

AAUP Works

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Shared Governance and Budgets: Contract Principles for Design and Faculty Review

Over the past year, we have received a number of questions about shared governance and the right of faculty to be involved in the design, review, or approval of university budgets. The right of faculty to be involved in budgeting varies depending on the level of budgeting. To follow is a brief review of the contractual principles involved at the university, college, and unit levels.

University and College Budgets

The general principle of shared governance, including faculty involvement in the budget process, is established under Article 27. Article 27.2.1 gives the University faculty the right to consider matters (including budget matters) affecting the University and provide aid, advice and counsel to the Board of Trustees. Article 27.2.2 provides a parallel right to college faculty with respect to advising the dean, and also provides for committees elected by the college faculty to assert this right. Articles 27.2.6 through 27.2.8 specifically recognize the Faculty Senate as the representative faculty body at the University level with the right to review and make recommendations on the final budget as presented by the President to the University's Board of Trustees. This right is further supported by a Memo of Understanding (M.2 – Faculty

Representation on the Board of Trustees) which provides for faculty representatives to the Board who can attend with voice all meetings of the Board, including meetings of the Board's Finance Committee.

Unit Budgets

The AAUP contract addresses academic unit budgets in Articles 24, 27 and 31. Article 27.2.3 provides that "each unit [faculty] shall have the right to advise, aid, and counsel the unit head on matters affecting the unit, college, and University and shall be given sufficient time, in such matters, to do so." Thus, academic unit heads have the right to manage the unit budget (see Article 31.2.8), but also have the responsibility to consult with faculty on budget development in a collaborative manner.

31.2.5 leadership in academic governance, including especially the collaborative development of appropriate procedures for governance within the academic unit (e.g., policies and procedures regarding RPT, leaves, long-range planning, curriculum development, program review, and distribution and utilization of resources).

As with all other aspects of shared governance, the process should be approached with a feeling of mutual respect that will lead to productive collaboration.

Faculty must be provided reasonable access to all documents and data necessary to give informed and meaningful input on unit budget development. In the end, however, final decisions about the budget do rest with the unit head.

There is one aspect of unit budgeting which demands the use of faculty-developed criteria: allocation of travel funds.

24.6 Each academic unit or library system will establish in a democratic manner, the criteria and procedures for the allocation of travel funds. These criteria and procedures will be submitted to the Dean or appropriate Library Administrator for approval and subsequently published and distributed to each member of the academic unit or library system. These approved procedures may include a committee elected from the unit to make recommendations to the unit head.

As usual, we encourage all faculties to establish clear unit (and college-level) bylaws which address processes and procedures to help ensure smooth decision-making in all areas of shared governance.

If you have questions about these or other issues, please don't hesitate to contact us.

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