Shared Governance at the University of Texas System Institutions: A White Paper
(Executive Summary for the Chancellor)

April 7th, 2016

"Shared Governance" is a concept of collegial, cooperative and trust-based organizational leadership that enables meaningful combined participation by administration and faculty in the management of an institution's operations. Outstanding universities across the globe apply this concept that involves a combined governance effort. Though the application of such democratic principles to the governance of a higher education institution in the US was first codified in 1920 in a report by the American Association of University Professors, shared governance in American higher education is almost 200 years old. History, proven practice, and tradition have shown that involving employees in the decision making processes at institutions allow those organizations to excel in the generation of knowledge and ideas, sustain high quality education, and protect both quality and productivity from short-sighted decisions. Shared governance creates a highly effective team culture of "all-in" on a campus.

Recent developments in the higher education environment in the United States put this critically important concept at risk. Driven by many factors -- political decisions and reduced sources of funding among them -- the business aspects running a university often reduce the internal decision making processes to those akin to a corporation. More and more frequently the "front line" employees -- the faculty -- are no longer involved in these processes. A routine of faculty exclusion in one area of governance gradually expands to other processes of shared decision making and soon the conscience of an institution that provides educational expertise, continuity, and the long view is lost.

We are fortunate here in the UT System to have shared governance codified by Regents' *Rules and Regulations,* Rule 40101, Faculty Role in Educational Policy Formation. This Regent Rule states that "the faculties of the institutions regularly offering instruction shall have a major role in the governance of their respective institutions." However, the results of a UT System Faculty Advisory Council survey conducted in the 2015/2016 Academic show cause for concern. Six of our institutions reported serious problems or little-to-no shared governance, and four institutions reported "moderately effective" or mixed results in their shared governance procedures. Only four of our fourteen institutions reported having "very effective" shared governance structures and cultures of communication.

We believe we can do better. As a result we, the FAC, have developed a White Paper on Shared Governance, and this executive summary briefly captures the paper's two main points:

1) The Chancellor considers establishing a set of "Essential Elements of Effective Shared Governance" as a UT System standard to be met by our institutions.

2) Apply a specific set of best practices tailored to UT System conditions as a start point for the discussion between faculty and administration at each institution for the implementation or enhancement of existing shared governance.

The draft listing of the FAC-recommended Six Essential Elements of Shared Governance ideally found at each UT System institution follow:

- **An institution-wide commitment to the concept of shared governance** linking the president, faculty, and all stakeholders in a well-functioning partnership, purposefully devoted to a clearly defined and broadly affirmed institutional vision**.**

- **An organizational culture of caring, mutual respect, and trust.**

- **Consistently open, bidirectional, and transparent communication without threat or fear of reprisal.**

- **A standing elected faculty governance organization recognized institution-wide as the voice of the faculty.**

- *Partnership***, shared** *responsibility***, and shared** *accountability* **in decision-making** for all academic, clinical, and research matters; shared *accountability* in all other institutional decision-making.

- **A proclivity for action and persistent follow-up** on all institutional decisions.

The following are specific recommended "best practices" that would enhance shared governance at institutions across the UT System:

- Implement policies, if not already in place, that specifically establish, secure and clearly define the role of the institution's Faculty Governance Organization in overall institutional governance. Specific details on membership, procedure, and unique functions provided in the full White Paper.

- Consider establishment of a separate Shared Governance Board (SGB) *or add that function to existing Faculty Senate Executive Committees/Councils* for each campus. The composition of this body may vary from institution to institution but at a minimum include the President, the leadership of the faculty governance organization, and others in staff and administrative executive leadership as deemed appropriate. It is considered a best practice that this SGB/FSEC be the foremost advisory committee to the President and meet regularly, no less than bi-monthly. The full White Paper further outlines recommended areas of shared decision making in detail.

- Include the faculty at large early and often in strategic planning, review of the institutional budget, philanthropic funding distributions as well as clinical revenue allocations across the university/institution. Provide transparency to faculty on budgets and allow their input on budgetary decisions. Specific details in full White Paper.

- Develop an evaluation tool for assessment of faculty performance that incorporates all dimensions of faculty workload including all areas of faculty participation in scholarly activities and service in addition to teaching.

- Develop an upward evaluation tool or 360 degree assessment tool for all higher administrators including Chairs, Deans, Provosts, Vice Presidents and Presidents that

includes participation by the campus Faculty Governance Organization, with a written report given to the appropriate UT System Executive Vice Chancellor and the Deputy Chancellor.

- ■ Ensure the medical faculty has shared decision-making in setting their clinical expectations, and faculty is provided a mechanism to appeal decisions if an increased workload is affecting the safety of patients.

- ■ Review for internal compliance and update as necessary all policies in HOPs and HOOPs regarding promotion and tenure, term tenure renewal or post tenure review. A best practice is to have any changes to the HOP reviewed and approved by the Faculty Governance Organization prior to implementation. Further details in the full White Paper.

- ■ Implement clear faculty appeal and grievance policies, and a mechanism for review and approval of such policies by the Faculty Governance Organization or the institution's Shared Governance Board if formed.

- ■ Direct the execution of a culture and climate survey among the faculty and administration on an annual basis and within the first 90 days of the arrival of a new President.

- ■ Establish a mechanism for institution faculty or administration to raise issues or problems with shared governance that cannot be resolved internally to UT System Administration level.

- ■ Provide adequate administrative support and designated space for the faculty governance organization to improve efficiency of communication and transparency.

- ■ Develop a faculty governance body website for each institution to improve transparency.

A strong sense of partnership and shared collective commitment to the institution among faculty and administration is essential to the successful daily operations of our universities, sustaining excellence for our students and patients, and reacting thoughtfully to a rapidly changing environment. The results of our survey show this critical sense of "team" is inconsistent on most of our campuses and non-existent at a few. We, the FAC, believe the UT System senior leadership should step in and establish a guardrail against the further erosion and loss of true shared governance.

Recommendation: the Chancellor applies a common standard, a set of guidelines, for shared governance across the System. These guidelines would be a general statement of the minimum expectations for shared governance and evaluated on an annual basis. The Six Essential Elements of Shared Governance outlined in this executive summary are the strongly recommended by the FAC to be the start point for discussion of this common standard.