Building A Culture

he term "shared governance" often means different

things to different

Our own understandings about shared governance have expanded and evolved over the years through our participation in university governance as faculty members, faculty senate the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) the American Council on Education (ACE) and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities

A common misunderstanding concerning shared governance centers upor the concept that every group is equally involved in making decisions on everything. This

campus constituencies.
Although the term is used

We have come to appreciate the value of collaboration, dialogue and inclusive decision-making organizations concerned chiefly with matters related to faculty, administration First, while shared governance requires joint planning and effort, participation in decision-

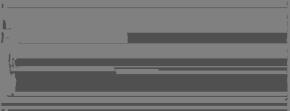
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By Philip Rous and Sarah Shin



For example, promotion and tenure processes and policies are primarily within faculty's purview because the faculty is likely to have the best knowledge of a specific academic discipline.

In most cases, the assignment of decision-making authority between faculty and administration is not binary but "weighted," to borrow from statistics nomenclature. In other words, while various groups of people share in many key decision-making processes, the weight of each group's voice is determined by the primary responsibility of each constituency. Thus, in matters that are primarily



as people rotate on and off these assignments, it is necessary to review these concepts regularly and give people the opportunity to ask questions about the processes. The same is often true when the administration is subject to rapid turnover.

One of the most important lessons we have learned concerns how information is communicated. This is a particular challenge in shared governance. Both of us have encountered situations

