

1.5.1 Shared Governance at Blackburn College

(from Faculty and Staff Handbooks, Effective January 2022)

1.5.1.1 Introduction

Blackburn College is committed to shared governance. Its faculty, staff, students, and leadership recognize that there are varying levels of responsibilities among the different College constituencies. Furthermore, there must be delineation of levels of responsibilities where primary and final decision-making authority lies for different kinds of decisions. Shared governance at Blackburn is designed as a system of open communication aimed at aligning priorities, creating a culture of shared responsibilities for the welfare of the institution, and creating a system of checks and balances to ensure the institution stays mission-centered.

Although the Board of Trustees has ultimate authority for any and all institutional decisions independent of recommendations from campus constituents, with that authority comes the responsibility to work with the campus community to reach the best decisions for the institution. It is through the shared governance process that the Board utilizes the expertise of all relevant stakeholders for making decisions. Sharing responsibilities through shared governance does not mean the Board waives its ultimate authority. This document is designed to help clarify these various roles.

From time to time our shared governance process and policies should be evaluated for their effectiveness, per recommendation of The Association of Governing Boards (AGB) and best practices research in higher education. To that end, the College established a Shared Governance Task Force in August 2019 to review and assess shared governance at Blackburn. The shared governance definition and framework (consisting of levels of responsibilities and a graphic depiction of the process) in the relevant appendices are a result of the work of the Task Force and the various constituencies of the College community. The College community will review these policies no later than 2026 and every five years thereafter. The complete documentation of the work of the task force is available in the Office of the President in the record of the Board of Trustees.

1.5.1.2 Blackburn College Definition of Shared Governance

The shared governance definition specific to Blackburn College was drafted after researching shared governance definitions and reviewing the results of the shared governance survey of Blackburn constituents. A strong system of shared governance is essential to the success of any institution of higher education. Shared governance at Blackburn College is a system that is built upon clear and open communication, good faith, trust, and transparency among all stakeholders of the institution (i.e., the Board of Trustees, the President, administration, faculty, staff, and students). Although the Board of Trustees has the final authority for institutional decisions, shared governance relies on the expertise of all relevant stakeholders for making decisions to ensure the well-being of the College. Thus, shared governance at Blackburn works on behalf of the entire college community, is inclusive of all stakeholders, and works to align various stakeholder priorities with Blackburn's mission and vision while cultivating an academic, social, and work-related atmosphere that ensures success for students.

Shared governance at Blackburn College ensures all relevant stakeholders' access to the decision-making process while delineating where primary and final decision-making authority lie for different kinds of decisions. Through a well-defined framework for delineating authority, shared governance at Blackburn provides a mutually agreed-upon system that respects the expertise and integrity of the appropriate decision-making bodies while ensuring effective oversight. The framework also specifies that when stakeholders disagree or a decision needs to be expedited, the final decision will reside with the deciding authority identified in the particular process in question.

1.5.1.3 Shared Governance Framework

The shared governance framework consists of Levels of Responsibilities for each constituency group (Board of Trustees, the administration, faculty, staff, and students) along with a graphical flow chart showing the decision authority and sequence appropriate to the shared governance process. Identifying levels of responsibilities in decision making provides a better understanding of the shared governance process. The Levels of Responsibilities is designed to help clarify the various roles of campus constituencies and is a living document that represents the current understanding of the Blackburn College community. These responsibilities are designated below.

The Shared Governance Flowchart is a graphic representation of how the shared governance process functions specific to Blackburn College. Appendix 1H contains the Shared Governance Flowchart for Blackburn College.

1.5.1.3.1 Levels of Responsibilities within Blackburn Shared Governance: Campus Constituencies

Blackburn College is committed to shared governance, and its faculty, staff, students, and leadership recognize that there are varying levels of responsibilities among the different groups depending on the area of responsibility. To that end, this document is designed to help clarify these various roles. It is understood that the Board of Trustees has ultimate authority for the College and has the power and right to make any change. The Board is the only entity that can mandate an expedited shared governance process. This accommodation can only be used when the deadline for a final decision is not likely to fit within the typical timeframe of the shared governance process, thereby accelerating deliberations and consultations. This list is not exhaustive.

This Levels of Responsibilities is a living document that represents the current understanding of the College community, and may be updated as deemed necessary.

Shared Governance

1. Areas over which the faculty has primary responsibility.

The faculty has chief responsibility to oversee the university's curriculum and academic policies. Its authority includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- (a) the curriculum;
- (b) graduation requirements;

- (c) attendance and grading policies;
- (d) grade appeal procedures;
- (e) add and drop policies;
- (f) course repeat policies;
- (g) election of division chairs and faculty assembly chairs and vice chairs.

2. Areas over which the faculty has shared responsibility with the administration.

The faculty has a shared role, along with relevant administrators, in overseeing and executing policies related to faculty positions and academic programs. The faculty exercises this responsibility most commonly through Blackburn's committee structure. As the Board has entrusted Blackburn senior leadership with final say in these areas, decisions should only be overturned after very careful consideration and with full transparency about the rationale.

The faculty's shared authority includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- (a) the establishment of new degree programs;
- (b) the establishment of new majors or minors or substantive change to existing majors or minors;
- (c) the elimination or consolidation of degree programs;
- (d) admissions policies;
- (e) the recruitment and hiring of new faculty members;
- (f) the adoption or amendment of policies regarding appointment, tenure, post-tenure review, and sabbatical;
- (g) the appointment of department/program chairs;
- (h) the creation of faculty task forces and ad hoc committees;
- (i) the awarding of endowed professorships and endowed chairs;
- (j) the merger or discontinuation of departments or divisions;
- (k) the allocation of new faculty positions and the reallocation and/or prioritization of existing faculty lines;
- (l) the establishment of policies and procedures that directly affect the quality of degree programs;
- (m) the development and administration of external grants with material impact.

3. Areas over which the staff has shared responsibility with the administration.

The staff has a shared role, along with relevant administrators, in overseeing and executing policies related to staff positions and non-academic departments and programs. Staff exercises this responsibility most commonly through Blackburn's committee structure. As the Board has entrusted Blackburn senior leadership with final say in these areas, decisions should only be overturned after very careful consideration and with full transparency about the rationale.

The staff's shared authority includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- (a) the establishment, substantive change, elimination, or consolidation of co-curricular programs;
- (b) the recruitment and hiring of new staff members;
- (c) the adoption or amendment of policies regarding appointment and advancement;

- (d) the appointment of program directors and other positions of staff supervision;
- (e) the creation of staff task forces and ad hoc committees;
- (f) the allocation of new staff positions;
- (g) the elimination of staff positions;
- (h) the establishment of policies and procedures that directly affect the quality of co-curricular programs;
- (i) the development and administration of external grants with material impact.

4. Areas over which the faculty and staff have shared responsibility with the administration.

The faculty and staff have a shared role, along with relevant administrators, in overseeing and executing policies related to institutional policies and processes. Faculty and staff exercise this responsibility most commonly through Blackburn's committee structure. As the Board has entrusted Blackburn senior leadership with final say in these areas, decisions should only be overturned after very careful consideration and with full transparency about the rationale.

The faculty's and staff's shared authority includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- (a) the university's mission and vision statements;
- (b) the university's strategic planning;
- (c) library and other research facilities;
- (d) the academic calendar;
- (e) the establishment of non-degree programs;
- (f) the development and administration of external grants with material impact.

5. Areas over which the faculty has a consultative role.

The faculty has a consultative role with respect to issues that involve the delivery of a quality student experience at Blackburn, but that are the primary responsibility of the President, the Provost, or other senior administrators. The intent of faculty consultation is not to participate directly in decision-making, but to provide the faculty's perspective on issues which have an impact on the effective delivery of a quality student experience.

The faculty's consultative role includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- (a) the President's decision regarding which open or new faculty positions shall be filled
- (b) academic marketing and communications strategies;
- (c) the appointment of faculty members to positions with administrative responsibilities.

6. Areas over which the staff has a consultative role.

The staff has a consultative role with respect to issues that involve the delivery of a quality student experience at Blackburn, but that are the primary responsibility of the President, the Vice President for Diverse and Equitable Student Live, or other senior administrators. The intent of staff consultation is not to participate directly in decision-making, but to provide the staff's perspective on issues which have an impact on the effective delivery of a quality student experience.

The staff's consultative role includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- (a) the appointment of administrative department chairs and directors;
- (b) the President's decision regarding which open or new employee positions shall be filled;
- (c) co-curricular marketing and communications strategies;
- (d) the appointment of staff members to positions with administrative responsibilities;
- (e) the merger or discontinuation of administrative departments or divisions.

7. Areas over which the faculty and staff have a consultative role.

The faculty and staff have a consultative role with respect to issues that involve the delivery of a quality student experience at Blackburn, but that are the primary responsibility of the President or other relevant administrators. The intent of faculty and staff consultation is not to participate directly in decision-making, but to provide the faculty's and staff's perspective on issues which have an impact on the effective delivery of a quality student experience.

The faculty's and staff's consultative role includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- (a) the selection of senior administrators;
- (b) the President's decision regarding which open or new employee positions shall be filled
- (c) the budget;
- (d) the campus master plan, including building construction;
- (e) institutional marketing and communications strategies;
- (f) enrollment growth, financial aid, and scholarship strategies;
- (g) tuition policies;
- (h) student disciplinary policies;
- (i) intercollegiate athletics other than purview of Athletic Committee;
- (j) employee benefits.

8. The role of students in shared governance.

There is a long tradition at Blackburn for strong student involvement in shared governance. This is most commonly demonstrated by the involvement of students in most committees, as well as within the student managed Work Program.

Areas in which students have primary responsibility:

- (a) the Work Program, through its student leadership;
- (b) the Student Senate through allocation of club money and approval of student organizations' constitutions.

Areas in which students have shared responsibility with administration:

- (a) changes in student disciplinary judicial process;
- (b) legislative changes brought forth by Student Senate.

Areas in which students have a consultative role:

This role is most commonly exhibited through committee membership, Student Senate, and the Work Committee, although in some instances the whole student body may be consulted.

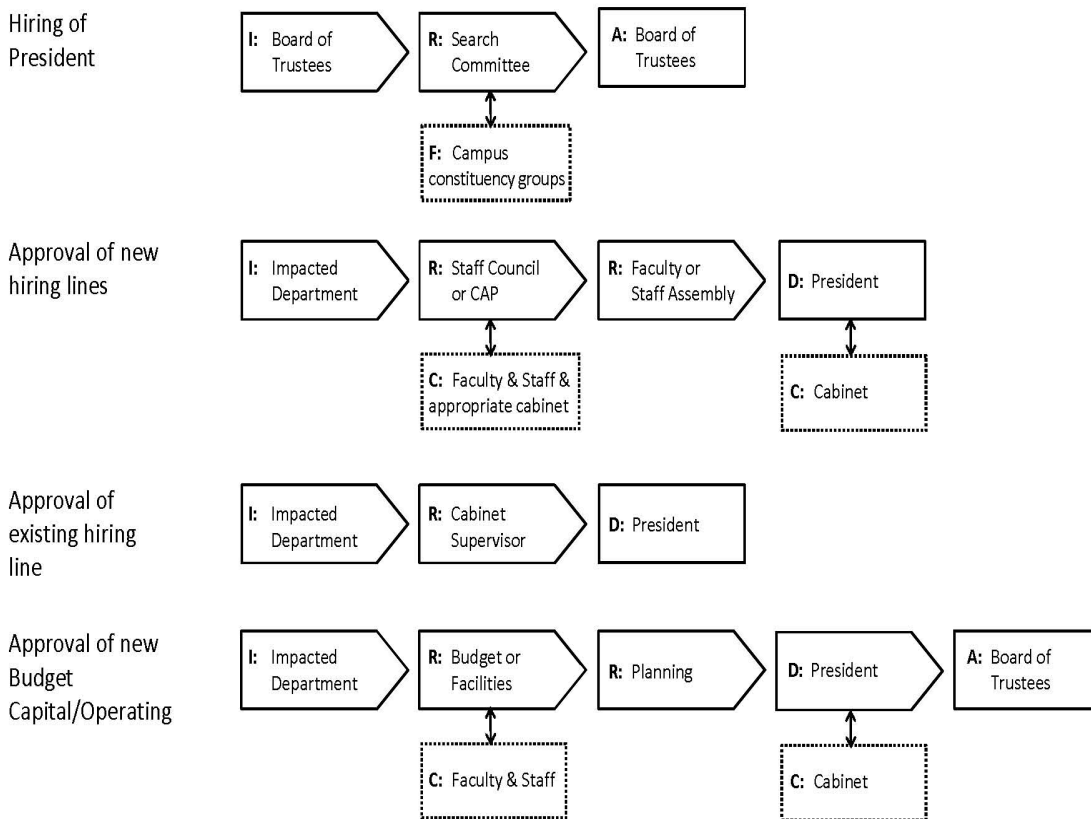
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- (b) the budget;
- (c) the campus master plan, including building construction;
- (d) marketing and communications strategies;
- (e) enrollment growth;
- (f) student disciplinary policies;
- (g) intercollegiate athletics.

Shared Governance Flow Charts

Business-oriented Decisions

Operational Decisions

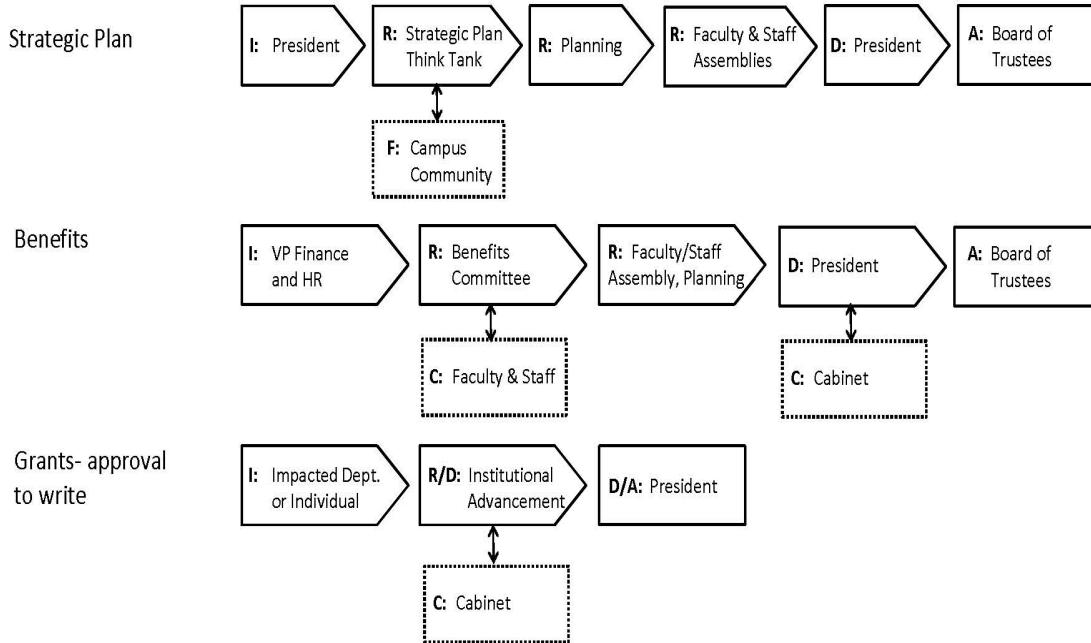


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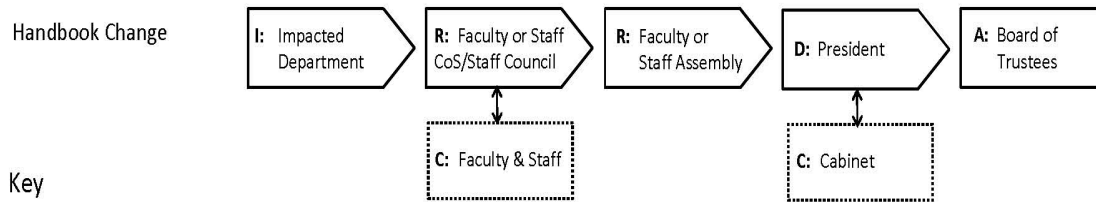
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Business-oriented Decisions

Operational Decisions



Policy Making/Changes Decisions



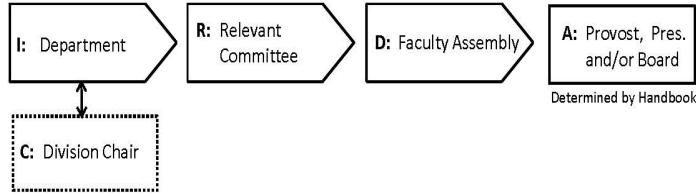
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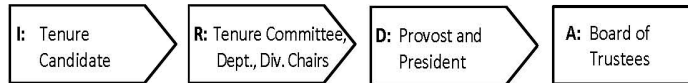
Academic-oriented Decisions

Operational Decisions

Most Decisions/
Standard Operational
Decisions



Tenure Decisions



PTR



Policy Making/Changes Decisions

Most Policy
Creation/Change



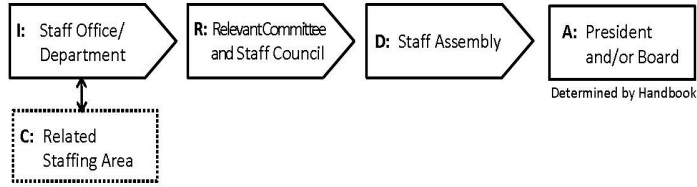
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Staff-oriented Decisions

Operational Decisions

Most Decisions/
Standard Operational
Decisions



Policy Making/Changes Decisions

Most Policy
Creation/Change



Key

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Student Senate-oriented Decisions

Policy Making/Changes Decisions



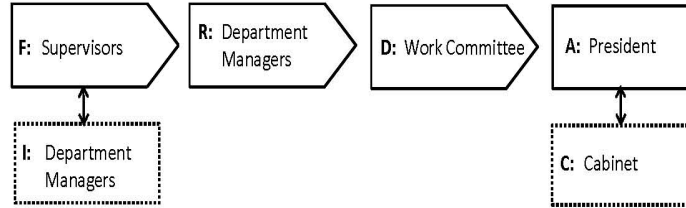
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Work Program-oriented Decisions

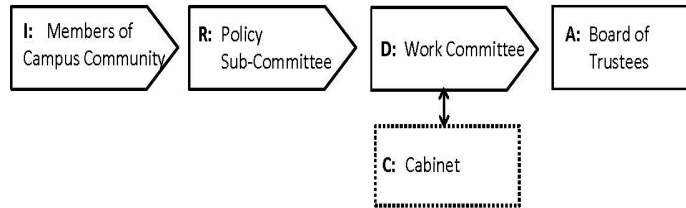
Operational Decisions

Allocations
(tuition bodies
and paid hours)



Policy Making/Changes Decisions

Work Program
Guidelines



Key

I = Initiating Body F = Formal Input C = Consulted Authority R = Recommending Authority D = Deciding Authority A = Approving Authority