

120.00 POLICY ON STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNANCE

As members of the campus community, students have a substantial interest in the governance of the University. Their participation has increased significantly in the last decades, and the University has benefited from it. It is the intent of this *Policy* to reaffirm the University's commitment to the principle of student involvement in governance in both administrative and academic areas and to state the primary purposes and goals of that involvement.

This commitment is based on the premise that student participation is vital to a vigorous intellectual exchange and the furtherance of the objectives of the University education and research. Appropriate, effective, and productive student involvement, consistent with the development of policies that reflect the total needs of the University, is the goal.

The governance of the University involves more than the process of making decisions. The process of governance provides a forum for group interaction, expression of concerns, exploration of feasible solutions, and reconciliation of diverse viewpoints. Within this context, student participation serves several functions.

First, it is important to the sound development of policy. Student views and advice, often from special perspectives, provide for more informed University decision making. Participation should be encouraged and strengthened through the involvement of all levels of student participation.

Second, there is recognition that students have a vital interest in decisions directly related to policies and programs affecting their academic and non-academic experience at the University. Clear procedures are required to ensure that students are afforded access to needed information, an opportunity to share ideas, and encouragement to express concerns, both formally and informally.

Finally, student participation is crucial to ensure that student viewpoints are considered on issues of importance to the University community. This communication provides opportunities for testing assumptions, for understanding the attitudes of others, for sharing information, and for developing understanding and mutual trust among constituencies. The special nature of the University requires a sense of community. While every decision may not be wholly satisfactory to all parties, the governance process should provide a forum for candid discussion.

Efforts should continue to be directed toward improving not only the extent but also the quality and effectiveness of student involvement. To these ends, the University must work to achieve several goals.

First, the processes central to student involvement, including the selection, training, and continuity of student participants, need to be clearly understood by all members of the

campus community and periodically reexamined. Care should be taken, in particular, that the process of reaching decisions in campus governance is openly communicated and well understood. Second, building on existing mechanisms, means for student participation in administrative and academic areas should be developed and implemented on the campuses and in the Office of the President; it is important that a variety of ways be provided to ensure that the University gains full benefit from student participation in those areas. Third, areas where students are not now participating need to be examined. In this regard, ways should be sought to enhance student involvement in academic departments, where important decisions that affect students are made.

In order to achieve the goals of this Policy, each campus has developed a plan for student participation. Essential to the success of such plans is a periodic review of the procedures used by campus academic and administrative departments, student governments and other student organizations, and an evaluation of progress toward implementation of the plan. This review process should involve broad consultation with the campus community, including formal consultation with student governments and the Academic Senate. Campus plans for student participation in institutional governance should be made readily available for review. Matters which have been delegated by The Regents to the Academic Senate are beyond the scope of these campus plans, but direct discussions between students and the Academic Senate on student participation in the deliberations of the senate should continue. Plans for student participation in institutional governance should be widely disseminated.