



2025

# Overview of University Shared Governance at Radford University

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University shared governance documents describe the organization of shared governance, identifies the participants, and outlines the processes to be followed. It includes a set of guidelines about the roles and authority of stakeholders, such as the Board of Visitors, faculty, administration, staff, and students, in decision making.

This document is intended to build and maintain a culture of transparency and trust, in which all stakeholders are encouraged to share knowledge and insights that will allow the university to [address complex issues and adapt to](#) current needs. An open and effective system of university shared governance will be receptive and responsive to change. Procedures for amending the University Shared Governance documents and processes are described within to allow the university to grow and evolve.

All documents and responsibilities for maintaining the system of university shared governance resides within the Office of the President, supported by the Office of the Chief of Staff. Updates to governance documents, including but not limited to committee membership lists with terms, responses to motions for representative bodies, and communication about changes will be housed within that office. The University Shared Governance Review Committee reviews and approves any proposals for changes in the Shared Governance structure and document coming from any shared governance constituency before the proposal moves to the President for final consideration.

## Purpose and Principles of Shared Governance

“Shared governance is a system of open communication aimed at aligning priorities, creating a culture of shared responsibility for the welfare of the institution, and creating a system of checks and balances to ensure the institution stays mission-centered” (Bahls 2014).

At Radford University, shared governance addresses issues related to the core academic mission and also the administrative functions and policies related to implementing that mission. Radford University is strongly committed to shared governance that includes all stakeholders because the resulting decisions will be better-informed and more sustainable than ones derived from one individual or from a cadre representing only one constituency. Understanding, based on community of interest, and producing joint effort is essential. Decisions and recommendations that are best for the welfare of the university as a whole are based upon processes in which individuals listen to all ideas, respect competing concerns, and evaluate alternatives.

Certain fundamental principles are vital in order to foster a healthy system and culture of shared governance. An open and effective system of university shared governance must:

- delineate clear pathways for decision-making,
- identify specific participants and their roles within decision-making,
- facilitate open discussion in which participants share freely
- ensure agency and autonomy of the representative bodies
- support ability of representative bodies to effectively collaborate, coordinate, and communicate.
- regularly review the University Shared Governance document and processes.

## University Shared Governance Constituents and Representative Bodies

The University Shared Governance document provides a broad structure or framework for governance, with the inclusion of the President, the President's Cabinet, the Leadership Council, the Student Government Association, the Faculty Senate, the Administrative Senate, and the Staff Senate, as well as necessary committees and/or councils. Each division may have additional elements of shared governance for decisions at that level.

### **Board of Visitors**

As public trustees, the Board has overall responsibility and authority, subject to constitutional and statutory limitations, for the continuing operation, development of evolving policies and financial oversight of the university. Appointment of members of the Board, and authority for implementing the shared governance system is delegated to the President through the by-laws of the Board of Visitors, who serves as the agent of the Board and as Chief Executive Officer of Radford University.

### **The President**

For the continuing operation and development of the institution, much of the authority of the Board of Visitors is delegated to the President, who serves as agent of the Board and chief executive officer of the university. Delegated authority includes the approval of revisions to the University Shared Governance document.

### **President's Cabinet**

The Cabinet is an Advisory group that meets at the request of the President. While the President names Cabinet members, it customarily includes the President, Vice Presidents who oversee divisions, and may include other staff member designated by the President. The Cabinet's function is to review and make recommendations regarding actions affecting the operation and development of the university. The President may delegate decision- making authority to the President's Cabinet or to individual members when appropriate.

Members may delegate decision-making authority when appropriate in keeping with the philosophy that decision-making authority should be delegated to the lowest appropriate level.

### **The Leadership Council**

The Leadership Council serves as an advisory group for the President and is comprised of the members of the President's Cabinet as well as the Deans of the colleges, the Director of Athletics, and other staff members designated by the President.

### **Teaching and Research Faculty**

The Teaching and Research (T&R) Faculty must maintain a representative body, the

Faculty Senate, that shall speak for its members as a whole on matters of curricula and programs, co-curricular offerings and resources, and professional standards and activities, as well as on other issues that may affect the welfare of the university community. The Faculty Senate maintains a constitution and bylaws that specify (at minimum): charges, membership, leadership, Senate standing committees, functions, and process and pathways for motions and resolutions.

This Senate (1) initiates, (2) approves or (3) reviews and comments upon proposals. Pathways for curricular, policy, and structural changes in Academic Affairs are presented in the Academic Governance document. Procedures for changes in the Faculty Senate Constitution are described in that document. Procedures for changes in the Teaching and Research Faculty Handbook are described in that document.

This Senate is responsible for appointing faculty to represent their constituencies on standing committees except in cases where it is specified that members are elected or chosen by some other means.

### **Administrative and Professional Faculty**

The Administrative and Professional (AP) Faculty must maintain a representative body, the Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate that shall speak for its members as a whole on matters of policies and procedures affecting the employment and working conditions of administrative and professional faculty, as well as on other issues that may affect the welfare of the university community.

As appropriate, this Senate shall (1) initiate, (2) approve, or (3) review and comment upon proposals. This Senate shall also be responsible for appointing faculty to represent their constituencies standing committees except in cases where it is specified that members will be elected or chosen by some other means. Procedures for changes in the Administrative Professional Faculty Senate by-laws are described in that document and include: charges, membership, leadership, structure, and clear pathways for motions.

### **Students**

Every student becomes a member of the Student Government Association (SGA) upon matriculation in the university. The SGA Senate serves as the primary legislative body for the students and serves as a body for student expression and participation in campus policy decisions. The SGA Senate speaks for graduate and undergraduate

students on matters of curricula and programs, co-curricular offerings and resources, and policies and procedures for student evaluation of faculty, as well as on other issues that affect the welfare of the university community.

As appropriate, the SGA Senate shall (1) initiate, (2) approve, or (3) review and comment upon proposals. The association is responsible for appointing students to represent its constituencies on standing committees except in cases where it is specified that members are elected or chosen by some other means.

### **Classified Employees**

Classified and wage employees (1500 hours) shall maintain a representative body, the Staff Senate, that shall speak for their constituency on matters pertaining to safety and working conditions and campus environment, as well as on other issues that may affect the welfare of the university community.

As appropriate, this Association shall (1) initiate, (2) approve, or (3) review and comment upon proposals. The association also shall be responsible for appointing wage employees to represent its constituencies on standing committees except in cases where it is specified that members will be elected or chosen by some other means.

Procedures for changes in the Classified Staff Senate by-laws are described in that document and include: charges, membership, leadership, structure, and clear pathways for motions.

### **Other Stakeholders**

This document does not preclude stakeholders subsumed by the above categories from organizing associations, councils, or other bodies to represent their interests. However, in terms of Shared Governance, only the senates and committees identified in this document are authorized to formally initiate proposals. Stakeholders wishing to introduce a proposal must submit it to the first level in the proposal pathway.

## Standing Committees

Standing committees, councils, and task forces (collectively, Committees) are established as necessary for the purpose of advising the President, the President's Cabinet, and other administrators; considering and making recommendations regarding a variety of university policies and procedures; and/or carrying out those policies and procedures.

Standing committees exist at the university, division, college, and department level, though this document guides university and division level standing committees. These committees are listed at the end of the document. Additionally, ad hoc and advisory committees may be established on a temporary basis pending completion of the governance process. Membership, officers, and charges should be reported to the Office of the Chief of Staff for updating of documents and posting on the shared governance website.

### **Comparison of Shared Governance versus Shared Operational Committees**

Shared governance committees participate in the governance of the university and division. These focus on policy, oversight and shared decision-making. The shared governance committees shape the rules, priorities, and long-term direction of the institution. Shared operational committees support the implementation and management functions of the university. These guide the practical work of running the university once policies and priorities are set. Standing committees serve a primary function but may overlap in domain. Those that have both will be listed as shared governance.

## Procedures for Standing Committees

### **Creating, Modifying, or Sunsetting Committees**

The University Shared Governance Review Committee (USGRC) has review and recommend authority on the formation, changing charges or membership, or sunsetting Standing Committees. All committee proposals should be brought to USGRC for initial review and initiation of pathway review. The President and Vice Presidents, as well as constituent groups, may propose these changes for consideration by the governance review pathways. The President and Vice Presidents have the authority to empanel Task Forces, and will inform the Office of the Chief of Staff and USGRC.

### **Membership on Committees**

As committees are formed, appropriate and relevant stakeholders will be represented on standing committees, including Teaching and Research faculty, Administrative and Professional faculty, classified staff, and students. Unless otherwise noted within specific committee charges and membership, appointed committee members are appointed in the following fashion:

- Student appointments are made by the SGA President/Senate, or by the Vice President for Student Affairs if the SGA President/Senate is unable to make the appointment by the .
- Faculty appointments are made by the Faculty Senate Executive Council. All faculty committee election results and appointments will be reported to the Office of the Chief of Staff by the close of business on Friday of first week of classes for the fall semester.
- Administrative and professional faculty appointments are made by the AP Senate Executive Council.
- Classified and wage (1500 hours) staff appointments are made by the Staff Senate Executive Committee.
- Members of the Institutional Review Board for Research Involving Human Subjects and the Institutional Animal Care & Use Committee are appointed by the Associate Provost for Research, Faculty Success, and Strategic Initiatives in accord with federal policies governing these.
- When individuals are representing specific units or offices, appointments are made by the appropriate vice president.
- Persons who serve by virtue of position may appoint a designee.
- Confirmation letters will be sent out by the close of business of the third week of the fall semester.

### **Terms of service on committees**

- Unless otherwise indicated, terms of service on standing committees are two years for all non-student members beginning with the start of the fall semester. To ensure continuity, terms of non-student members should be staggered.
- The term of appointment for students is one year.
- Members, whether student or non-student, may be reappointed or reelected when allowable by the appropriate governing document of that committee.
- If a substitute is appointed or elected to complete the term of any committee member, the substitute's term will expire at the end of the original term.

### **Timeline for constituting and convening committees**

Elections for college-level faculty committee representatives must conclude no later than the close of business on Friday of the first week of classes of the Fall semester. In the case of faculty membership vacancies, new members will be elected by their college/school to fulfill the remainder of the original terms to fulfill the remainder of the original terms.

Unless otherwise indicated, the following officers of university committees are elected annually by the members of the committee:

- chair
- vice chair, and
- recording secretary.

All university committees must convene and elect officers no later than close of business on Friday of the fourth week of classes of the fall semester.

### **Committee Pathways**

Pathways for university shared governance and shared operational standing committees are described below and identify role and chain of decisions. Divisions may have their own pathways which are available via the shared governance website. Divisions without pathways will default the shared operational pathways.

### **Categories of action**

Each constituent in a pathway (committee, senate, or administrator) is authorized to take one of the following types of actions with respect to a proposal:

Review and Recommend: when constituents review the proposal, they may call in the proposer or other affected parties. Constituents must recommend proposal as submitted, recommend the proposal subject to changes, or reject the proposal. Their recommendation, along with any justification for recommended changes or rejections will be forwarded to all constituents in the pathway. The recommendations may include separate consideration of related actions. If a proposer does not agree with any parts of a recommendation, they may attach comments to be included in the proposal's documentation as it moves forward.

Approve: the constituents have the authority to approve or disapprove the proposal. If the proposal is approved it is forwarded, along with any comments and recommendations received, to the next constituent, if any. If the proposal is not approved, it is not forwarded to the next constituent in the pathway. If the proposal contains amendments (changes in wording, deletions or

additions), the proposer may withdraw the proposal within ten class days during the regular academic year. All constituencies in the path up to this point will be notified of the decision and the rationale for the decision. In the case of disapproval, the proposer may seek an appeal following the appeal process described below or may revise and resubmit the proposal in light of any recommendations.

Move through: the constituent is responsible for ensuring that the proposal moves on to the next level for review and comment or approval.

Informed: other affected parties that are not constituents in the pathway will be informed upon final approval of a proposal.

**Shared Governance:**

- Recommendations are reviewed by one or more senates.
- Committee recommendations related to its administration, changes to structure, membership, and charges can be proposed by any stakeholder, but are initiated and reviewed by the committee.
- The proposal pathway begins with the committee, who has review and recommending authority.
- Proposals are reviewed and recommended by governing bodies.
- Those recommendations are reviewed and recommended by the appropriate division head.
- Final review and recommendation is conducted by University Shared Governance Review Committee.
- The President has ultimate approval authority on recommendations.

Full committee documents are available at the end of the document.

**Shared Operational:**

- Recommendations are reported and acted upon by appropriate division heads.
- Recommendations related to the committee administration, or changes to structure, membership, and charges can be proposed by any stakeholder but are initiated and reviewed by the committee.
- Review pathway begins with the committee, who has review and recommend authority. Proposals are reviewed and recommended by governing bodies.
- Those recommendations are reviewed and recommended by the appropriate division head.

- Final review and recommendation is conducted by University Shared Governance Review Committee.
- The President has ultimate approval authority on recommendations.

### Timetable for actions

Action	Date
Faculty positions elected and reported to Office of the Chief of Staff	Friday of the second week of the fall semester
Senate appointments to committees reported to the Chief of the Staff	Friday of the second week of the fall semester
Student appointments completed and reported	Friday of the second week of the Fall semester
Committees convene and elect officers	Friday of the fourth week of the fall semester
Membership and officers posted on the Shared Governance website	Friday of the fifth week of the fall semester
Annual reports due to the Designated Administrator	Friday of the final week of the spring semester

### Designated Administrators

For each committee, a designated administrator is identified. Designated administrators are by default the President or Vice President, or delegated to others by those individuals. The roles are chosen because the committees' charges fall under their purview. They are responsible for facilitating the business of the committees. Designated administrators are listed as appropriate for support of committees. Senate presidents act as their representative body's designated administrators.

### *Guidelines for Designated Administrators*

- Convene the first meeting of the committee by the fourth week of the fall semester and work with the committee to establish a regular meeting time.

- By the fourth week, if the committee has not already done so, facilitate the election of the chair, vice chair and recording secretary by members of the committee. The designated administrator will then notify the Office of the Chief of Staff website of the name, university address, phone number, and e-mail address of the committee's officers via a form on the shared governance website.
- Support the committee's charges and arrange for new committee members to be informed about the function and procedures of the committee.
- Serve as a resource for the chairperson and the committee (e.g., communication with all appropriate university stakeholders, preparation of proposals using the appropriate forms and format, routing of proposals, other guidelines and procedures).
- Designated administrators will be thoroughly familiar with shared governance document as they apply to their designated areas of responsibility.
- The designated administrator may choose to participate fully in meetings of the committee as a non-voting member except in cases of committee meetings in which appeals or grievances are being considered (i.e. committees in which appeals are being considered that may later be considered by the designated administrator).

### **Reporting Responsibilities**

Governance committees, except for the Faculty Appeals, Faculty Grievance, and AP Faculty Grievance, the committees' annual reports are due to their designated administrators by the Friday of the week following the last week of the spring semester. Designated Administrators are responsible for forwarding all reports to the Office of the Chief of Staff for posting on the Shared Governance website. Report any changes in position titles or personnel to the Office of the Chief of Staff.

### **Parliamentary Authority**

Robert's Rules of Order, in the form of its most recent edition, will govern all representative bodies and committee proceedings. Standing committees will follow Robert's Rules of Order and encourage full participation of all members of the committee. Additionally, committees that have or develop internal policies for carrying out their responsibilities will submit those documents and

any subsequent revisions to the appropriate Designated Administrators for review and approval. A copy of these documents is to be filed with the Designated Administrator.

### **Attendance and Participation**

All members are expected to attend and participate in all activities of their respective committee. Members are expected to be prepared, including reviewing preparatory committee materials. In the case of excessive absences or non-participation (by the judgment of the committee chair, in consultation of the Designated Administrator), the committee chair will request that the appropriate senate/official will be asked by the committee chair to appoint someone who can and will participate regularly. Committee members may identify substitutes for a particular meeting. Substitutes retain the voting rights of the committee members. Proxy votes, however, are not acceptable, as per Robert's Rules of Order.

All members of the Radford University community have an responsibility to behave ethically and in the best interest of the university, as outlined in the Highlander Code of Ethics (<https://www.radford.edu/about/mission/ethics.html>).

### **Meetings and Proceedings**

Except when personnel matters are being considered, such as grievances and appeals, all committee meetings are open to the public. Observers may request permission of a committee to make statements. A quorum is based on a simple majority of the voting membership of the committee, excluding any membership positions that are vacant after the end of the fifth week of the fall semester. Members of the committee may and should abstain from voting when they have a conflict of interest in the vote. Each committee will keep and distribute agendas and minutes to the members of the committee and the appropriate administrators. Copies of the minutes and supporting documents will be maintained on the currently adopted university-wide platform by the designated administrator or designee for the current and previous academic years at a minimum.

### **Subcommittees**

Subcommittees, working groups, or other divisions of Committees may be formed by a vote of the Committee. Subcommittees should have a defined membership and charge that is clearly related to the charge of the Committee.

### **Confidential Discussions and Documents**

University In accordance with the principles of the shared governance system, when working papers and correspondences are submitted to committees they will be treated as public documents. University standing committees will not withhold any documents or records of discussions (except those protected by federal and state law) from any individual or group. [Virginia Code 2.2-3705.7](#) allows the working papers and correspondences of the chief executive officer of any public institution to be kept confidential for deliberative and personal uses.

## Initiating and Processing Proposals

The pathways for proposals for university-wide changes begin with one of the shared governance committees or senates listed herein. Copies of the initial proposal may also be sent simultaneously for information purposes to other constituencies in the approval pathway. For some actions, specific formats may be required, e.g. new course proposals. If not, the proposal should at a minimum include a title for the proposed change, a description of the change and the contact information for the initial author(s) as well as a rationale for the change. If appropriate, include an analysis of the impact of the proposal on affected stakeholders, programs and offices. When changes are proposed to senate handbooks, constitutions, and/or bylaws, specify the sections and language to be altered. If the proposal includes any fiscal impacts, a budget should also be included. The proposal must include a signature block with lines for each reviewing and approving authority required in the pathway and lines for the dates the action is required and when it occurred.

### **Timeline**

The initial author(s) of the proposal is responsible for tracking the progress of the proposal and moving the proposal forward through each step in the pathway, including any suggestions or recommendations already made. Constituents with a role in reviewing and recommending or with approval authority have up to 20 class days during the regular academic year to fulfill their function. Faculty Senate, however, has 40 class days during the regular academic year to allow for review by sub-committees and full review by the Senate. Proposals intended to be considered by Faculty Senate must be delivered to Faculty Senate Executive Council no later than 40 class days prior to their final spring meeting (link to Faculty Senate calendar.) If no action is taken within the specified time period, the proposal will be forwarded to the next constituent with an indication that no action was taken at the previous level.

Proposals that must be approved by the Board of Visitors and/or state level authorities have their own timelines; author(s) should be cognizant of timelines and deadlines of the authorizing

board/council/agency and submit proposals with sufficient lead-time to insure timely action.

### **Appeal**

The author(s) may appeal the decision to disapprove in full or in part. The appeal will be to the constituent who initially disapproved. The appeal will be in writing with a rationale that responds to the reasons for disapproval. If the appeal does not result in a change in the decision at this level, the proposer may appeal to the next level up of approving authority, up to the President, if any. The decision at this level will be final.

#### Shared Governance Committees:

##### University level:

- Intellectual Property (Faculty Senate and AP Faculty Senate)
- University Shared Governance Review Committee (Faculty Senate, AP Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, SGA)
- University Policies Committee (Faculty Senate, AP Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, SGA)

##### Division level:

##### Academic Affairs: (Governing body: Teaching and Research Faculty Senate)

- Academic Policies and Procedures Committee
- Curriculum Lifecycle Committee
- General Education
- Graduate Affairs Council

#### Shared Operational Committees:

##### University level:

- Sustainability Committee (Faculty Senate, AP Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, SGA)
- [Student Success Council \(currently ad hoc\) \(Faculty Senate, AP Faculty Senate, and SGA\)](#)
- [Public Arts Committee](#)

##### Division level:

##### Academic Affairs: (Governing body: Teaching and Research Faculty Senate)

- Faculty Grievance
- Faculty Appeals
- Faculty Awards
- Scholarly Activities
- [Research Advisory Council](#)
- Student Evaluations of Faculty
- Institutional Animal Care & Use
- Institutional Review Board for Research Involving Human Subjects
- Library

Student Affairs: (Governing body: SGA)

- Student Affairs Executive Council
- Committee on Clubs and Organizations
- Health and Well-being Council
- Sexual and Interpersonal Violence Council
- Outstanding Student Worker Committee
- Risk Advisory Committee
- Student Activities and Facilities Committee
- Student Athlete Appeals Committee
- Student Media Steering Committee

Enrollment Operations (Governing body: Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate)

- [Enrollment Operations Group](#)

Finance and Administration (Governing bodies: Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate and Staff Senate)

- Finance and Administration Leadership Council
- Administrative/Professional Faculty Grievance
- Bookstore Advisory Committee
- Dining Services Committee
- Financial Aid Advisory Committee
- Information Technology Advisory Committee
- Parking and Traffic
- Systems Operations Committee

Director of Athletics (Governing body?)

- Intercollegiate Athletics Committee

Advancement and Alumni Affairs (Staff Senate)

- [Naming and Commemorative Tributes Committee](#)

Economic Development and Corporate Education (Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate)

- [Joint Commission](#)

## Amending the University Shared Governance Documents

### **Editing the documents in response to Administrative Changes**

The designated administrator for an administrative position, unit, or division must notify the University Shared Governance Review Committee (USGRC) of any of the following;

- a modification of the title or name of a position, unit, or division,
- a modification or realignment of responsibilities that affects one or more positions,
- a modification or realignment of functions that affect one or more units or divisions, and
- the elimination of a position, unit, or division.

The chair of USGRC must be notified within ten business days of any such changes that would require corresponding edits to the Shared Governance Documents.

Within twenty business days of notification, the chair USGRC will determine whether the changes will require edits and will make the necessary edits both to the document and to the Shared Governance website.

### **Amending the documents in response to proposals from Representative Bodies**

Proposed amendments to the shared governance documents must be submitted to USGRC for determination of the representative body or bodies, as appropriate. If the representative bodies recommended for approval the proposal will be forwarded to the USGRC. The presidents of the other representative bodies may present the proposed amendment to their members for review and comment. At least twenty business days during the regular academic year will be allowed for review and comment.

Within ten business days of the expiration of the period allowed for review and comment, the chair of the USGRC will convene the committee to consider the comments from the Representative Bodies and to vote upon the proposed amendment. A simple majority will be

required for passage.

Upon passage, the committee's recommendation will be forwarded to the President.

Upon notification of approval by the President, the Chief of Staff will make the necessary edits both to the document and to the Shared Governance website. The nature and date of each amendment will be recorded in the Appendix.

### **Regular Review of Shared Governance**

Every four years, the USGRC will conduct a review of the documents. Constituents, divisions, and representative bodies will be notified that the review is underway and will be invited to identify structures, policies and processes that may no longer be appropriate as the university evolves. In consultation with committees, the USGRC also will survey the shared governance committees to determine whether membership and charges continue to be appropriate.

As a result of the review, the USGRC may recommend amendment(s). Any proposed amendment will be communicated to the presidents of the Representative Bodies. The presidents will present the proposed amendment(s) to their members for review and comment. Forty business days in the regular academic year will be allowed for review and comment. Thereafter the process described in the section above will be followed.

## REFERENCES

Bahls, Steven C. 2014. *Shared Governance in Times of Change: A Practical Guide for Universities and Colleges*. Washington, DC: AGB Press.

## SUMMARY AND TIMELINE OF CHANGES

<b>Date</b>	<b>Changes Made</b>	<b>Documented Approval</b>
<b>4/15/22</b>	Updated Designated Administrator and position titles to reflect administrative changes	Part of USGRC’s 4-year review of shared governance.
<b>4/15/22</b>	Elimination of Institutional Effectiveness Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed change</li> <li>• Recommendation from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Quality Improvement and Assistant Provost for Budget and Academic Operations</li> </ul>
<b>4/15/22</b>	<p>Modified date on “Timetable for actions”, p. 15 for Senate appointments to be made by the end of spring semester.</p> <p>Modified number of days for senates to review proposed changes to Shared Governance document.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed change</li> <li>• Part of USGRC’s 4-year review of shared governance.</li> </ul>