

Policy Name: Shared Governance  
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Title of Policy Owner: Vice President  
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I. Policy

The concept and process of shared governance is vital to the vitality and integrity of the academic community.

II. Purpose

To set forth the principles of shared governance at Southside College of Health Sciences (SCHS) in order that they might be utilized as a conceptual framework for all policies and processes of the College.

III. Scope

This policy applies to all associates and students of SCHS.

IV. Definitions

None.

V. Policy Details

**Shared Governance**

A collaborative process wherein College stakeholders-administration, faculty, staff, and students-together advance the mission of the College as a community dedicated to excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service.

The process of shared governance is intended to promote the discernment of the best policies to meet the needs of the College community.

The collegial model of shared governance formally recognizes that the planning and development of college-wide policy is a responsibility to be primarily shared between the administration and the faculty, the administration fulfills its part of this shared responsibility through the administrative hierarchy, which is designed to administer policy and programs.

The faculty fulfills its responsibility in two ways: 1) through the planning, development and implementation, and assessment of policies and programs inherent to the academic discipline(s); and 2) through the Faculty Senate, which articulates formal faculty positions on policy matters.

Collegiality, a key principle in any system of shared governance, recognizes and encourages the distinction between policy development and policy administration. There are two other principles necessary to the shared governance system: consensus and communication. Rather than majority rule, the system demands that there be prior consultation based on full and adequate documentation of need for new or changed policies or programs. It also requires that all parties be informed and that there be communication to build the confidence of all parties in the judgments and decisions being made. Shared governance cannot succeed without open, uninhibited discussion among all parties concerned. In keeping with the principle of consensus, there shall be no unilateral action by any party in the absence of such discussion. Regular channels of communication must be assured so that the faculty organization and the administration can discuss issues and concerns. While sufficient time must be allowed for full participation, all parties must agree to respond in a timely manner to the issues that are brought forward for consensus.

### **Principles and Practice of Shared Governance**

Shared Governance is the process by which the College community (i.e., faculty, staff, administrators, alumni, and students) has the opportunity to influence decisions on matters of policy and procedure, and/or an opportunity to present alternatives on such matters. The objective of shared governance is to foster mutually reinforcing relationships that expand the opportunities for cooperation and leadership while facilitating judicious, yet creative, college governance.

Shared governance includes issues of values, culture, management, and administration, as well as operating frameworks, such as legislation, which are externally imposed. The intent of this process is to balance efficiency and effectiveness with equity and fairness.

### **Principles of Shared Governance**

#### General

- In an environment of shared governance, those who will be affected by a decision on policy or procedures will be informed and have the opportunity to influence governance decisions.
- A climate of shared governance relies upon consistent, trustworthy communication that is multidirectional and reciprocal.
- All participants in the shared governance process are accountable for the proper execution of their roles in a timely manner.
- Shared governance will permeate all levels of decision-making within the College community.
- Full and active participation at all levels of shared governance will be encouraged without fear of retribution.
- Recommendations made through shared governance processes will be taken seriously and have actual influence in college decision making.

#### Representation

- **Areas of Primary Concern:** While many governance issues will involve multiple constituencies, the process acknowledges that certain areas may be the primary concern of one group either because the matters considered have primary importance and concern to that group or because one group holds the expertise in those matters.
- **Proportional Representation:** Representation will be proportional to the level of impact on constituencies. However, efficiency and effectiveness should not be sacrificed for the sake of proportionality.

#### Procedural Integrity

- **Authority:** The College's published policies and procedures, including policies and procedures of Bon Secours Mercy Health System, and any applicable federal and/or state laws, as well as accrediting standards, are the authoritative frameworks within which shared governance operates. The spirit of shared governance requires all parties to seek mutually

acceptable recommendations. When compromise and concurrence cannot be achieved, rationale for the administrative decision will be provided in written form to the involved parties who may present a written statement of their position and/or any objections to the decision as part of the institution's or unit's record on the issue. However, the spirit of shared governance requires that the administrative rejection of shared governance recommendations be rare and for compelling reasons. Once a decision is reached, all parties are expected to be supportive of the implementation process.

- **Openness:** The process should be transparent, and the status of any proposal will be available to all appropriate constituencies at any point in the approval process.
- **Notification:** The process will provide constituencies with sufficient opportunities for discussion of policy and procedural issues prior to making final recommendations.
- **Timeliness:** Recommendations and decisions on proposals need to be made in a manner that is timely and appropriate to the issue yet does not overlook the governance process for the sake of expediency. It may, on occasion, be necessary to use vehicles of collaboration that can be effectively carried out in accelerated periods of time. Responsiveness is the key to the credibility of the process.
- **Oversight:** Review and evaluation of the shared governance process is essential to ensure the functioning of the process as intended and adherence to the spirit of shared governance at all levels of the College.

### **Practice of Shared Governance**

Procedures and Structures – The College will have written procedures and formal structures that provide for appropriate collaboration and communication between and among administration, faculty, staff, and students. The structures and procedures shall be developed cooperatively, disseminated widely prior to adoption, and reviewed periodically according to procedures and timelines established in the documents governing institutional practice. Institutional structures and positions, as well as other employees on long-term contracts.

Subject Matter – Identification of subject matter appropriate for administration, alumni, faculty, staff, and student’s participation in the governance process shall recognize:

- The responsibility of administrators for forming and articulating a vision for the institution, providing strategic leadership, and managing its human resources, finances, and operations.
- The central role of the faculty in the institution’s teaching and service, including development of the educational programs of the college; selection of course materials, instructional equipment, and other educational resources; systematic evaluation and revision of the curriculum; assessment of student learning outcomes; and planning for institutional effectiveness.
- The essential support provided by staff in facilitating the institution’s operations and the legitimate interest of the staff in participating in the development of policies and procedures.
- The institution’s main educational focus on its students and their legitimate interest in matters pertaining to student life and the academic environment.

Best Interest – Given the dynamic nature of institutional governance, it is understood that there may be infrequent occasions when institutional leaders must act in the best interest of the institution on major issues affecting the institutional constituencies without full benefit of the share governance process. In such cases, the representative bodies shall be informed in a timely manner and have an opportunity to comment on the actions taken. While participation in governance by faculty, staff, and students is necessary and important for the well-being of the College, the final responsibility for decision-making rests with the Vice President, who is ultimately held accountable by the Bon Secours Mercy Health System.

Resources – Shared governance requires a commitment of resources and time from the institution. The College must provide an appropriate level of resources to faculty, staff, and students to allow them to carry out their shared governance responsibilities effectively.

## VI. Attachments

None.

**VII. Related Policies**

None.

**VIII. Disclaimers**

Nothing in this policy creates a contractual relationship between Southside College of Health Sciences (SCHS) and any party. SCHS, in its sole discretions, reserves the right to amend, terminate or discontinue this policy at any time, with or without advance notice.

**IX. Version Control**

Version	Date	Description	Prepared by
1.0	08/1/2021	Revised and new template	Executive Council