

# MSCF Minute



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## Faculty Shared Governance

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During the Chapter President's training at Ruttger's, a topic that came up in some of the small groups revolved around the notion of Faculty Shared Governance (FSG). Questions ranged from what to put on the agenda to a deeper discussion of what is the purpose/role of FSG.

True FSG aspires to create a system of accountability along with the greatest amount of involvement in decision making. It gives a voice, not specifically authority, to shared concerns throughout the college. In the article "[Defending the Tradition of Shared Governance](#)" (1996), the author noted that "When faculty members and administration defend shared governance...they are defending the practice of democracy." This long held view has been used to promote what is in the best interest of the institution. Shared governance is not meant to simply get committee consensus or be a one-way information sharing session. Contractually, our language states the purpose as

"The Employer and the MSCF recognize that the faculty has a direct interest in college issues including, *but not limited to*, **long and short range planning, priorities in the deployment of financial resources, acquisition and use of existing physical and human resources, institutional self-study, marketing, public relations, and recruiting activities.**"

Using what is contractually stated as the purpose of FSG can be a guiding tool for what to consider when developing the agenda. In addition to what is listed above, the contract also states "The parties agree that the council is established to *make recommendations* to the college on the following topic areas: **Personnel, Student Affairs, Facilities, Fiscal Matters and General Matters.**" This language provides significant latitude about what can be discussed. The latitude recognizes the unique issues each of our colleges deal with and allows the faculty-elect chair flexibility regarding what to include on the agenda. Standard practice at most colleges has been for the chair

and College President to collaboratively create the agenda. In true shared fashion, the items on the agenda and time spent on them should be balanced between both parties. There are some items contractually that must be considered at FSG:

1. Proposals initiated by the administration to create or change existing policies and/or rules and regulations affecting faculty members will be submitted **in writing** to the local MSCF for reaction before a final decision is made by the administration.
2. Reductions in unlimited faculty members must be discussed within one month following the notice of layoff.
3. If agreement is **not** reached on a proposal at the first meeting at which it was considered, the administration **shall take no action on the proposal for ten (10) days**. At the request of the faculty, the proposal shall be reconsidered at a subsequent council meeting during the ten-day period.

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Ultimately, extensive and continuous communication is vital to achieving genuine shared governance. If sincere efforts have been made by both parties and an agreement /understanding cannot be reached, "*either party may request that the MSCF bring the issue(s) to the next monthly meeting of the MnSCU/MSCF Joint Labor Management Committee.*"

Faculty and administration need to view each other as real partners of the institution. When we ask stakeholders to be continuously involved in discussions so we know what changes and advances are taking place at our institutions, the college thrives. Shouldn't that truly be our shared goal?

