

Joint Faculty Senate/Provost Shared Governance Implementation Team, Annual Report AY 2025-26

Membership

Chair(s): Kristen McCleary and Elizabeth Oldmixon; Members: Liam Buckley, Sasha Kokhan, Smita Mathur, Brian Sullivan, Jeff Tang, Roger Thelwell, Karin Tollefson

Charge

The Joint Faculty Senate/Provost Academic Affairs Shared Governance Implementation Team continues the significant work of the Joint Faculty Senate/Provost Academic Affairs Shared Governance Task Force. Informed by the Spring 2023 recommendations and working closely with the co-chairs, the team assesses specific recommendations and establishes goals and timelines for implementation.

AY 2025-26 Work

Strategic Planning and Shared Governance

The committee engaged in ongoing discussions about strengthening shared governance practices for BOV initiatives, including the strategic planning process and the Vision and Implementation Teams. The committee considered ways to introduce shared governance practices to leaders and BOV members.

This relates to:

6e. BOV Transparency Continue positive developments in BOV transparency by communicating more broadly with faculty as to the availability of committee and full board agendas ahead of meetings, and outcomes thereafter, including the availability of minutes and a summary of key decisions and areas of conversation. Commit to earlier posting of Board agendas, open invitations to faculty to observe committee meetings, and broad circulation of the livestream for the full Board.

Overall, the committee discussed increasing transparency in the selection of chairs, co-chairs, and members of university-wide initiatives; clarifying expected time commitments before individuals are asked to serve on committees; and involving faculty earlier in university initiatives.

Faculty Handbook

Instructional faculty members on the committee encouraged greater transparency in several areas. With respect to the Faculty Handbook:

- Closing the loop: Some committee members would like more information about key takeaways from the Faculty Handbook revision process, including how recommendations were evaluated and decisions were made, including summaries of what was rejected and why. SGIT discussed the possibility of asking the Faculty Handbook Revision Committee (FHRC) to write a report summarizing key decisions on revisions that were not accepted, in large part to help next year's faculty handbook committee. Are there unresolved issues/areas that the FHRC would recommend the regular FHC return to?
- Can the FHRC release the recommendations it received regarding the Faculty Handbook to promote transparency?

Voting and Governance

Elizabeth Oldmixon discussed creating a process through which faculty members could be more directly involved in policy decisions through voting. Moreover, the committee created the document [*Voting and Survey Guidelines*](#), which addresses Core Recommendation 5 of the Task Force Report:

- Feedback and Voting JMU must create better-documented, more trustworthy and transparent systems for voting, conducting surveys, and other faculty/staff feedback-gathering and data collection activities relevant to shared governance. 5a. Best Practices Manual Create a draft manual of best practices with data management and the development of qualitative/quantitative surveys (including ballot development, records management policies/retention schedules, ensured confidentiality, etc.) from experienced areas at JMU, such as the Office of Institutional Research, Libraries, IRB, and Center for Faculty Innovation (CFI), as well as from knowledgeable faculty. A strong model for this now exists in the College of Science and Math, and working documents are available from the Task Force upon request.

The document received feedback from SGIT, the Shared Governance Committee of the Faculty Senate, and was also circulated to senators for their feedback.

The committee administered a survey designed to explore shared governance perceptions. The survey was modeled on the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) Shared Governance Survey. Its purpose was to examine perceptions of decision-making authority across academic, personnel, and administrative domains. The survey asked respondents to evaluate both the current and preferred states of governance using a five-point scale ranging from faculty primacy to administrative primacy. Participants included members of the Faculty Senate leadership, Academic Council, and related governance bodies. For analysis, responses were grouped into two categories: faculty

leaders and academic administrators. The analysis used a qualitative visual approach to examine agreement patterns, divergence, and desired changes between the two groups. Although the sample size was limited, the results provide meaningful insights into perceptions of the strengths and challenges of shared governance at JMU.

Next Steps

In fall 2026, the committee will complete work on several recommendations. The committee will be retired, and we will hand off our work to the Senate Shared Governance Committee.