

**Commission on Staff Policies and Affairs**

**Tuesday, October 24, 2023**

**11:00 am**

**Location: North End Center, Conference Room 2420 and zoom;  
<https://virginiatech.zoom.us/j/82126985689>**

**Present:** Callan Bartel (presiding), Doug Broyles, Jenni Case, Lacey Doyle, Alan Grant, Sarah Henderson, Amanda Hill, Chad Kelley, Curtis Mabry, James Perkins, Michelle Raines, Susanna Rinehart, and Mary Sullivan.

**Absent with Notice:** Jamie McElfresh

**Absent:** Brent Bowden, Nikki Gland-Turpin, and Alex Parrish.

**Guests:** Lori Buchanan, LaTawnya Burleson, Kari Evans, Bryan Garey, April Myers, and Dee Dee Somervell.

Callan Bartel called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. A quorum was present.

**1. Adoption of Agenda**

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the agenda. The motion carried.

**2. Approval of or Announcement of approval and posting of minutes of September 26, 2023**

A motion was made and seconded to approve the September 26, 2023 meeting minutes.

**3. Old Business**

**CSPA Resolution 2023-24A**

Resolution to Add a Statement of Support for Participation in Governance and Professional Development to Staff Job Descriptions

Callan Bartel presented the resolution for second reading. A motion was made and seconded to approve the resolution.

Bryan Garey, Vice President of Human Resources, suggested that the language of the resolution be updated in the **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** paragraph to reference “job posting” instead of “staff position descriptions”. He confirmed that a clause can be added to the PageUp job posting template, and mentioned that the addition would be to all job postings, not just staff. Mr. Garey encouraged CSPA and Staff Senate to work with the Faculty and A/P Faculty Senates to ensure agreement about the addition to the job posting template.

A motion was made and seconded to amend the resolution to change the language in the final paragraph from “position description” to “job posting”. The title of the resolution will also be adjusted to reflect this change. The motion carried.

The resolution, as amended, was approved. The amended resolution is attached.

**4. New Business**

No new business

## **5. Acceptance and Posting of Committee Reports and/or Minutes**

No reports and/or minutes

## **6. Presentation**

April Myers, Director of Governance Administration & Secretary to University Council, Lori Buchanan, Senior Manager for Governance Administration, and Dee Dee Somervell, Governance Specialist presented an overview of Shared Governance at Virginia Tech. The presentation is attached.

## **7. Other Items**

Callan Bartel led a discussion regarding Shared Governance at Virginia Tech to collect responses to the survey Kim O'Rourke, Vice President for Policy and Governance, sent out. CSPA's responses are attached. Additional feedback will be accepted before the December 15, 2023 submission date. Commission members should email Callan Bartel and Kari Evans with any other feedback.

## **8. Announcements-**

The next meeting will be Tuesday, February 27, 2024 at 11:00 a.m.

## **9. Adjournment-**

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 12:06 p.m.

**Commission on Staff Policies and Affairs**  
**Resolution to Add a Statement of Support for Participation in Shared Governance**  
**and Professional Development to Staff Job Postings**  
**CSPA Resolution 2023-24A**

Draft Notice Sent to University Council Cabinet	September 12, 2023
First Reading by Commission	September 26, 2023
Approval by Commission	October 24, 2024
First Reading by Senate	October 18, 2023
Approval by Senate	Date
Faculty Senate Comment	Date
Staff Senate Comment	Date
Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate Comment	Date
Graduate and Professional Student Senate Comment	Date
Undergraduate Student Senate Comment	Date
First Reading, University Council	Date
Approved, University Council	Date
Approved, President	Date
Approved, Board of Visitors	Date
Effective Date	Upon Approval or Date

**WHEREAS**, in the spirit of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University’s (University) motto, *Ut Prosim* (That I May Serve), engagement in community through participation in shared governance is valued; and

**WHEREAS**, as mentioned in a statement from President Sands to the University community on August 28, 2023, the University’s shared governance system requires an informed and knowledgeable community and allows for transparent, comprehensive, and open communication amongst governing bodies and the University community; and

**WHEREAS**, staff participation in the shared governance system promotes collaboration and inclusiveness among the University community; and

**WHEREAS**, support for professional development opportunities should be encouraged at any higher education institution where the pursuit of knowledge is the basis of the institution’s mission; and

**WHEREAS**, job responsibilities and in-person staffing concerns can hinder staff participation in shared governance and professional development opportunities.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that a statement of the University’s support for staff participation in the University’s shared governance system and professional development opportunities be added to staff job postings as an enduring and unifying invitation to the community.

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## A statement from President Tim Sands on staff participation in governance

Dear colleagues,

Navigating Virginia Tech's opportunities and challenges over the past few years has given me great appreciation for our robust system of shared governance and the collaboration and inclusiveness that comes from having staff working alongside students and faculty.

Participation in governance brings value to our staff members and the university, providing important representation and perspective, along with opportunities for unique and impactful professional development that can cultivate future leaders. While ensuring individual primary job responsibilities are completed, it is important that we endorse and support staff participating in our shared governance system. Staff members who have an interest in serving on committees and commissions should be encouraged to participate. The Division of Human Resources is available to help supervisors through conversations centered on balancing job responsibilities with university service. It has been our long-standing practice that employees serving the institution through committee participation are not required to use leave.

Maintaining our momentum and achieving our goals for the future will be challenging and complex, requiring all the tools and resources we have worked to develop. Active engagement in our system of shared governance, by all our constituency groups, is essential for the university to thrive.

I look forward to meeting with chairs and learning more about each commission's plans for the year. We have much to do and some exciting work ahead of us. Thank you for everything you do to support Virginia Tech and represent the perspectives of staff, students, and faculty.

Sincerely,

Tim Sands,  
President

**Commission on Staff Policies and Affairs**  
**Resolution to Add a Statement of Support for Participation in Shared Governance**  
**and Professional Development to Staff Job Postings~~Descriptions~~**  
**CSPA Resolution 2023-24A**

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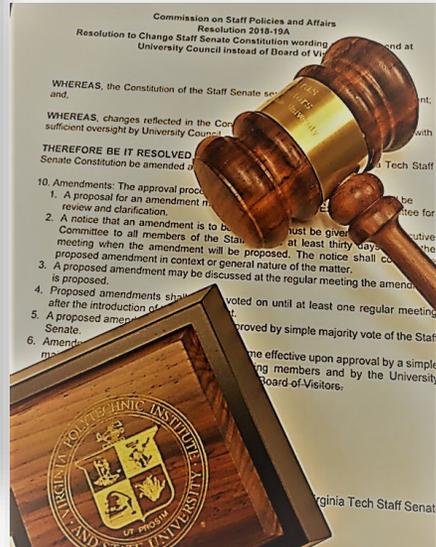
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# Shared Governance at Virginia Tech

*“All voices are important at Virginia Tech. Through shared governance, we can work together to advance our vision for the university.”*

**Virginia Tech President Timothy Sands**



## Shared Governance is...

- Shared responsibility and cooperation among all groups
- Major groups have a collective voice in matters of policy and procedures
- Responsibilities are allocated according to areas of competence

# Governance Structure

**Board of Visitors**

**President**

**University Council**

**University Council Cabinet**

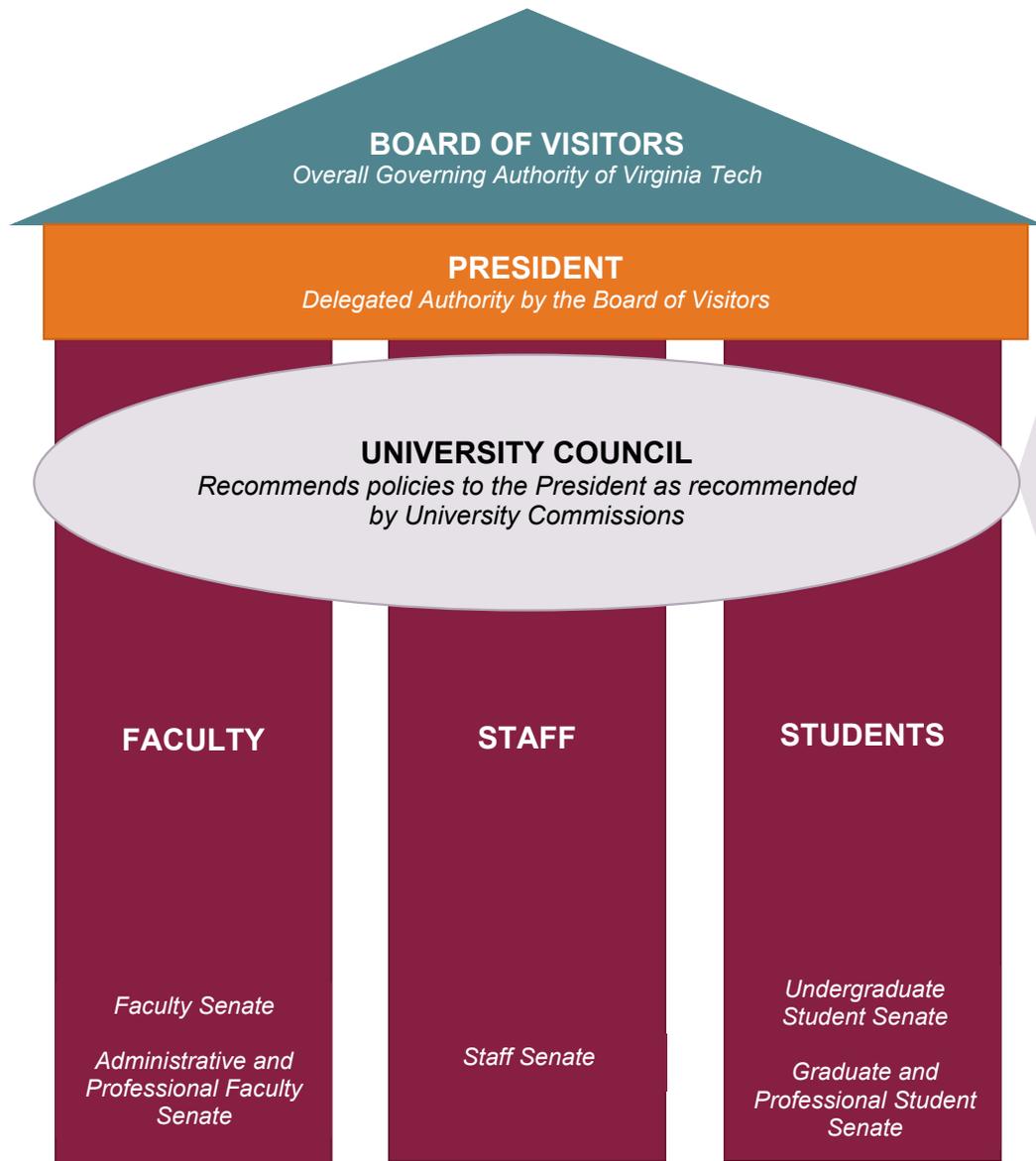
**University Council  
Cabinet  
Committees**

**Senates**

**University Council  
Commissions**

**Senate  
Commissions**

**Committees**



- **Advisory body to the President that reviews and makes recommendations on topics of concern for constituencies and refers matters to the appropriate commissions, senates, committees, groups, or individuals for review.**
- **59 Members** (41 Ex Officio, 18 Elected)
- **Parliamentary Authority** – Robert’s Rules of Order
- **University Council Cabinet**
  - Sets agenda for University Council
  - Reviews commission resolutions for relevance to their charge
  - Facilitates the university Mission Initiative Process
  - **14 Members** (6 Ex Officio, 8 Elected)

# CSPA's History

**Late 1980s**  
President  
McComas  
established a  
taskforce

**1991 – 1992**  
New constitution was  
approved to make  
changes to the  
University Governance  
Structure including the  
addition of Staff Senate  
and the Commission on  
Classified Staff Affairs

**2006**  
Commission on  
Classified Staff Affairs  
changed their name to  
the Commission on Staff  
Policies and Affairs

# How Does CSPA Fit In?

- **Focus: Policies and procedures affecting the working conditions of classified and university staff, and non-student wage employees.**
  - Staff morale
  - Evaluation and communication with supervisors
  - Recognition
  - Career development
  - Relation with campus community
  - Benefits and personal leave
  - Professional development
  - Matters EDI
- **Policy Making Body for the Staff Senate**

“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”  
Helen Keller

Responsibilities  
of  
CSPA  
Members

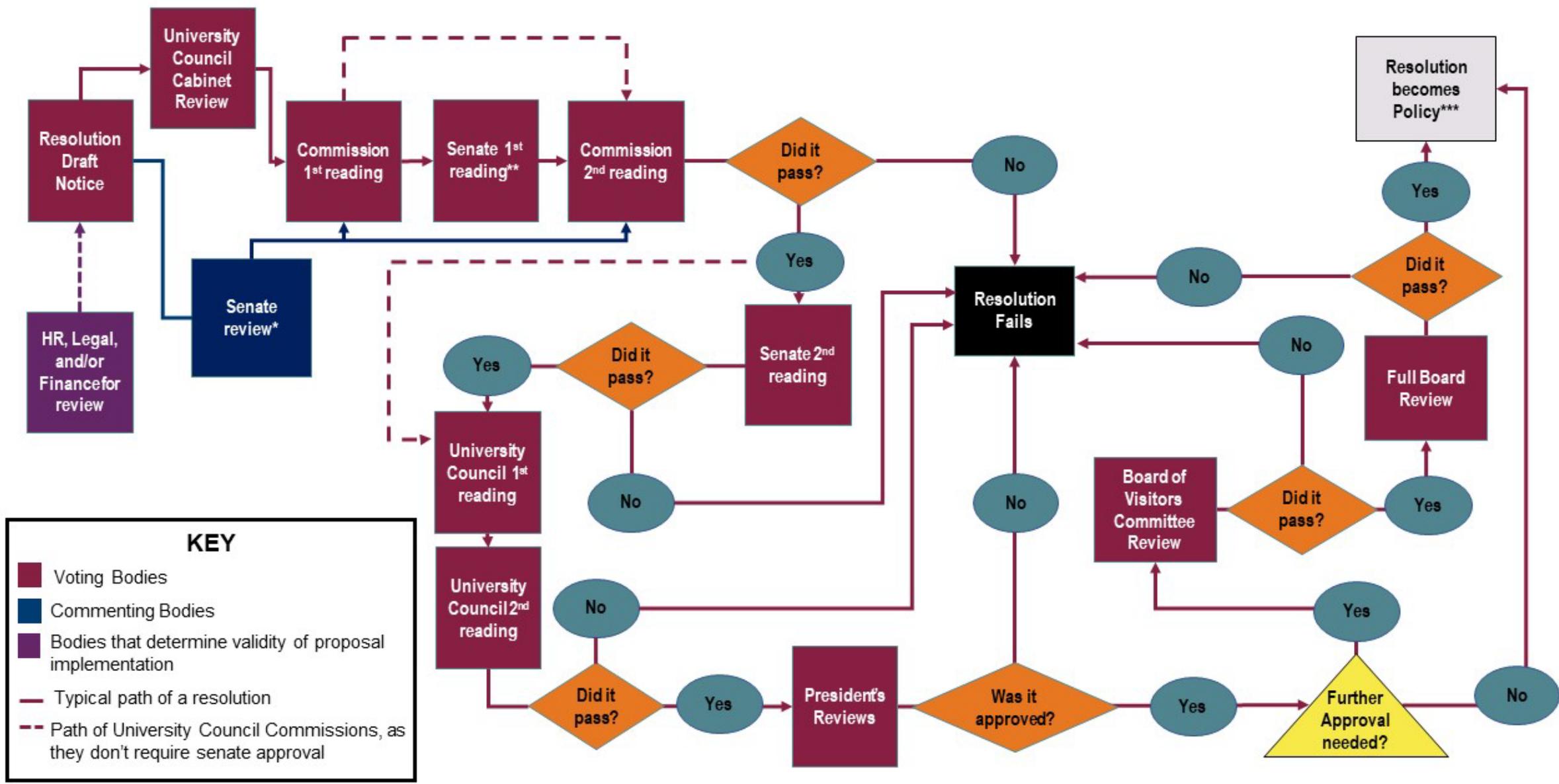
Two-Way  
Communication

Solicit Input  
from  
Constituency

Review  
Meeting  
Materials Prior  
to Meetings

# Resolutions Introduced by CSPA

- **Addition of staff representative to the Board of Visitors (2007)**
- **Human Resources and compensation and merit pay policies for University Staff (2008)**
- **Winter Break Closing (2010)**
- **Creation of the Staff Career Achievement Award (2011)**
- **Updates to the Staff Senate governing documents (2023)**



\* Senates that do not have to approve a commission resolution before it advances to University Council (UC) have the right to comment. Such comments should be made no later than after the voting senate approves a resolution and before it is read at UC

\*\* Senates that have 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> readings are those that commissions report to and, therefore, senate approval is required. COED and COIA report directly to UC, so they do not have senate readings.

\*\*\* Some resolutions require approval outside of the University from SCHEV and/or SACSCOC.

## Possible Pitfalls



1. Failure to consult with other senates and commissions
2. Working on topics outside of commission charge
3. Failure to consult with Legal, Budget, and/or HR
4. Not allotting enough time for the Governance Process

# Resources

Website: <http://www.governance.vt.edu>

Governance Tutorials: <https://governance.vt.edu/GovernanceTutorials>

Resolution Tracker: <https://governance.vt.edu/ResolutionTracker/UnderReview>

## **Office of the Vice President for Policy and Governance**

319 Burruss Hall (MC 0125)

800 Drillfield Drive

Blacksburg, VA 24061

[vppg@vt.edu](mailto:vppg@vt.edu) | (540)231-6232



## Shared Governance Discussion Questions for CSPA

1. How well are the roles of commissions, senates, University Council Cabinet, University Council, and the President understood?
  - a. The roles are mainly understood. There are sufficient resources on the shared governance website. There is so much to learn when beginning to delve into governance. There would be a benefit to having an orientation for employees when joining into the governance system.
  - b. There is a tutorial "Governance 101" and a version of it will be added to New Employee Orientation with help from HR.
2. How well are the approval path of a resolution and timeline understood? How might this be streamlined?
  - a. Before a resolution gets to a commission reading, it needs to be approved by the University Council Cabinet. A form and draft must be submitted to kick off this process. Can we expand the form to include a summary instead of needed to submit a draft resolution?
  - b. Streamlined is not a good word to describe the new process. The process may appear clunky, but it's inclusive of all those that need to have a voice in the process.
3. Are any important constituencies missing from membership on your commission/senate? If so, which one(s)?
  - a. Non-student wage employees are often unable to participate. How can we make them feel included in the process?
4. One of the goals of the new governance structure was to reduce the size of University Council and balance representation on University Council more appropriately. Would you recommend any changes?
  - a. There are few staff members that are voting members of UC compared to the size of Staff Senate. 4,454 as of July 19, 2022. Quite a bit larger than any other group. Deserve more representation than we currently have. We don't have a non-student wage representative on UC.
5. Has it been difficult to fill the positions on your commission? If so, what do you think is the reason?
  - a. It hasn't been difficult to fill positions, but we do have quite a bit of turnover from staff to a/p faculty positions. We've been actively recruiting senators to serve on commissions, so it's been easier to fill positions.
6. Has it been difficult to fill the positions on your commission? If so, what do you think is the reason(s)?
  - a. Elected members of commission and respective constituencies?

- i. Communication seems to be improving. Visibility could be better. Non-student wage need to feel included and respected.
  - b. Commission and your respective senate?
    - i. President of Staff Senate attends all CSPA meetings. Communication is great! Maybe we can add a report of commissions at Senate meetings.
  - c. Between the bodies of shared governance?
    - i. Open communication and support. More opportunities for collaboration and that should be fostered. When President Sands and Provost Clarke weren't able to attend the University Council, the President of the Faculty Senate was the chair. Why does the Faculty Senate rank higher than A/P or Staff Senate leadership? Maybe the three Senates can rotate that responsibility? Atleast have transparency around why that choice was made.
- 7. Are you satisfied with the transparency of the shared governance system?
  - a. Yes.