



UW System Shared Governance Council Charter Unanimously Approved on May 5, 2023

Purpose. The longstanding University of Wisconsin history of shared governance arises from the respective responsibilities of the Board of Regents, UW System leaders, chancellors, faculty, provosts, academic staff, students, and university staff. As set forth in Wisconsin Statute Chapter 36 faculty, academic staff, and students from each UW System university “shall have the right to organize themselves in a manner they determine, and to select their representatives to participate in institutional governance.” As set forth in Regent Policy Document 20-20, university staff “have the opportunity to participate in institutional governance...and in the immediate decision-making and policy development of the institution.” University staff may also “make recommendations, consider proposals, and raise concerns to institutional leadership.”

The UW System Shared Governance Council fulfills the purpose of shared governance in service to the mission of public higher education in the State of Wisconsin. As set forth in Wisconsin Statute Chapter 36, the mission of the UW System is to:

...develop human resources, to discover and disseminate knowledge, to extend knowledge and its application beyond the boundaries of its campuses, and to serve and stimulate society by developing in students heightened intellectual, cultural and humane sensitivities, scientific, professional and technological expertise and a sense of purpose. Inherent in this broad mission are methods of instruction, research, extended training and public service designed to educate people and improve the human condition. Basic to every purpose of the system is the search for truth. *Wis. Stats. 36 (01)(2)*.

Leadership of the UW System has been long-rooted in shared governance. Put most simply, shared governance is the idea that faculty, academic staff, students, and university staff share a significant role in the governance of the institution in collaboration with Regents, UW System leaders, and campus leaders. The system of shared governance, as it is commonly understood and practiced within the UW System, is based not only on the premise that the above-mentioned parties all contribute to the leadership of the UW System, but also upon the understanding that inclusiveness leads to better decision-making. Thereby, shared governance activates the incredible human assets of the UW System in developing strategic priorities, as well as strategic decision making, working collaboratively with the Board of Regents, UW System leaders, and campus leaders to address significant challenges in ways that are both responsible and sustainable.

This document sets forth both the institutional governance role and organizational structure of the UW System Shared Governance Council, as organized, determined, and unanimously approved by faculty, academic staff, students, and university staff representatives from each of the 13 UW System Universities on May 5, 2023.



Membership. The UW System Shared Governance Council comprises representatives from each of the 13 UW System Universities, who are leaders of the four shared governance groups on their respective campuses: faculty, academic staff, students, and university staff. Whenever practicable, the members of the UW System Shared Governance Council will be the chairs (or their designees, from among members) of the faculty, academic staff, students, and university staff shared governance groups from each UW System University.

Organizational Structure. In support of the UW System Shared Governance Council, each of the four shared governance groups shall elect their own chairperson, set their own agendas, and make decisions about how to conduct their own meetings. In addition, the four shared governance groups shall regularly and consistently convene together, in order to share ideas and to collaboratively and collectively communicate with each other. The UW System Shared Governance Council shall invite members of the Board of Regents, UW System leaders, and campus leaders to regularly and consistently attend these meetings; to collaboratively consult on matters of institutional governance; and to discuss information, ideas, topics, and initiatives of system-wide importance.

The UW System Shared Governance Council shall meet 6-8 times per year, generally one week in advance of each two day meeting of the UW System Board of Regents. Special meetings will be organized, as needed in order to fulfill the purpose of shared governance for the UW System. The UW System Shared Governance Council is not an official governmental body. By separate document, the four shared governance groups may set forth a structure for standing committees, and/or a process for reviewing and approving formal action of the UW System Shared Governance Council.

Institutional Governance. The UW System Shared Governance Council shall engage in early, active, and system-wide consultation and collaboration on matters of institutional governance. The UW System Shared Governance Council shall participate in the process of developing the laws, regulations, and policies by which the UW System is governed, including, but not limited to, the following:

1. *Personnel Policies* (for example, and without limitation by enumeration, UWS Unclassified Personnel Guidelines; and related personnel, compensation, and benefits policies, which pertain to Faculty, Academic Staff, and Students.)
2. *Academic Policies* (for example, and without limitation by enumeration, curriculum, admission, retention, transfer, graduation, and academic degree program policies)
3. *Institutional Governance: Structure of the UW System* (for example, restructuring of UW System universities and branch campuses.)



Institutional Governance Responsibilities. The UW System Shared Governance Council has institutional governance responsibilities at both the system-level and campus-level. In fulfillment of these responsibilities, the members of the UW System Shared Governance Council are committed to working collaboratively with each other, and with the Board of Regents, UW System leaders, and campus leaders, in a manner that is strategic, responsible, timely, and in the best interest of the UW System. Council members also are committed to building mutual trust and respect, mutual understanding of roles and responsibilities, and mutual commitment to achieving shared goals with each other, and with the Board of Regents, UW System leaders, and campus leaders.

The institutional governance responsibilities of the UW System Shared Governance Council shall include, but are not limited to, the following.

- A. Shared Governance System-Wide Responsibilities.** In support of institutional governance, the UW System Shared Governance Council shall consistently and regularly consult with members of the Board of Regents, UW System leaders, and campus leaders. In support of UW System committees, work groups, task forces, and/or initiatives, the UW System Shared Governance Council shall actively consult with the Board of Regents, UW System leaders, and campus leaders to identify appropriate shared governance representatives from the faculty, academic staff, students, and/or university staff to serve as members of these committees, work groups, and/or task forces.

- B. Shared Governance Campus-Level Responsibilities.** The UW System Shared Governance Council shall be relied upon to provide timely communication to, and responses from, their respective governance bodies at the campus level.

- C. Shared Governance Service Responsibilities.** The UW System Shared Governance Council shall support institutional governance in the following ways:
 1. Board of Regents: Each UW System Shared Governance Council group shall identify representatives to attend every regular meeting of the Board of Regents. Members of the Board of Regents shall be invited by the UW System Shared Governance Council to regularly and consistently attend Council meetings.
 2. UW System and campus leaders shall be invited to attend each meeting of the UW System Shared Governance Council to share information and engage in discussion.
 3. Search and Screen Committees: Members of the UW System Shared Governance Council shall accept invitations to serve on search and screen committees for UW System and campus leadership positions.
 4. Task Force, Initiative, Work Group, and Special Committee/Project Service: Members of the UW System Shared Governance Council shall accept invitations to serve as members of Board of Regents, UW System, and campus-level task forces, initiatives, work groups, and committees.



D. Communication Guidance. This document describes a process of liaison between shared governance groups, which fosters effective and broad collaboration and consultation. The primary channels of communication are between the UW System Shared Governance Council, the Board of Regents, UW System leaders, and campus leaders. Appropriate communication with shared governance representatives will include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Regular meetings will be scheduled between shared governance representatives, members of the Board of Regents, the UW System President and senior staff, and campus leaders. Meetings will be modeled after UW System convenings of chancellors and provosts.
2. A direct mechanism will be developed to direct and support spontaneous consultation between the Board of Regents, UW System leaders, campus leaders and shared governance representatives.
3. Because shared governance representatives need to consult with their respective campus-level Senates and University Committees, sufficient response time will be allowed for campus-level governance processes.