

*N.B. This document was developed by the deans of academic programs at the University of Florida to contribute to the campus's conversations about and evolving understanding of shared governance and the various ways that colleagues with differing responsibilities participate in it—July 2005*

## **The Role of Academic Deans in Shared Governance**

Effective university shared governance is built not only through institutional structures and political processes but especially through effective working relationships between administrators and faculty, mutual respect for the participants' differing roles and responsibilities, and mutual trust in the ability and willingness of the various parties to meet their commitments. Open, regular communication and consultation between and among faculty and administrators and transparency in policies and procedures are fundamental elements of shared governance.

Deans are the chief academic officers and administrators of their colleges. They are expected to provide leadership and overall administration in academic matters, financial planning and policy, and routine operations for their units. Deans are appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the President. Deans report directly to and are directly accountable to the provost or vice president responsible for their college. Deans are delegated authority and responsibility for their units by the President through the provost or vice president to whom they report. Just as the President and Provost/Vice Presidents delegate responsibility and authority to deans, deans may delegate authority and responsibility to department chairs and other faculty for the effective administration and management of their colleges.

Effective shared governance requires that all participants clearly understand their roles and responsibilities, that they be well informed about issues on which they will offer opinions or decisions, and that they have clarity about who makes final decisions about what and why. Those who ultimately are held accountable for a decision and its outcomes must be the ones to have final decision-making authority in that area.

Faculty and deans share responsibility for such things as developing policies for faculty hiring, tenure and promotion, and the appeal of tenure and promotion decisions.

Deans have primary delegated authority and decision-making responsibility for such things as hiring and evaluating faculty and staff and for administering the college's fiscal and physical/material resources. In exercising their primary decision-making responsibilities, deans are expected to seek appropriate input, consider it, and provide feedback and rationale about the final decision made.

Faculty have a primary decision-making role in the development and systematic evaluation of curricula, the establishment and application of admission standards for students, and the assessment of students in the performance of their academic work. In exercising their primary decision-making role, the faculty are expected to seek appropriate counsel and advice from department chairs, deans and other relevant administrators. In exercising shared governance, normally the faculty of a college recommend to the dean; and the dean, unless otherwise holding delegated authority, recommends to the appropriate provost/vice president.

Nothing in this document or other University shared governance documents may deprive any other party of its delegated authority or responsibility. Parties that delegate a portion of their authority and/or responsibility also retain general oversight and approval of decisions made in order to maintain appropriate accountability for the authority and responsibility vested in them by their supervisors.