SHARED GOVERNANCE POSITION PAPER

INTRODUCTION

History/Issues Considered by MCC’s Shared Governance Task Force

The proposal to address issues in MCC’s shared governance process emerged when members of the Academic Senate expressed concern about the need for greater clarity concerning MCC’s shared governance process. In order to include representatives from all shared governance constituencies, persons holding the following positions agreed to participate in a Shared Governance Task Force: President of the Academic Senate, President of the District Staff Council, President of the Administrative Association, College Presidents of Faculty and Staff Associations, a Dean of Instruction, a Dean of Student Development, one Officer, and the Associate Vice-Chancellor/Assistant to the Chancellor.

The Task Force began its work with a discussion of readings chosen to contextualize the history and goals espoused for shared governance in America’s higher education institutions. Readings included articles and research data on shared government, as well as current issues and events impacting community colleges and the shared governance process.

Readings also included information from The 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure and a copy of The 1977 Joint Statement on Government of College and Universities. Both of these documents were issued by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), and then endorsed by the American Council of Education (ACE) and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB). Readings also included the The Glion Declaration II: The Governance of Universities, issued in 2000 by the Glion Colloquium, a private initiative including well-known scholars and higher education leaders from leading research-intensive universities from the United States and Western Europe. Although these documents deal with shared governance in four-year colleges and universities, they are crucial to understanding shared governance as practiced in community colleges, since it is based on the four-year institutional model. These three documents posit the following principles for shared governance in higher education institutions:

1) Academic freedom in teaching and research as a basic right for the protection of teachers, as well as students.
2) Tenure as the means for insuring academic freedom.
3) A collegial and participatory model of decision-making, in which the board, the president, and faculty participate in making decisions about a wide range of issues affecting the institution.
4) Higher education institutions as settings in which civil and reasoned discourse should characterize shared governance interactions and processes.
5) A belief that shared governance must work in service of the students and the community that the higher education institution serves.
Lawrence De Nardis’ article, *Focus: Shared Governance*, in the fall 2001 issue of *The Presidency* described what has been the traditional prevailing model of shared governance in action.

**Today, the precise nature of shared governance may differ from one institution to another, but its practice exists within most of U.S. higher education, subject to the ultimate legal responsibility of the governing board.** We find, for example, that on matters such as curriculum, faculty status, and standards of student competence, faculties have principal responsibility. On matters such as institutional budgeting, staff salaries, and physical and fiscal resources, presidents and their senior managers have principal responsibility. On matters such as the creation or elimination of academic programs, joint responsibility is claimed. On a number of other important matters, responsibility is not clear and/or is disputed.

Members of MCC’s Shared Governance Task Force agreed in large part that this description characterizes how the shared governance process has typically worked at MCC. They also noted that at MCC we have worked to include staff, along with faculty and administration, in the shared governance decision-making processes. The Task Force affirmed that the identity of MCC’s faculty has been firmly rooted in the collegial shared governance model, as opposed to a K-12 top-down organizational model, which some community colleges, due to their history and evolution, have adopted.

MCC’s Shared Governance Task Force, as well as recent literature/research on issues in higher education, recognized that the following conditions have intensified pressure for adjustment/change in how shared governance has worked historically:

1. an accelerated rate of both internal and external change in higher education institutions;
2. challenges from for-profit competitive providers;
3. the growth of distributed learning locally, nationally and internationally;
4. accelerated changes in technology;
5. public pressure for accountability about both student learning outcomes and the management practices of higher education;
6. severe reductions in state funding;
7. diminishing public support for higher education as a common good that should be supported with public funds at the state and national level.

Of particular interest to the Task Force were preliminary results from a survey of 760 four-year colleges and universities by the University of Southern California published in 2002. The survey identified a number of the same issues that surfaced in the discussions of the MCC Shared Governance Task Force, including the following:

1. 85% of campus respondents indicated that shared governance remains an important part of their institutional value and identity.
2) Despite numerous problems with shared governance, 70% of survey respondents reported there is still sufficient trust and communication between faculty and administration to support effective decision-making and to move forward on critical issues facing their institutions using shared governance structures and processes.

The survey also reported the following shared governance issues:

1) Where faculties have decision-making authority and where they do not is a point of contention on the majority of campuses.
2) A workable definition of shared governance was a troublesome challenge.
3) Faculty involvement occurs in a variety of ways in both formal shared governance structures and informal structures.
4) 57% of respondents questioned the role/power of academic senates because of lack of faculty interest and participation, lack of time for involvement, and negative perceptions about the decision-making processes.
5) Faculty committees have spent a preponderance of their time over the last few years on personnel-related issues such as salary, health benefits, retirement issues, and working conditions.

The MCC Task Force agreed that the survey reflected many of their own and their constituents’ concerns about MCC’s governance process shared by them and their constituents. The survey identified issues/trends reflected in MCC’s shared governance decision-making process in the last ten years, particularly in the past two years.

The Success of Shared Governance in Building America's Community Colleges

Although the Task Force expressed concern about MCC’s shared governance process, it stressed that the following points are central to understanding and valuing the shared governance process at MCC:

1) The community college movement that began in the early 1960’s has established over 1100 two-year degree-granting institutions that now serve over half of America's undergraduates. In a little over forty years community colleges have substantially changed the landscape of American higher education. As a result, community colleges are described in the scholarly literature as the success story of 20th century American higher education. The unprecedented success of the community college movement was often greatly facilitated by the shared governance systems of many of the colleges.

2) MCC's Shared Governance Task Force noted that the success of community colleges, including MCC's position as one of the eight to ten largest and most successful of the urban/suburban community college systems in the U.S., has frequently been the result of strong partnerships between faculty and administration. To some extent, the crucial role of staff in the continued success of community colleges has also been a factor in community college shared governance systems.
3) MCC’s Shared Governance Task Force noted that they were not aware of any other business in America that could tell a success story equal to that of the community college movement in terms of growth rate, as well as building such a high percentage of market share in a similar time frame. In fact, the shared governance process has a number of characteristics often noted in literature describing high functioning businesses: 

a) inclusiveness; 

b) information sharing that permeates the organizational structure; 

c) ground-up as opposed to top-down decision making; and 

d) a sense of shared community and valuing of the work environment among employees that supports productivity and quality.

Therefore, the Task Force agreed that MCC, as one of America's largest and most successful urban-suburban community colleges, would be well advised to address issues in our shared governance process in order to insure its continued success.

**Shared Governance as a Viable Structure for Higher Education**

Although an overwhelming majority of faculty would resist any comparison of community colleges to a business, the comparison may be instructive in that community colleges are often admonished to become more business-like and efficient, i.e., more timely and crisp in their decision making and management practices. The Task Force agreed that timely decision-making and effective response to the challenges faced by the district are crucial to remaining successful and competitive in the 21st century.

Thus, in considering the shared governance system, it is fair to ask: “How do community colleges, with their sometimes troublesome, cumbersome and too-slow decision-making processes (often identified as the down side of shared governance systems) compare to a more typical business model of operation/practices?” Recently some writers suggested that higher education institutions have in some instances beaten the traditional top-down business model at its own game.

One example of this point of view appeared in the Fall 2002 issue of *The Navigator: Direction and Trends in Higher Education Policy*, published quarterly by the University of Southern California's School of Education:

One hears an increasing drumbeat that educational organizations need to change, but how to change is unclear. No one has a shortage of ideas about what to do ranging from new kinds of institutions and cooperative arrangements, to new ways to conduct basic educational tasks such as teaching. The tenor in which the ideas get expressed, however, is often in a fit of pique that change has not yet occurred or that we had better change--or else. I suppose in totalitarian countries or businesses of a century ago change-by-command might have worked. A leader decided on a plan of action and the followers followed or they were removed.

For over a century, however, colleges and universities have been the opposite kind of organization--noisy, administratively messy, and populated by individuals willing to express their opinions. True, some might wish for a more rigorous decision-
making structure that provides greater agility in a cumbersome process. Others might bemoan that academic organizations seem to have lessened their commitment to shared governance, as budgets become tighter and public funding decreases. And yet, no one argues that post-secondary institutions have become precisely like businesses or that shared governance is entirely dead. Indeed, during the recent spate of business scandals one wonders if businesses might more rightly try to mimic some of academe's ways, rather than vice versa.

The point, of course, is not that all is well in academe and we do not need to change. But it is also the case that we ought to not simply try to mirror one or another business process as a cure-all for what currently ails us.

MCC’S SHARED GOVERNANCE PROCESS;
DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS, A WORKING DEFINITION,
GUIDING PRINCIPLES, AND DESIRED OUTCOMES

Desired Characteristics

MCC’s Task Force agreed that shared governance has been and should continue to be an important part of our institution's decision-making process. The following characteristics were considered essential in revitalizing and maintaining the process:

...trust, open-discussion, clearer lines of communication, input into and clarity about decision-making processes, effective use of social capital and interpersonal networks combined with formal governance structures, and an understanding of recent organizational research emphasizing the need for trust and flexibility in meeting the significant changes and challenges for higher education institutions in the next ten to fifteen years. (The Navigator, Fall 2002, University of Southern California).

Participants also agreed that clarification of concepts, updating of practices and decision-making models used in the shared governance process, and better communication need to occur in order to insure that the process works for the benefit of MCC, its employees, and the students and community that we serve.

Working Definition for MCC’s Shared Governance Process

MCC’s shared governance system is based on Board Policy 2.10010. This policy reads as follows:

Because individuals and employee organizations need uniform and orderly methods for communication, the Chancellor will develop an appropriate governance system, which provides for ready intercommunication of ideas and feelings regarding the operation of the district. This governance system will provide for:
1) appropriate participation by faculty, staff, students, and administrators at the campus level; and
2) review and advice by all recognized district employee groups, administrators and where appropriate, student associations on matters relating to employee working conditions and benefits, and district policies and regulations at the district level. The board, however, will consider such a governance system as entirely advisory to the Chancellor.

MCC’s shared governance system is further defined in District Regulation (DR) 2.10010 as follows:

The internal governance of the district will be based on a system of recommendation and mutual consent of the various constituencies within the district organization. Participatory governance will be fostered through a network of employee organizations and committees in addition to the formal organizational structure of the district and its administrative units. Representation from the formal organizational units and employee organizations will comprise the Chancellor’s cabinet, an advisory body to the Chancellor. Additional membership of the Chancellor’s cabinet will be at the discretion of the Chancellor. (For the complete DR see attached.)

The Task Force constructed the following working definition for MCC’s shared governance process:

At MCC shared governance is a process that provides opportunities for all constituents of MCC’s academic community to have a voice in the decisions that affect them. Shared governance is a process that communicates openly about and provides multiple opportunities for input from various constituencies, as well as mechanisms for giving respectful consideration to such input. It is a process that seeks consensus among constituencies in decision making, but ultimately respects the responsibility of those identified by statute, policy, regulation, procedure or tradition for making decisions in their areas of specified or delegated jurisdiction.

Guiding Principles for MCC’s Shared Governance Process

1. Shared governance is a value of MCC as an academic community, made up of various constituencies, including the formal employment categories of faculty, staff and administrators, as well as students.
2. Shared governance attempts to give voice and respectful consideration to the values, opinions and ideas of all MCC constituencies, especially those primarily affected by the decisions at stake. This includes seeking out and respecting differences of opinion and attempting to find common ground among differences.
3. Shared governance seeks consensus, even unanimity, but can tolerate disagreements that cannot be resolved.
4. Shared governance values thoughtful deliberation but supports decisions that are in the best interests of the organization. Although shared governance seeks consensus,
those involved in the process respect decisions made by those who are acknowledged to hold principal decision-making responsibility in their areas of expertise and/or delegated authority.

5. Shared governance requires investment of time, energy and social capital in processes that seek input and attempt to achieve consensus.

6. Shared governance depends upon open and respectful communication among all constituent groups and all participants in the process.

7. Shared governance depends on open sharing of information among all constituencies, specifically including pertinent information related to decision-making.

8. Shared governance works most effectively when participants acknowledge and agree upon the areas of expertise and authority for which groups or individuals have principal influence or responsibility.

**Desired Outcomes of MCC’s Shared Governance**

Shared governance, by definition, is based on understanding that everyone in the institution--faculty, staff, administration, and students--shares the outcomes of decisions. Ideally, there is a sense of equal partnership among the various governance groups. Shared governance also means that all governance groups have a vested interest in the successful outcomes of institutional policy.

Shared governance works effectively when consensus has been reached between members of the various governance groups. Some possible outcomes of a successful shared governance process would be:

1. The establishment of a community in which there is an ongoing climate that encourages equal partnership among the various employee groups.

2. Collaborative relationships would be encouraged and would emerge, as a result of the shared governance process, among employee groups.

3. The MCC would recognize shared goals and when these goals have been achieved.

4. Employees would be recognized and rewarded when they achieve professional success or display conspicuous commitment to MCC and its goals.

5. Decisions that emerged from the shared governance process would clearly support student learning.
Assessment of the quality of MCC’s shared governance process centers on three key values implicit in the definition, guiding principles, and desired outcomes for shared governance previously stated:

1) **Inclusiveness** is characterized by the participation of all employee groups. Historically, staff participation at MCC has often been limited by job responsibilities, lack of supervisor support, and cynicism about the process. Administrative and faculty governance has had more consistent participation.

2) **Trust** entails mutual respect for all parties within the governance process. Careful scrutiny of ideas is a key to good analysis of ideas presented in the governance process. Complete mistrust and dislike of people offering ideas is not. Successful concepts and practices of shared governance necessitate that participants refrain from personal attacks and concentrate on issues and ideas.

3) **Sound communication** is minimally characterized by the effectiveness of the tools used to communicate, e.g., telephones and e-mail. Its essential nature is found in a venue that allows the time for ideas to be heard and a climate that fosters tolerance of minority viewpoints.

Commitment to these values by individual participants in shared governance will determine MCC’s success in the shared governance process. However, the Task Force recognizes that systemic changes in MCC’s governance process are also needed. The Task Force recommends the following structural changes and confidence building measure for MCC’s shared governance process.

**Recommendations for Structural Changes**

Recommendations for structural change include a reorganized Chancellor’s Cabinet and establishing strategic conversations.

1) **The Reorganized Chancellor’s Cabinet**

The reorganized Chancellor’s Cabinet would include the existing members, as well as additional members. The membership of the Cabinet would increase to include presidents of faculty and staff associations at the colleges and the Administrative Center. This expansion of the Cabinet would support fuller representation of MCC’s internal stakeholders. The Cabinet would continue to meet on a monthly basis, but might meet in the afternoon to allow for extended meeting times when needed.

The current Cabinet format involves governance representatives who provide the Chancellor and other Cabinet members with a brief update of campus events/constituency reports and deal with PRP’s. In a reorganized Cabinet the meeting format would change to allow for discussion of issues of districtwide significance that the Chancellor and the Cabinet agreed to place on the agenda. This would allow the expanded membership and
the Chancellor to hear more fully the substance of key conversations related to governance matters which occur among constituencies at all district locations. The Cabinet would remain an advisory body to the Chancellor. However, an expanded Cabinet would, hopefully, improve the flow of communication/information to the Chancellor and among all employees throughout the district.

2) Strategic Conversations

Strategic Conversations are a governance structure used by Maricopa Community Colleges to allow for discussion of issues of significance districtwide. MCC would use strategic conversations not only for discussion of issues, but also to gather information to help inform decisions to be made on issues of importance to MCC constituencies.

A strategic conversation would occur when an issue of importance is identified. Relevant information would be gathered and a task force would write a position paper, representing the viewpoints of various constituencies, on the issue. The position paper would be distributed throughout MCC, and all interested parties would have the opportunity to participate in a two-three hour facilitated conversation about the issue.

Recommendation for a Confidence Building Measure

The task force recommends the use of a commonly accepted decision-making model. Although the model is not appropriate for every decision and should not be used to evaluate the validity of every decision, it is a model to which employees throughout the district could aspire. The Task Force believes the model would support better-informed more consistent decisions that would have more employee buy-in and constitute a more efficient/effective use of organizational time and resources. The larger the scale of any decision (scale is determined by the number of people affected, breadth and impact on organizational resources, and importance of the message the decision sends) the more important the use of the decision-making model.

The recommended MCC Decision-Making Model is attached.
GOVERNANCE SYSTEM

2.10010 DR

The internal governance of the district will be based on a system of recommendation and mutual consent of the various constituencies within the district organization. Participatory governance will be fostered through a network of employee organizations and committees in addition to the formal organizational structure of the district and its administrative units. Representation from the formal organizational units and employee organizations will comprise the chancellor's cabinet, an advisory body to the chancellor. Additional membership of the chancellor's cabinet will be at the discretion of the chancellor. Appendix A of the PRP's illustrates the relationships of the various governance constituencies and the chancellor's cabinet.

Communication within the governance system is predicated upon the following:

I. It is the responsibility of all representatives to ensure that there is opportunity for their units and organizations to study, discuss, advise, and consult on issues relating to matters coming through governance bodies of the district before final decisions are made.

   A. Regular Procedure for matters requiring the approval of the chancellor:

      A matter will be lodged at a regular monthly chancellor's cabinet meeting for action at the following month's regular cabinet meeting.

   B. Regular Procedure for policy matters requiring the approval of the board:

      After a matter is duly acted upon by the chancellor's cabinet and approved by the chancellor, it will be lodged at the next board meeting for action at the following month's board meeting.

   C. Expedited Procedure:

      When an issue arises which the chancellor believes requires expedited action, the time frame may be shortened provided;

      1. Officers of all recognized organizations are notified of the proposed action.

      2. One week is allowed to call each organizational body together in special session to consider the action being proposed, contingent upon availability of members (one week is insufficient during periods of open enrollment, summer months, etc.)

      3. A special meeting of the chancellor's cabinet is called to consider input from all recognized organizations.

II. Units and organizations represented on the chancellor's cabinet will make full and total use of the communication system provided by the internal governance process outlined above. Each unit and organization will follow all channels of internal district communications prior to bringing any matter to the chancellor. Should a matter not be resolved at the chancellor's level, the chancellor will take it to the board for review and final decision.
This process is in no way intended to interfere with individual freedom of action or speech, but to ensure that such action or voicing of opinion will occur in an ordered and measured fashion.

III. The selections and duties of the committee members who carry out the governance tasks of the district as well as the membership will be delineated in each policy, regulation and/or procedure. Committee members may be specified by title, appointed by a designated authority or selected by a group. When a group selects its committee representatives, the members will ordinarily represent the views of the group.

Deliberations may be confidential, as in the case of a selection from among candidates, but final decisions, except in grievance cases where confidentiality has been requested by either party, will be reported to interested groups and individuals.

Where committee members are appointed by a designated authority to represent groups, the group will be notified and given the opportunity to react to the selection.

IV. In all cases, notification of committee membership will be provided to appropriate organizations and presidents upon appointment.

V. Whenever a subcommittee is needed to facilitate the work of a committee, the committee members will choose persons to serve on the subcommittee. The subcommittee will have representation from affected groups, organizations, units, and categories. The function of the subcommittee may be to advise or to recommend.

Approved: Chancellor
June 15, 1976

Revised: January 10, 1978

Revised: April 13, 1982
METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY COLLEGES
DECISION-MAKING MODEL

The following steps are intended to serve as a “common” decision-making process that is applicable to all types of decisions that are made within our organization at MCC.

1. **Understand the need or issue.**
   a. Describe the need or issue that needs to be addressed in both quantitative and qualitative terms.
   b. As appropriate, identify the internal and external stakeholders who will be involved in the process.
   c. Determine the scope of the need or issue.
   d. Define the desired outcomes of addressing the need or issue.

   Other consideration: This process may lead to the conclusion that the issue is not a problem or there is not a need.

2. **Collect and document data/information that verifies or disputes the need or issue.**
   a. Use quantitative and qualitative data.
   b. Record assumptions that were made in the collection and documentation.
   c. Seek stakeholder input.

3. **Brainstorm and develop possibilities that address the need or issue.**

4. **Evaluate the above possibilities in relationship to the institutions (e.g. MCC, college, or unit) resources, priorities, goals and values, and the expected effectiveness of the alternatives.**
   a. May utilize guideline questions in evaluation process.
   b. Consider political reality while respecting the authority of the decision-making process.
5. **Determine the most effective alternative or recommendation.**
   
   a. Provide rationale or documentation for recommending or deciding on alternative.

   Definition of “most effective”: Maximizing the desired outcome or result within the boundaries of institutional resources, priorities, goals and values.

6. **Communicate and implement or recommend decision.**

   a. Determine if the decision is subject to review by another group or person such as supervisor, another department, a governance group, or Officers. If so, take the appropriate steps.

   b. If the recommendation violates a PRP, suggest a change in the PRPs.

7. **Assess the outcomes of implementing the decision.**

   a. Set up a system to assess the outcomes.

   b. Develop a feedback loop for reassessing the decision.
SAMPLE GUIDELINE QUESTIONS

1. Can the problem be solved within known resources?

2. How could resources be reallocated to solve problem?

3. Who has knowledge about alternative resources and authority to reallocate?

4. How do the alternatives help us achieve unit, college, and/or strategic priorities or goals?

5. To what degree does each alternative address the desired outcomes defined in Step 1?

6. What possible negative repercussions does each alternative pose? How extensive is the impact?

7. How do the alternatives fit with the values of our internal as well as external communities?

8. What is the scope and likely reactions if an alternative is implemented?