A Statement From Sherry Buchanan, Ph.D.
Chair
Board of Governors

10/19/12

As stated last month, Shared Governance prescribes various roles, responsibilities and decision-making authority. Depending on the situation, the Board of Governors makes decisions in a variety of ways.

Some of the things we vote on are *pro forma* endorsements of decisions made by others (e.g., modifications to curriculum or confirmation of faculty for promotion and tenure). For these types of decisions, we rely almost completely on the trustworthiness of the shared governance processes that bring them to our agenda.

Other types of decisions come after considerable consultation with Administration and Board Committee work (e.g., changing policies regarding personnel issues; deciding whether to undertake a campus-wide prioritization project; budgeting). For these kinds of decisions, we assume that appropriate input has been sought by Administration through shared governance mechanisms. Since most of the Board’s committee meetings are open and posted in advance, unless there are exceptions under Missouri’s Sunshine Law, we also assume that interested persons will attend and participate, and that campus interests will be accurately presented by Administrators or other representatives.

Some Board decisions are, essentially, unilateral. We, generally, dialogue with Administration and may seek input from the University’s attorneys, Human Resources or other sources of information. Campus opinions, impact of such decisions and best ways to implement will be considered, but we consider the decision-making responsibility to be ours. Final decisions do not typically rely on others because there may be confidentiality issues, campus constituents might have conflicts of interest, or the decision-making role is one assigned exclusively to the Board of Governors (e.g., whether to give salary increases; hiring, evaluation and retention of the President, contracts to purchase or utilize land owned by the University).

Though not all situations fall neatly into one of these categories, this is a basic summary of how we see our role within shared governance and some of the assumptions about the various decisions we are asked to make.