

## **Executive Summary**

### **Shared Governance Discussions with Deans and Faculty**

In its annual report on Shared Governance (May, 2009), the Faculty Council identified the absence of a common understanding of shared governance as an obstacle to the success of shared governance at Marquette. In response to this report, at its October 2009 meeting, the UAS approved a motion, endorsed by Provost Pauly, calling for discussions to be held with the deans and executive bodies in each of the colleges and schools addressing four questions:

- 1. What will it take to make shared governance work at Marquette?*
- 2. What does "working" mean with respect to shared governance?*
- 3. When have we seen shared governance work, and when has it not?*
- 4. How will we know if shared governance is really working?*

This executive summary is based on reports by Faculty Council members who facilitated these discussions over the past several months. Several colleges identified instances when faculty governance at Marquette worked well (the change in date for the submission of final grades, the governance process for the core curriculum) and instances when faculty governance was absent (online course evaluations, course renumbering and day/time distributions). Consensus emerged from these discussions around three issues: 1) the need for greater trust in relationships between faculty and administration; 2) the need for greater transparency, especially in financial decision-making, to create trust and ensure better decision-making; 3) the need for better and more timely communication about decision-making to create trust and ensure better decision-making. In particular, the following themes were salient and common to the discussions:

(a) It should be understood by all parties that a rational and fair decision-making process requires that the interests of administration and faculty need to be balanced. An issue arising repeatedly in the meetings of individual colleges was that it is vital for administrators (at both the university and unit levels) to view faculty as partners who are equally vested in the continuing success of the University.

(b) It is critical that faculty should be included in the decision-making process, particularly when decisions significantly impact academic life and the pedagogical mission of the University. These include decisions made at the college and/or departmental level. Moreover, timing of the inclusion is crucial. Both faculty and deans believe that faculty need to be consulted / included *prior* to decisions being made rather than be "informed" about these decisions afterwards. It is often difficult, if not impossible, to undo decisions even if faculty should vehemently disagree with them, and this only fuels faculty frustration regarding shared governance.

(c) The need for greater transparency in the decision-making process was emphasized by many deans and faculty. Currently, much of this process appears to be opaque to faculty. Transparency should include the sharing of all relevant information, including financial information, that is critical for a particular decision. The absence of such sharing fosters decisions that are less well-informed and promotes a culture of mistrust between administration and faculty, unintended or otherwise.

(d) Accountability is another shared theme. In particular, feedback regarding how UAS resolutions and recommendations are incorporated into the actual decisions of the University needs to be provided. Many faculty felt that it is

necessary to go further and institute a formal documentation process regarding how UAS resolutions / recommendations are implemented.

(e) Many units emphasized that the current divide between the financial side and the academic side of the University should be eliminated in the interests of both effectiveness and efficiency. Most successful organizations whether in academia or the corporate world have removed such silos from their decision-making processes as part of overall quality improvement and strategic plans. In this context, many of the units felt that the Provost, as the chief academic officer, needs to have a greater say in the budgeting process.