

Faculty roles in governance in American Research Universities

Richard Saller

Dean, School of Humanities & Sciences
Stanford University

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Principal roles of faculty in governance

- Talent pool for selection of department chairs, deans, provosts and presidents
- Participation in selection of the above
- Advisory on university priorities and finances
- Review and approval of academic programs
- Direction of academic programs

Roles of faculty in governance (con't)

- Selection of students
- Advisory on capital program planning, e.g., layout of new buildings
- Advice and consent on faculty appointments and promotions

Limits to faculty governance

- Financial management of a complex institution
- Final tradeoffs in difficult choices
- Closure of departments and programs
- Occasional unwillingness to make difficult promotion decisions
- Erratic decision-making in discipline cases of students and faculty

Limits to faculty governance(con' t)

- Rotation of department chairs→limited experience, occasional abdication of responsibility to staff
- Unwillingness of faculty to serve on institutional committees
- Related, repeated service of the same subset of faculty (differential willingness to provide public goods)
- “Democracy” may have unintended consequence of replicating current faculty: the diversity issue

Conclusion: Importance of trust

- The challenge of asymmetry of information between levels of administration, between faculty and staff
- The challenge of communications in large, loose-jointed institutions
- Need for academic administrators to be able to talk out of both sides of their mouths: academic values *and* institutional responsibility