

## The State of Shared Governance at San Jose State University

As noted in the WASC report of June “SJSU has a legacy of respect for academic freedom and strong shared governance which is also visible in the expectations of the faculty for open and transparent participation in governing the University successfully.” During the WASC accreditation team’s site visit conducted April 13-16, 2015 it was apparent that maintaining this legacy was challenged by a lack of trust between the administration and the faculty and by the ongoing personnel changes in the University’s top leadership. I am pleased to report that under the leadership of Interim President Susan Martin (7/15-7/16) and the current leadership of President Mary Papazian, San Jose State has reinvigorated the culture of successful, collegial and engaged shared governance. There are a number of factors that have led to this turnaround.

### Presidential Transitions

Soon after the WASC report was issued, then President Qayoumi announced his resignation from SJSU effective July 2017. CSU Chancellor Timothy White responded immediately to the resignation and within days announced the appointment of Interim President Susan Martin. Within days of her appointment, President Martin reached out to Academic Senate Chair Michael Kimbarow and immediately reset the table by making it clear that she valued and supported shared governance and would change the culture of communication between faculty leadership and the administration to ensure open and transparent dialogue.

President Martin was true to her word and within days of her arrival on campus it was evident to the faculty members of the Academic Senate Executive Committee that her relationship to the faculty would be dramatically different from her predecessor. President Martin set to work to reconnect with all campus and external constituencies to repair damaged relationships and within a matter of a few weeks the morale of the faculty took a 180-degree turn north. President Martin is credited with repairing shared governance and positioning the University for a successful search for its next permanent president.

Following the completion of a highly competitive national search that took place during the late fall 2015 into the early spring 2016 semester, Chancellor White announced the selection of Mary Papazian as SJSU’s permanent President. Before arriving on campus, Dr. Papazian and Senate Chair Kimbarow were in full communication via phone and email. During her campus visit before taking office, President Papazian met with the Senate leadership and by all accounts made her respect and appreciation for effective shared governance clear.

Since her arrival in July 2016, President Papazian has demonstrated consistent and meaningful support for the SJSU legacy of shared governance. President Papazian engages fully in discussion during Senate Executive Committee meetings, participates in full Senate debates, and is completely engaged in reviewing and

approving Senate policy recommendations. In addition, as appropriate, President Papazian has made a point of sharing information and ideas with the faculty senate leadership to gauge the potential impact on the campus before finalizing her decisions.

Dr. Papazian and the Senate faculty leadership have not always agreed on policy; however, disagreements are resolved through open dialogue without defensiveness on either side and without fear of retaliation. This important component of shared governance was missing during the time of the WASC visit in April 2015.

### Cabinet Transitions

Since the WASC site visit in April 2015, four new members of the President's leadership team have joined the University. Vice President for Student Affairs, Reginald Blaylock, Vice President for University Advancement Paul Lanning, Vice President for Administration and Finance Charlie Fass and Chief Diversity Officer Kathy Wong (Lau) have joined Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs (and now the longest serving senior administrator on campus) as the core of campus leadership.

Collectively, because of the complete turnover of the senior leadership team that coincided with the change in Presidential leadership, the campus found itself unshackled from the past and the association of individual's with the previous President. Consequently, following the lead of President's Martin and Papazian, the cabinet as a whole is completely engaged with and supportive of shared governance. The faculty leadership of the Senate has observed that the leadership team is supportive and respectful of each other and is working collectively for the good of the campus.

### Senate Leadership Stability

The stability in faculty leadership is yet another contributing factor to the successful turn-around of shared governance. Four of the faculty members of the Senate Executive Committee, who met with the WASC site visit team in April 2015, remain in Senate leadership today. As thought leaders on the campus, the collective will and desire of the faculty leadership to repair the damaged relationships between the senate, the campus, and the administration set the tone and example for others on campus to follow.

### Indicators of Effective Shared Governance

The following list is not exhaustive but serves to demonstrate key accomplishments in support of shared governance.

- Reactivation of the Budget Advisory Committee Co-Chaired by the VP for Administration and Finance and the Vice-Chair of the Senate

- Creation of a Strategic Planning Steering Committee co-chaired by the Provost and Chair of the Senate
- Creation of a permanent WASC Accreditation Steering Committee with representation including administration and faculty (including the Academic Senate Chair)
- Implementation of a Senate meeting summary, which is sent campus wide following every Senate meeting.
- Commitment by President Papazian to appoint a faculty member to chair all administrative level search committees
- Development of an Ad Hoc Committee on Faculty Diversity including the Chief Diversity Officer, Senate Chair, Chair of the Professional Standards Policy Committee, the President's Chief of Staff, AVP for Faculty Affairs, Faculty-in-Residence for Diversity and the faculty Co-Chairs of the Faculty Diversity Committee
- Inclusion of the Senate Chair on Mary Papazian's Campus Leadership Group
- Revision of the Tower Foundation Bylaws to include the Senate Chair and a Faculty-at-Large member on the Board of Directors.
- Individual bi-weekly meetings between the Academic Senate Chair, and the President, Provost, Chief Diversity Officer and the President's Chief-of-Staff.

### Strategic Planning

One of the factors that contributed to the breakdown in shared governance during the previous administration was the lack of transparency in the development of the strategic plan (Vision 2017). The campus is now engaged in the process of closing down Vision 2017 and preparing for the creation of a new 10-year strategic plan. University policy S16-3 <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-3.pdf> establishes the strategic planning steering committee (SPCC) and guidelines for the strategic planning process designed to eliminate the deficiencies in the development and dissemination of Vision 2017.

The SPCC was constituted and charged by President Papazian in Fall 2016. The committee is co-chaired by Provost Andy Feinstein and Senate Chair Michael Kimbarow. The committee's task during the 2016/17 academic year is to identify the indicators of success of Vision 2017 and to create a communication plan to share the closeout of Vision 2017 with the campus. The SPCC will turn its attention to the development of the new plan during the 2017/18 academic year.

### Summary

In summary, the state of shared governance at San Jose State University is strong. In a short 21 months, the campus is now operating under its third President and has an almost completely new cabinet. Yet, despite this leadership turnover, the campus is enjoying a remarkable turn-around in faculty morale and faculty/administration engagement in shared governance. It's a testament to the

will of the faculty, the President and the President's cabinet that SJSU has returned to its rightful place as a leader in successful shared governance.