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ABSTRACT

Shared governance within the community college fosters a sense of empowerment and equal partnership in the members of the organization. Accountability is multi-directional, not hierarchical, as in the case of the traditional pyramidal organization. In California, community college governance underwent a tremendous change in 1988 with the passage of Assembly Bill (AB) 1725, a community college reform proposal that strengthened the role of faculty, particularly academic senates. In 1992, Compton Community College (CCC) adopted local AB 1725 policies and procedures, documenting the shared responsibility between the Board of Trustees, the district administration, faculty, staff, and students. The Budget and Planning Committee was established as the primary vehicle to implement the concept of shared governance through increased communication, developing plans and budgets through meetings held among faculty, staff, students, administrators, and members of the Board of Trustees. The successful future of shared governance at CCC relies on communication and a collaborative process, especially in the current period of retrenchment. In addition, the college should evaluate the needs of the community. The involvement of all constituencies in goal identification, program planning, and evaluation will bring together the objectives of the institution in a manner that results in minimal conflict. Contains 16 references.
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Shared Governance and Compton Community College District

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Shared Governance Within the California Community Colleges

The Evolution of Shared Governance

Successes and Concerns

The Future of Shared Governance at Compton Community College

References

Shared Governance Within the California Community Colleges

Shared Governance is a social system of self government. Policies, procedures and decision making involve the entire organization. Communication and collaboration are the foundations for shared governance. Accountability is primarily to the organization. Decisions that arise from a process of shared governance result in a circle of self-evaluation. This full-circle system of governance removes the stigma of fault. The desire of such a system is to then direct all available resources, personnel, physical and financial, to meaningful improvement and progress.

The model of shared governance recognizes the contributions and requirements of all members of the college. Members may include, but are not limited to, the Board of Trustees, faculty, students, staff, administrators, the Senate, the classified union, the certificated union, local businesses and the community.

The Board of Trustees is the legal authority of the community college, as authorized by the California Education Code. Members of the Board are public officials, elected by the communities they represent. All policies and most of the strategic decisions flow from the Board of Trustees to the President/Superintendent for implementation. The President/Superintendent interprets the policies and, with the approval of the Board, allocates resources in order to operationalize the strategic plans. Decision making and power on both of these levels, policy making and operations, are shared among several competing groups. Individuals form coalitions within the community to achieve common goals. Robert A. Dahl found a community power structure to be highly pluralistic, in which both leaders and followers were associated with different strata within the organization. Involving people and groups representing the greater community in the

decision making process will increase the likelihood of support for both the President/Superintendent and the Board of Trustees in their directives and policy making.

Administration is the science of managing human behavior. The accomplishment of objectives is through the effort of others (Richardson, R. C., Jr.). In order to accomplish objectives through others, the others must be supportive. They must have been involved in the decision making process. They must have a vested interest in the successful outcomes of their actions.

Decision Making and Accountability

At the community college, accountability is multi-directional, not hierarchical, as in the case of the traditional pyramidal organization. The community elects the members to the Board. The Board hires and evaluates the President/Superintendent. The President directs and evaluates the other administrators. Implementation of decisions flow downward. However, the students, faculty and community, the affected groups, provide feedback to the administration and to the Board of Trustees. As the members of the Board are elected representatives of the community, they are accountable to the students and community members.

Decision making in isolation of the affected groups by the Board of Trustees or by the administration will result in the greatest degree of dissatisfaction among the community. Decisions in controversial areas are a result of compromise procedures that seek group consensus. Compromise rarely satisfies anyone, yet they can allow organizations to move forward and not stalemate at some impasse situation. Maximizing involvement in the process of reaching compromise will result in high support by the organization. Genuine involvement produces identifiable results capable of providing

satisfaction separate from the decisions themselves. The results are then the product of the whole, and accountability to the affected groups are from those groups that were involved in the process. The interdependency of the relationships within the organization maintains a state of balance between the competing groups.

Shared Governance attempts to foster a sense of empowerment and equal partnership in the members of the organization. A collaborative style of decision-making supports the concept of "employees as ends" and "responsibility through ownership." This process is quite distinct from vertically organized consultation wherein each segment at different times and independent of each other gives advice that is later used in a closed process of a selected few to arrive at decisions.

Modified Consensus

Polling members is useful in assessing consensus, to ensure engagement into the process and to establish public record. The climate must be non-coercive, but nevertheless participants are encouraged to express their personal and organizational views rather than remain silent. Silence is sometimes a substitute for dissent. Unilateral decisions are a rare result of this process and are made only for compelling and clearly articulated reasons by the decision maker. There may result disapproval of the decision, however, there should always be present, the understanding of the considerations that led to the decision and a rationale that supports the decision.

Shared governance today is not the daring experiment it was a few years ago. The process and dynamics are defined, the advantages and disadvantages have been articulated. There are numerous models available for adoption and incorporation into an organization. According to higher education researcher George Keller, who spoke on

March 7, 1989, at UC Berkeley on "Ten Trends in Higher Education," shared types of governance and general faculty empowerment are national phenomena. Limited resources, shifting demographics and the changing needs of students require genuine involvement of all community members in the continuing quest for institutional excellence.

The Evolution of Shared Governance

Jencks and Reisman (1968) indicate that the development of community colleges was modeled after the local comprehensive high school. The community college is bureaucratic, as described by the German sociologist Max Weber (1947). This bureaucracy includes a hierarchy of authority in which those in top positions would wield much of the organizational power.

Legally, the primary responsibility for public education rests with the State. Legislated into law, the State has delegated much of the power to the local community. The Board of Trustees have been recognized by the State as the local authority over policies and programs specific to the District.

Junior colleges were authorized by the State in 1917. Program foundation funding by the State was established in 1947.

The G.I. Bill spurred the community college growth of the 1950's and the Baby Boom the growth of the 1960's. The community college was on its way to becoming all things to all people during those resource abundant decades. Enrollments were high and funding was available for most programs and services. The need for shared governance is not as great when resources are available to support the majority of the program requests.

The economy deteriorated in the 1970's and the Baby Boomers declined in numbers. The mission of the community college began to be questioned. There was

increased demand for accountability and the state support of community colleges declined. Institutions revisited institutional missions and responded to issues of quality and values. Higher education is undergoing serious economic scrutiny. Colleges must make difficult, often painful, decisions about resource allocations and program cutbacks. Administrators are torn between the desirability of avoiding personnel layoffs and the need to eliminate low-priority programs. Reductions in force should be a management tool of last resort.

Power and decision making has been traditionally hierarchical, with decisions and directives flowing from the Board of Trustees to the President/Superintendent. The President/Superintendent would authorize senior administration to implement policies and procedures, develop and manage the various programs and services. Senior administration would make department specific decisions in a closed process.

The collegial model proposed by Millett (1962) and Goodman (1962) depicts the college organization as a community of scholars. Leadership, authority and other institutional governing mechanisms are executed through shared decision-making processes.

There has been a widespread demand for a re-evaluation of priorities and a new commitment to program excellence. Evaluation has been the missing essential ingredient in curriculum development since the beginning of the community college movement.

AB 1725, a comprehensive community college reform proposal was legislated in 1988. The bill addressed statewide issues and was broadstroke in addressing system issues of the California Community Colleges system. The California Community Colleges required individual districts to formulate and adopt local documents in compliance with

AB 1725. In 1989, the State legislated Proposition 98, formalizing into law the split between funding for community colleges and K-12.

AB 1725

AB1725 was passed by the State legislators in August 1988. AB1725 strengthens the role of faculty, particularly academic senates, in community college governance. The bill requires the Board of Governors to develop policies and guidelines for strengthening the role of the academic senate regarding the determination and administration of academic and professional standards, course approval and curricula, and other academic matters. The deadline for the developing policies and guidelines was January 1, 1990. The Board was also required to develop a plan for encouraging greater student participation in campus, district and systemwide governance. These two projects augmented the Board's responsibilities to ensure that faculty, staff, students and academic senate roles be integrated into governance as provided in Education Code, Section 70901(b)(1)(E).

Compton Community College District adopted its local AB 1725 Policies and Procedures in 1992. Shared governance at Compton Community College means shared responsibility, including both individual component responsibility and designated joint responsibility. The Academic Senate, representing the Faculty, has the primary responsibility for maintaining the integrity of the college curriculum, its subject matter, methods of instruction, faculty status, all faculty actions (including authoritative recommendations for faculty appointments, reappointments, decisions not to reappoint, promotions, tenure, censure and dismissal), and, those aspects of student life which relate to the educational process. Based on Title V, Section 53200(c) the Compton Community

College Academic Senate is mandated and authorized by law to participate effectively in campus policy development, establishment and oversight of degree requirements, grading, budget development, strategic planning, accreditation and academic program review.

Joint responsibilities between the District and the Academic Senate include long range planning, selection of the college president, staff development, matriculation, selection of all administrators and the utilization of physical resources.

Shared governance has replaced participatory governance in our current lexicon. There has been a substantive shift from a governance model in which all the constituents have a right to participate to one in which these same parties have a right to collaborate in making those decisions. The difference in the degreeism of involvement can be illustrated between the right to comment and the right to vote.

Shared Governance at the Compton Community College District

Shared Governance is defined in the Compton College AB1725 Policies and Procedures. The document, approved by the Board of Trustees in 1992, is the District's negotiated instrument resulting from the California Assembly Bill No. 1725 passed in August 1988.

Shared Governance equals shared responsibility between the Board of Trustees, the district administration, and the faculty, with joint recognition and respect for the participation of classified staff and students in institutional decision-making.

The Board of Trustees is the ultimate campus authority on policy, budget and personnel issues. All administrative authority at the campus level, primarily daily operating decisions, result from an authorization by the Board of Trustees.

The President/Superintendent is the chief operating officer and is the representative of the Board of Trustees. The President/Superintendent is responsible for the planning, organization, implementation and evaluation of programs and activities that are in conformance with Board policies and guidelines.

The Academic Senate is the faculty vehicle for curriculum and professional affairs on campus. The Academic Senate, in consultation with the Compton Community College Federation of Employees (CCCFE), the certificated collective bargaining unit, is responsible for all faculty appointments to campus committees.

The CCCFE is the primary vehicle for the negotiation and maintenance of faculty employment contracts, wages, hours and working conditions. Collective bargaining has been a major influence in the decision making in community colleges for decades. Faculty have reported satisfaction with the increased economic benefits they feel it has brought them. Trustees and administrators are wrestling with the increased discord and management problems attributed to bargaining. Collective bargaining has brought about greater faculty participation in governance. It has not been determined whether or not the participation has improved the school operations.

Lay versus Professional Control

Civil authority over the community college is based on the democratic doctrine that the social services crucial to public welfare should be subject to public will. Compton Community College was founded for the benefit of society at large, not for the benefit of professors, administrators, students, trustees or any grouping of these constituents. As a result, the governing board represents the public at large.

At Compton Community College, there exists another perspective of the organization that emphasizes the role of faculty. Faculty, by virtue of their professional expertise may be in the best position to determine and to fill the educational needs of the general public. The Senate and the faculty union promote the role for faculty of exclusive authority in the academic organization, especially relating to issues affect teaching, learning or students.

The Final Carnegie Commission Report, issued in 1973, states that it is not easy to determine who should govern higher education. The concept of government is rejected on the basis that educational institutions do not wield coercive power to enforce law. Colleges provide services which people choose to obtain or forego on their own free will. The governance of Compton Community College is a matter of how good decisions can be made, not the prescription that any single principle should be followed. The final decisions on governing Compton Colleges will be made by legislators, trustees, faculty, students and administrators in committee meetings and in the voting booths.

Successes and Concerns

The Budget and Planning Committee

The Budget and Planning Committee is the primary vehicle at Compton College that attempts to operationalize the concept of shared governance. This committee has been active during the past two years and is the recognized campus group charged with the development of the strategic plans and the budgets. Membership includes faculty, staff, students, administrators and members of the Board of Trustees. The public is invited to attend the meetings and participation is encouraged. All fiscal issues are discussed and recommendations are forwarded to the President/Superintendent. Program issues that

result in fiscal impact are required to be discussed at our committee meetings prior to being presented to the President and the Board of Trustees for action. The committee is working to revise the five year strategic plan. In addition, the Facilities Master Plan, the district vision statement, the Educational Master Plan, and most other forward planning documents are processed through the Budget and Planning Committee.

The Budget and Planning Committee has increased the communications throughout the college. The open discussions, the question and answer sessions, the ability to critique decisions and recommendations have all added to the increased participation on the part of the college community. The minutes of the committee meetings are shared with the members of the community. There are status reports provided at various forums, including board meetings, senate meetings, administrative meetings and collegewide meetings. Reports and analyses are prepared and distributed during the fiscal year.

Open communication has increased the trust levels of some of the groups and individuals on campus. Increased trust promotes a healthier work environment and is the beginning of an improved organization climate at Compton College. Communication will continue to be an area of emphasis and the college intends to expand on both the quality and quantity of its communications.

Educational versus Organizational Reform

Shared governance is intended to address educational reforms. Curricular content, pedagogical techniques, assessments, student evaluations and performance standards are all educational reforms that are directly related to the work of the college. The target of improvement is the learning and training of the students. The content of learning and

ability to apply the training by the students, not necessarily the process by which the student has received the education, should be the measurement of evaluation.

Organizational reform is about improving the way the college is structured in order to reach its goals effectively and efficiently. The delivery systems, departmental tasks, physical and political climate of the organization, all pertain to the operations of the institution. Participatory management teams, total quality management, restructuring and employee performance standards are organizational reforms that relate to the processes and tasks, but not to the products. Participants in the processes of shared governance must differentiate between the goals of educational and organizational reforms.

Shared decision making has been viewed as a panacea for the problems in higher education, including the community college. However, shared decision making is an organizational, not educational, reform that must be focused on the few essential tasks most closely related to educational improvement. Committee structures that are responsible for too many things will not be very successful at any of them. The recommendation here is to focus on those priorities that are both strategic and timely.

The Future of Shared Governance at Compton Community College

Financial Decision Making in a Period of Retrenchment

Retrenchment involves any one of a number of economy measures designed to reduce college expenditures. The causes leading to the need for expenditure reduction include declining enrollments, state budget cuts and inflation. Decision making includes resource allocation, utilization and accountability. Planning, budgeting, spending and evaluation are components of the fiscal management process. The most common responses to declining resources were reductions in non-instructional expenses, increasing

the use of part-time faculty, higher student/faculty ratios, temporary help in lieu of full-time staff, deferring maintenance and repairs on equipment and facilities.

Action, not reaction, is the productive approach to decision making. Compton Community College is most successful in carrying out its mission and in coping with reduced resources when activities are part of a planned institutional program of action.

Planning and budgeting must be decentralized. Participation by those who will be affected is an essential, common element in budget development processes. Mission and priorities re-examination is a necessary step in avoiding the syndrome of offering all things to all people. Cost benefit analyses and financial projections are necessary as input to the process of decision making. Outcome measurements are usually embedded within program evaluation data. The value of data is in their use as an aggressive communication tool to confront, not react to, the financial environment in a mission-related, well-thought-out manner. As Spencer (1979, p.65) argues, "institutional renewal, unless it links directly to data, will be almost impossible."

The communities surrounding Compton College are in a state of continuous change. In response to its mission, Compton College should change as the community changes. There is a need for Compton College to evaluate the changes in the community with respect to the mission of the institution. The process for determining new needs and the level of relevance to the institution should involve the community college as a whole.

The President/Superintendent plays a pivotal leadership role in the development and operations of a shared governance system. This position is the communications hub for the college. All administrative functions and personnel report to the office of the

President/Superintendent. All Board directives flow through this office to the college community for implementation.

Dual structures for administration and governance within Compton College inevitably gives rise to jurisdictional boundaries. There is an administrative structure whereby all functions report to an administrative office. The daily tasks are managed by identified administrators. Boundaries are clear in authority and process. In shared governance, the committee structure clouds the boundaries between decision making and accountability. Committees are not accountable for results, nor do committees supervise and manage personnel and functions.

Decision making through group processes is most time consuming. Reaching consensus, compromising and promoting dialogue are time intensive activities. Members of committees come with different perspectives and different expertise. The rules by which committees function are related to the personalities of the committee members.

While it is extremely desirable to resolve conflict effectively, it is more important to prevent the development of conflict by responding to issues through a collaborative process. The governance structure and the communications structure are parallel to one another. At Compton College, the objectives will include expanded communications and involvement at all levels of the organization in the decision making process. The involvement of all constituencies in goal identification, program planning and evaluation will bring together the objectives of the institution and the attitudes of the organization. The intended result will be minimal conflict.

It is hoped that the traditional chain of command between teachers and administrators will become a circle of colleagues with faculty, students, staff, administrators and community members all contributing to the decision making process.

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