decisions to be discussed below are those involving the curriculum, other aspects of academic policy, and the faculty itself.

Collegiality in Curricular Decisions

The university’s curriculum is central to the operation of the institution and is the principal concern of the faculty. The curriculum is determined within the framework of established educational goals. Although there is great diversity in the California State University system, all campuses must conform to general policies established by law and by the California State University Board of Trustees. But within those limits, each campus develops its own mission statement, which is the product of faculty and administrators engaging in a collegial process.

The faculty have a professional responsibility to define and offer a curriculum of the highest academic quality. In some fields, this professional responsibility is exercised within accrediting
guidelines developed and enforced by professional associations. This professional responsibility cannot, by its very nature, be delegated. The faculty, therefore, have primary responsibility for making curricular recommendations to the president. Normally, the president will accept the advice and recommendations of the faculty on curriculum matters. Faculty appropriately have this responsibility because they possess the expertise to judge best whether courses, majors, and programs adhere to scholarly standards.

Among curricular decisions for which faculty should have primary responsibility are:

1. The initiation of new academic courses and programs, and the discontinuance of academic courses and programs;
2. Course content, including choice of texts, syllabus design, assignments, course organization, and methods of evaluating students;
3. The designation of courses as degree or nondegree applicable, lower or upper division, or graduate level;
4. The content of the general education program within systemwide guidelines. Faculty should designate appropriate courses and establish the requirements for completion of the program. Faculty should be responsible for review and revision of the program;
5. The adoption, deletion, or modification of requirements for degree major programs, minor programs, formal concentrations within programs, credential programs, and certificate programs;
6. The establishment of minimum conditions for the award of certificates and degrees to students, and the approval of degree candidates; and
7. Recruitment decisions affecting curriculum.

Generally, since any curricular decision affects the primary mission of the university—the education of students—collegiality also demands student involvement in developing the curriculum.

Although practices on the various campuses will differ, decisions affecting curriculum will generally proceed through a process of (1) initiation by a faculty member or academic administrator, (2) approval by a department committee, (3) approval by curriculum committees at one or more levels, (4) approval by other relevant committees (general education, graduate programs, interdisciplinary), and (5) approval or review by the campus senates. The recommendation is then forwarded to the president.

The major limitations on faculty autonomy in curricular decision-making include constraints related to the general policies of the California State University system, the campus mission, budgets, and staffing limitations. Consultation among faculty and administrators should ensure that faculty are well aware of both the constraints on, and the possibilities for, program development and innovation. Faculty can be expected to make responsible judgments if they are in close consultation with administrators and thus kept knowledgeable of developments affecting curricular matters.
Collegiality in Academic Policy Decisions

Because the university’s curriculum is of central concern to the faculty and because faculty have the primary responsibility in curricular decisions, it follows that faculty should have the major voice in academic policy decisions which closely affect the curriculum, access to the curriculum, or the quality of the curriculum. All of the following are examples of academic policy:

1. Criteria, standards, and procedures for adoption, deletion, or modification of degree major programs, minor programs, formal concentrations within programs, credential programs, and certificate programs; Grading practices and standards;
2. Criteria, standards, and procedures for earning credit or satisfying requirements outside the classroom, including competency examinations for English composition and in U.S. history and government, credit by examination, and credit for experiential learning;
3. Both short-run and long-range planning, including definition or modification of the campus mission statement, determination of the general scope and relative size or priority of campus programs, modifications of the campus academic master plan, annual campus allocation of faculty positions to schools or other units, and annual campus budget allocations;
4. Criteria, standards, and procedures for evaluating programs, the quality of instruction, faculty currency, and all other evaluations of the quality of the curriculum or of instruction;
5. Campus policies which govern resources which support or supplement the curriculum, especially the library and research facilities;
6. Campus policies which govern auxiliary institutions which support or supplement the curriculum, especially the campus foundation and the campus bookstore;
7. Student affairs policies, especially those governing financial aid, advisement, learning services, Equal Opportunity Programs, and related services which determine the extent to which students can avail themselves of the curriculum;
8. Campus and system policies governing withdrawal, probation, reinstatement, and disqualification which affect access to the curriculum and which can affect program quality;
9. Co-curricular activities, especially those which increase the likelihood that students will benefit fully from the curriculum or those which distract students from the curriculum, including intercollegiate athletic programs, and the relationship of those programs to the academic program and mission of the campus; and
10. The academic calendar, including the first and last days of instruction and the scheduling of final examinations.

Faculty and administrators recognize that such policy decisions dramatically affect the quality of education afforded to students and agree that these decisions will involve students.

The process of academic policy-making will vary from one campus to another and may vary from one type of decision to another on the same campus. Collegial patterns of decision-making, however, should be followed in all instances. On every California State University campus, the full faculty and the faculty’s representative body, the campus senate/council, are the agencies for collegial decision-making. Some types of decisions may be made directly by the campus senate/
council. In other instances, the faculty or campus senate/council may create a special body to develop academic policy in some area; if so, that body should include at least a majority of faculty representatives, chosen either by direct election or by the campus senate/council.

In the case of curricular decisions, the faculty should usually be the initiator of policy, within the constraints of budget, law, and system policy. By contrast, in the case of academic policy, proposals for changes in policy or for new policy may arise from academic administrators. The Chancellor or Board of Trustees may designate campus administrators as responsible for implementation of systemwide policies. In every instance, collegiality requires that the academic administrator work closely with the appropriate faculty representatives. When a change in policy or a new policy is needed, the faculty should be invited to participate fully in framing the policy. When an academic administrator presents a policy question to the faculty, the faculty should give it full consideration, and the academic administrator should participate as a colleague in order to arrive at agreement. Where there are differences of opinion, compromise should be sought. All academic administrators should be constantly alert to the policy implications of their decisions. If a decision may have policy dimensions or implications, the academic administrator should bring the matter to the attention of the appropriate faculty representatives.

**Collegiality in Faculty Affairs**

The faculty’s professional competencies (derived from academic training, teaching experience, and continuing professional development) must play a significant and often decisive role in decisions regarding curriculum and academic policy. It is also the faculty who implement academic plans, programs, and curricula. Policies and procedures used in building, maintaining, and renewing the university faculty are vital determinants of the quality of the education the university provides to its students and to society.

The professional competencies that are central to curricular and academic policy should be comparably decisive and significant in the genesis and implementation of faculty personnel policies, procedures, and criteria. Recommendations regarding hiring, retention or nonretention, awarding of tenure, promotion, and disciplinary actions are best left to faculty who are technically competent in their disciplines and in pedagogy and who are in the best position to observe and make judgments on such matters as faculty performance and the specific staffing needs of academic programs.

Academic administrators may propose changes in faculty affairs policies. Proposals from administrators should be forwarded to the appropriate faculty committee for review and action in accordance with normal policy development procedures. The administrator should be invited to meet with the committee to discuss the proposal.

“Faculty affairs,” in this context, refers to those decisions regarding personnel policies, procedures, and criteria which have a potential impact on the quality of the curriculum. The following are examples of such faculty affairs decisions:

1. The establishment of criteria and standards for hiring, retention, tenure, and promotion;
2. The hiring of new faculty members, including the establishment of qualifications, development of procedures for implementing university policies such as affirmative action, evaluation of candidates, and the recommendation to the appropriate administrator;

3. The granting of tenure to faculty members, including the establishment of criteria and standards, the evaluation of candidates for tenure, and the recommendation to the appropriate administrator;

4. The development of appropriate criteria and standards for layoff and retrenchment;

5. The promotion of faculty members, including establishment of criteria and standards, the evaluation of candidates for promotion, and the recommendation to the appropriate administrator;

6. The selection of department chairs, including establishment of the election process and of criteria and standards, and the recommendation to the appropriate administrator;

7. The selection, evaluation, and retention of all academic administrators (i.e., those administrators who also hold an academic appointment and who have the potential for exercising retreat rights to a faculty position), including establishment of qualifications, composition of the search committee (which should always include a majority of faculty representatives), evaluation of candidates for appointment, and recommendation to the appropriate administrator; and

8. Recommendations regarding the selection, evaluation, and retention of nonacademic administrators whose duties involve substantial influence on the curriculum.

Obviously, while evaluating faculty for retention, promotion, and tenure, committees must take into account student perceptions.

The process of collegial decision-making in faculty affairs areas will vary somewhat, depending on the type of decision. In decisions involving hiring, retention, tenure, and promotion, the criteria and standards shall normally be determined through the campus senate/council and implemented through departmental committees and other appropriate faculty committees at levels above the department. Faculty committees must abide by all California State University and campus policies, such as affirmative action requirements. Administrators should assume that faculty committees are best qualified to judge the teaching effectiveness and other merits of the candidates.

Administrators should decide contrary to faculty recommendations only if there is clear indication of violation of system or campus policies or clear indication that the faculty committee failed to consider relevant information, in which instance the administrator should provide the faculty committee with written reasons for the decision and should refer the matter back to the faculty committee for reconsideration.

Department chairs have a substantial impact on the quality of the curriculum as well as on the quality of professional life. Because of their key role in implementing a range of decisions, department chairs should be acceptable to both the faculty of the department and to the university’s administration. The campus senate/council should develop policy defining the minimum guidelines to follow in the selection of department chairs. When faculty act within those guidelines to recommend a candidate for appointment, administrators should assume that
the faculty are best able to judge the effectiveness and merits of the candidates; administrators should deny a faculty choice only for cause and should explain fully any such decision to the faculty in question. Administrators should not impose a chair upon a faculty against its wishes except in rare instances and for compelling reasons which should be clearly stated in writing.

Because most academic administrators hold both academic and administrative positions, they have the option of exercising “retreat rights” and thereby becoming members of the instructional faculty. Academic administrators also have an impact on the curriculum. To maintain the quality of the instruction, faculty members should be closely involved in the evaluation and recommendation of candidates for academic administrative positions, both to evaluate the qualifications of the candidates, who might exercise retreat rights, and to evaluate the fitness of the candidates to make crucial decisions affecting the curriculum.

Conclusion

Authority in the modern public university derives from two quite different sources: (a) from the knowledge of subject matter and the pedagogic expertise of the faculty and (b) from the power vested by law and administrative code in governing boards and administrators. The collegial decision-making process evolved nearly a century ago as a means of reconciling these two types of authority. Collegial governance must resolve conflict within the university, while preserving respect and understanding among the faculty, trustees, administrators, students, and alumni.

Central to collegiality and shared decision-making is tolerance, which might be defined as a civil regard for differing opinions and points of view. Tolerance welcomes diversity and actively sponsors its opinions. The collegium must be the last public bastion of respect for individuals, whether they are members of the faculty, student body, staff, alumni, administration, or Board of Trustees.

The faculty must exercise its authority responsibly and recognize the legitimacy of administrative authority. If faculty members fail to act responsibly, academic administrators have an obligation to intervene. If an academic administrator fails to act responsibly, the faculty is professionally obligated to seek rectification of the problem. At all times, the various entities should try to reach an accommodation which is sensitive to the concerns of the university’s constituencies.

Academic administrators and the faculty may not always be able to achieve consensus, even when they approach a problem in a properly collegial state of mind and when they exert their best efforts to achieving consensus through rational dialogue. In such circumstances, the appropriate administrator should meet with faculty representatives to discuss their differences. The more closely a decision affects the curriculum, the more the administrator should defer to the views of the faculty. Administrators should reject faculty proposals if the proposals are contrary to system policy or law or if they cannot be implemented due to budgetary constraints, but administrators should not reject faculty proposals merely out of differences of opinion. When there is disagreement on an issue, all parties should undertake a serious reconsideration of their positions.
The California State University’s system administration is also important in encouraging collegial decision-making. California State University directives requiring campus implementation should always include sufficient time to allow for full consideration through the collegial decision-making process. Shared decision-making is time consuming, especially when the issue is complex. When California State University administrators direct campus administrators to develop campus policy and specify short timelines, they place the campus administrator in an untenable position. Time constraints are an unacceptable reason for bypassing full and collegial consideration.

The California State University administration should encourage collegial patterns of thought and behavior in other ways as well. It should itself be a model of collegiality, limiting its managerial mode to the bargaining table and to the working conditions specified in the contracts. It should specifically encourage all campus presidents to do the same and should incorporate appropriate references to the key role of the faculty and to the process of collegial decision-making into all memoranda and directives which address curricular, academic, or faculty matters. Ability to sustain good collegial relations through shared decision-making should be one of the most important criteria in evaluating campus presidents and candidates for appointment as campus presidents.

In fostering collegial, shared governance, all members of the university community must realize that conflict within the university is inevitable. The challenge is to resolve conflict or at least bring it to closure, while maintaining due regard for the prerogatives, expertise, and responsibilities of those involved. Disagreements must be vigorously and openly debated, then resolved through procedures of shared decision-making. Differing perspectives must be tolerated and respected. The university suffers seriously when faculty-administrative relations erode to “us versus them.” All members of the university community must treat one another with respect and honesty.

Mechanisms for shared decision-making exist systemwide and on each campus. What is needed now is the commitment of students, faculty, administrators, and the Board of Trustees to use these institutions in accordance with the principles discussed in this document. By so doing, they will accomplish the sensitive, thoughtful resolution of the inevitable conflicts that arise in the university, and they will thereby create a better university.

(This document was approved by the Statewide Academic Senate in March 1985.)