

5-2005

Resolution on Shared Governance

Gary Lyon
Governors State University

Follow this and additional works at: http://opus.govst.edu/facultysenate_documents

Recommended Citation

Lyon, Gary, "Resolution on Shared Governance" (2005). *Faculty Senate Documents*. Paper 10.
http://opus.govst.edu/facultysenate_documents/10

This Resolution is brought to you for free and open access by the Faculty Senate at OPUS Open Portal to University Scholarship. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Senate Documents by an authorized administrator of OPUS Open Portal to University Scholarship. For more information, please contact opus@govst.edu.

Faculty Senate Resolution on Shared Governance
A Memo from Dr. Gary Lyon, President, Faculty Senate
May, 2005

At its May, 2005 meeting, the Governors State University Faculty Senate passed the following resolution:

“Tenured/tenure-track faculty shall have the sole authority to develop and implement academic policies and by-laws at the program, division, department, and college levels.”

This resolution has been the source of a good deal of comment and a bit of controversy, so perhaps some explanation of its purpose and philosophy is in order.

GSU currently has no university-wide policy regarding who implements academic policies and by-laws at the program, division, department, and college levels. Please note that the proposed resolution specifically refers to academic policies. The Faculty Senate wishes to make sure that the faculty retains control of the curriculum of the university. As we see it, the function of the administration is to ensure that the university has the resources that it needs to effectively serve its students. The faculty should be in charge of implementing and developing the curriculum.

On its face, this seems obvious. Independent faculty, hired by national search and recognized as experts in their fields, should be in charge of implementing and developing the curriculum. However, like many other institutions, GSU has become increasingly dependent on hiring faculty at the level of instructor. Many of these faculty are extremely competent and bring a great deal to their programs and the university as a whole. But the fact remains that these excellent people were not hired through a national search and are relatively more dependent upon the administration for their job security than are the tenured/tenure track faculty. It is to be expected that they may have a different view of how curriculum should be implemented and developed.

The Faculty Senate therefore has endorsed the position that it is in the best interest of the university and its students to have the curriculum implemented by a relatively independent body of experts in the respective fields, which is to say that tenured/tenure track faculty should do this. It is my personal experience that this is the almost universal practice at colleges and universities in the United States. With the adoption of student grades, faculty rank, and the recent emphasis on scholarship, GSU is evolving toward a traditional model of higher education. The Faculty Senate stance on faculty control of curricular implementation and control seems consistent with the evolution of the university.

I understand that a good portion of the university community may well disagree with this analysis. I would like to say that I have worked on both sides of the fence, having been an instructor for many years and now serving as a tenure-track faculty member. I treasured my years as an instructor and value the contributions of my colleagues and friends who now serve in this role. It is my belief that their ideas and expertise should carefully be considered by each program. Nevertheless, I remain convinced that the Senate resolution as passed is in the best interest of the university.