# Joint Faculty Senate/Provost Shared Governance Task Force
## Mid-Year Report — Fall 2022

**Membership**

> **Co-chairs:**
> Smita Mathur, College of Education, Faculty Senate
> Bethany Nowviskie, JMU Libraries
>
> **Members:**
> Sasha Kokhan, College of Science and Mathematics, Faculty Senate
> Kristen McCleary, College of Arts and Letters, Faculty Senate
> Hala Nelson, College of Science and Mathematics, Faculty Senate
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> Audrey Burnett, University Studies
> Elizabeth Oldmixon, Faculty Affairs and Curriculum
> Linda Thomas, The Graduate School
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> **Ex Officio:**
> Michael O'Fallon, Faculty Affairs and Curriculum
> Meg Sander, Associate University Counsel
> Ben Selznick, School of Strategic Leadership Studies

**Charge:**
Comprised of four Faculty Senate representatives, four academic administrators, and three ex-officio members, this joint task force will deepen and expand our collective understanding, expertise, and best emerging practices for activating shared governance across the range of activities, responsibilities, and areas in Academic Affairs and across campus.

2022-2023 goals include:
- Exploring current structures and existing practices
- Assessing communications strategies
- Collecting relevant research from a range of higher education experts
- Integrating JMU Climate Study results related to shared governance
- Proposing a plan to implement shared governance professional development opportunities including workshops, seminars, and/or guest speakers tailored to the JMU context

**Summary of Current Semester Activity:**
This new Task Force met five times over the course of the semester (see agendas below), beginning with a Q&A and delivery of the charge to the group, by Senate Speaker Kathy Ott Walter and Provost Heather Coltman. We then collaboratively developed operating agreements, built a working library of documents and resources in Microsoft Teams, and grounded our discussions in readings and research shared by ex officio member Ben

Selznick in a "state of the field" presentation. Members undertook multiple working sessions to generate and refine a list of concrete deliverables speaking to expressed faculty concerns, Senate Speaker suggestions, and each of the five goals outlined in our charge. The group also considered local application of a Shared Governance Assessment Tool created by the American Association of University Professors and used to produce national findings on "Faculty Roles by Decision-Making Areas" through the *2021 AAUP Shared Governance Survey*. Having agreed on possible deliverables, the Task Force then broke into small groups to make progress on them.

At our final meeting of the semester, we shared work in progress and small groups received feedback from fellow Task Force peers. Work is progressing on the following planned outputs:

- A resource library or broadly accessible "gateway" page for definitions and research-based best practices in shared governance, including draft language for possible adoption of a JMU campus statement on shared governance
- A "JMU policy library," drawing together links to existing university and Academic Affairs policies relevant to shared governance
- A plan for documentation of current shared governance structures and communications practices in place at the campus and college level, to be created with faculty input
- A summary of findings relative to the state of shared governance at JMU from the September 2021 COACHE survey report (summarizing Spring 2020 feedback) and the April 2022 Campus Climate Study report (summarizing Fall 2021 feedback)
- Recommendations to create better documented and more trustworthy systems for voting, conducting surveys, and other faculty/staff feedback and data collection activities relevant to shared governance
- Recommendations for an action-oriented program for ongoing campus conversations, shared learning, listening, and concrete problem-solving around lived experiences of shared governance at JMU

Discussion continues on other possible recommendations and Task Force outputs.

**Future Work Planned:**
Bi-weekly check-in meetings are scheduled for the Spring semester and the group continues to seek a date or dates for an intensive working retreat. Consideration of a broad assessment tool or survey instrument has been tabled until Spring, pending further work by sub-groups. Members are continuing to progress their efforts toward the deliverables outlined above, which will be further workshopped with the whole Task Force beginning in February.

We anticipate a final report with a set of Task Force recommendations to Senate Steering and the Provost's Office, along with the concrete deliverables outlined above, by the end of the Spring semester. Some deliverables — including draft websites and proposed plans for future programming or workshops — will require funding commitments, sustainability considerations such as maintenance/personnel commitments or decisions about ongoing "ownership," and technology support.

**Appendices**

Agendas for five, 90-minute meetings held between September 29th and December 8th, 2022 are appended here. Some links in these agendas lead to Task Force working documents or resource libraries that are currently only accessible to members. Ongoing Zoom meeting access information has been redacted from the agendas, as have personal names from a first-pass to-do list for December 8th (as some small groups have since combined forces or refined their goals, and it no longer accurately represents responsibilities).

29 September 2022, 1:30pm

**Zoom meeting:**

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AGENDA

**Welcome, Operating Agreements, and Discussing the Charge**
> Bethany — 25 minutes
>> Guests for this portion: Kathy Ott Walter and Heather Coltman

**Getting to Know Each Other**
> Smita — 30 minutes
>> Please be prepared to introduce yourself briefly, share your experience or particular interest in shared governance, and offer one thing that colleagues should understand about or expect from you.

**Starting with the End in Mind**
> Smita — 30 minutes
>> Breakout groups to explore components of our charge and formulate the intended contributions of the Task Force or imagine what completed actions might be/what success would look like.

**Wrap-Up and Next Steps**
> Bethany — 5 minutes
>> Capturing action items, affirming mechanics (Teams, etc.) and plans for our next meeting, including readings and a presentation by Ben Selznick.

Next Meeting: 13 October 2022, 1:30pm on Zoom

13 October 2022, 1:30pm

**Zoom meeting:**

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## AGENDA

**Welcome Back and Progress Thus Far**

Bethany and Smita — 10 minutes

**Presentation and Discussion**

Ben and all — 50 minutes

An overview and state of the field by Ben Selznick; general discussion, questions, ideas arising.

**Next Steps**

Smita and Bethany — 30 minutes

Reviewing group contributions to our document on possible deliverables and action items; inviting commentary and shared thinking on next steps.

Next Meeting: 27 October 2022, 1:30pm on Zoom

27 October 2022, 1:30pm

**Zoom meeting:**

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## HOMEWORK

Please read and review Birnbaum (2004), the AAUP Shared Governance Assessment Tool, and its outcome: the 2021 AAUP Survey Findings. Please also come ready to discuss contributions to our "Start with the End in Mind" document.

## AGENDA

**Welcome and Recap**
> Smita and Bethany — 5 minutes

**Defining Deliverables**
> All — 40 minutes
>> Collaborative work to narrow down items proposed in our group document ,with a goal of settling on at least one deliverable for each of the 5 established Task Force goals.

**Considering the AAUP Assessment Tool in JMU's Context**
> All — 30 minutes
>> Should we deploy this assessment tool for benchmarking academic decision-making at JMU against national findings? If so, how would it best be delivered, and how might the Task Force use and communicate any findings?

**Confirming Next Steps**
> Smita and Bethany — 15 minutes
>> Given campus holidays, we have two more meetings established this semester. How do we want to use them? Should we schedule an additional in-person working session or retreat?

Next Meeting: 10 November 2022, 1:30pm on Zoom

10 November 2022, 1:30pm

**Zoom meeting:**

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## AGENDA

**Welcome and Update on AAUP Assessment Tool plans**
> Smita and Bethany — 10 minutes

**Defining Deliverables and Forming Working Groups**
> All — 1 hour
>> Discussion and refinement of items proposed in our group document or
otherwise shared with the committee as possible deliverables. Our goal is to leave the meeting
having settled on concrete deliverables that address the 5 established Task Force goals and
with point people/small groups assigned to take them forward.

**Next Steps**
> Bethany and Smita — 20 minutes
>> Given campus holidays, we have one more meeting established this semester.
How do we want to use it?
>> Does continuing the current meeting schedule and format work for everyone for
Spring 2023, or should we re-calendar?
>> Is there a desire for an in-person working session or retreat?

Next Meeting: 8 December 2022, 1:30pm on Zoom

8 December 2022, 1:30pm

**Zoom meeting:**

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## AGENDA

**Reporting Out**

       All — 80 minutes

       Having agreed on areas of focus in our last meeting, participants will share on work accomplished thus far, any needs or questions emerging for the whole group, and future plans.

- Exploring current structures and existing practices
  - ████, supported by ████, to work on a "JMU policy library" modeled on the one by Grand Valley State
  - ████ to ask the Provost to provide or solicit refreshed reports on college-level shared governance structures and practices.
- Assessing communications strategies
  - ████ to work on comparison of communications practices across colleges and departments, surfacing best practices
  - ████ to focus on best practices in voting and survey procedures
- Collecting relevant research from a range of higher education experts
  - ████ and ██ to create a document library that could be shared with the campus (readings, etc.)
  - ██ to share a round-up of other institution's published statements and/or policy libraries regarding shared governance
  - ██ and ████ to help define a concise set of key elements of shared governance/markers of a healthy culture, derived from research
- Integrating JMU Climate Study results related to shared governance
  - ████ and ████ to refine summary document on Climate Study and incorporate COACHE findings, with an eye toward recommendations that could be provided to the Climate Study Implementation Group
- Proposing a plan to implement shared governance professional development opportunities including workshops, seminars, and/or guest speakers tailored to the JMU context
  - ████ and ████ to create a first-draft proposal for campus workshops and listening/sharing sessions

**Next Steps**

       Smita and Bethany — 10 minutes

       A look at calendars and possibilities for a Task Force "retreat," and a preview of plans for the Spring semester.

                        Next Regular Meeting: 20 January 2023, 11am-noon on Zoom