



Academic Governance

And your role as a Council member

presented by Beth Bilson and Chelsea Willness

In this presentation...

- **Overview of Governance and Administration at the University:**
 - Statutory authority
 - Tricameral governance structure
 - Powers of our governing bodies and administration
- **Council's Authority, Membership, Structure**
- **Your role as a Council member**

What is governance?

- **“Wise self-command (1600)”**
 - *Oxford English Dictionary*
- **A set of arrangements and agreed-upon processes by which decisions can be made**

What's so different about governing in a university context?

- Structure
- Culture



What's the authority for our governing and administrative structures?

The University of Saskatchewan Act 1995

- Provides for a tricameral governance structure: Senate, Board, and Council
- Provides for an administration led by a President, Vice Presidents, Deans and Department Heads

University Governance: the University of Saskatchewan Act

- **1907 to 1995 - University of Saskatchewan Act**
- **1995 new University of Saskatchewan Act**
 - **Highly significant changes for Council**

A tricameral governance system: Our three governing bodies

Senate

Public voice

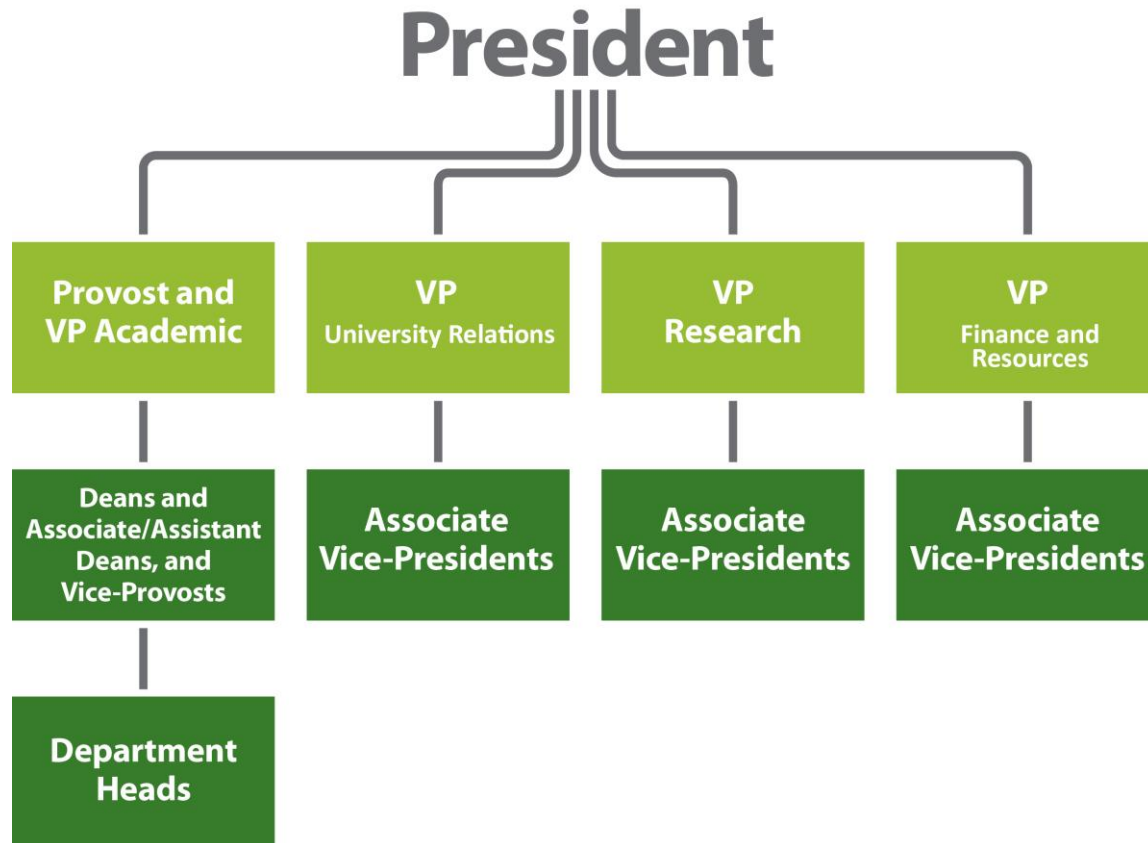
Board

Fiscal oversight

Council

Academic oversight

The executive branch: the university's administration



How it all fits together....

Executive Branch

Administration

President

Provost and
Vice-Presidents

Deans,
Vice-Provosts,
Associate/Assistant
Deans, Associate
Vice-Presidents

Department
Heads

Legislative Branch (Governing bodies)

Financial

Board of
Governors

Board
Committees

Academic

University
Council

Council
Committees

College Faculty
Councils

Department
Faculty
Committees

Public

Senate

Senate
Committees

Governing Bodies: The Board of Governors

“...all matters respecting the management, administration and control of the university’s property, revenues and financial affairs”

Governing Bodies: Senate

- Gives our graduates and representatives of our professions a voice in university affairs
- Provides for dialogue with the community and our stakeholders throughout the province

Governing Bodies: Council

“...responsible for overseeing and directing the university’s academic affairs”

Who is the GAA?

The University of Saskatchewan Act 1995 establishes the *General Academic Assembly* as the body to whom Council is responsible:

- includes all full-time faculty members and some students
- meets once a year to hear the report of the President (who chairs GAA)
- has the power to require Council to reconsider a decision and (ultimately) the power to dissolve Council
- a kind of 'safety valve'

How does Council oversee and direct the university's academic affairs?

- **grants academic degrees**, diplomas and certificates
- **grants** scholarships, prizes, fellowships, bursaries & exhibitions
- **approves all academic** programs, new programs, program deletions
- **approves** new centres
- **authorizes the board** to establish new colleges, schools, departments, endowed chairs and institutes – and disestablish existing ones
- **prescribes methods and rules** for evaluating student performance

How does Council oversee and direct the university's academic affairs? (ctd.)

- **disciplines students** for academic dishonesty and hear student appeals concerning academic decisions
- **prescribes qualifications** for admission
- **sets the academic schedule**
- **reviews library policies**
- **makes recommendations** on physical and budgetary plans for the university
- **makes recommendations** on “any other matters it considers to be in the interest of the university”

Who is on Council?

A representative elected body of 116 members:

- **President (ex officio)**
- **Provost (ex officio)**
- **2 elected members from each College (one is usually the dean)**
- **54 elected members at large**
- **One student from each college elected by the students**

Quorum is 40%

Governance by Council

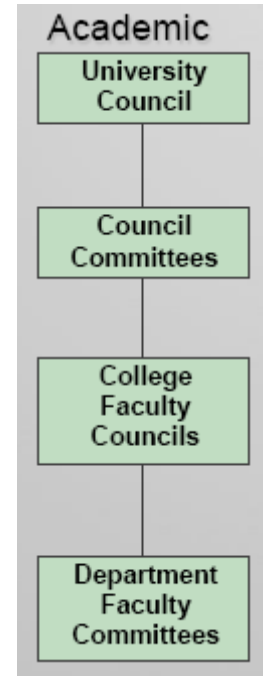
- **Council Chair is elected from among the members for a 2-year term**
- **Vice-Chair is appointed by Council to a 2-year term by the Chair**
- **Council Committees review and initiate items for the agenda**
- **Coordinating Committee (comprised of council committee chairs) sets the agenda for Council meetings**

How Council Works

- Meets monthly throughout the academic year
- Meetings are open to all
- Council comprises elected representatives of all colleges, members at large, students, the president and provost
- Business comes through committees, which bring their reports to Council for discussion and often a decision

University Council: Standing Committees

- **Academic Programs Committee**
- **Governance Committee**
- **Coordinating Committee**
- **International Activities Committee**
- **Nominations Committee**
- **Planning and Priorities Committee**
- **Research, Scholarly and Artistic Work Committee**
- **Scholarships and Awards Committee**
- **Teaching, Learning and Academic Resources Committee**



Council Committees

- **Blend of Council and GAA members, with relevant input from expert and administrative personnel**
- **Committees are ‘workhorses’ of Council**
- **Recommendations take several forms:**
 - **Request for decision**
 - **Request for input**
 - **Item for information**
 - **Annual reports**

Faculty Councils

“Each College or Faculty, subject to the provisions of the University Act, the Bylaws of Council, and the general control of the Council, shall in its College or Faculty have charge of matters of scholarship and discipline”

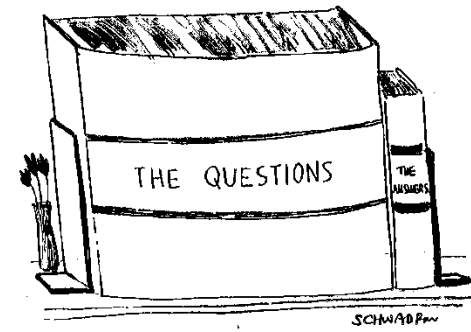
- e.g.
 - Recommending admission requirements
 - Promotion and faculty actions
 - Scholarships and awards
 - Recommendation of programs of study to Council
 - Recommendation of graduands for degrees
 - Keeping a record of their proceedings

Expectations - Council members

- **Make principled contributions to governance of the university (collegial self-governance)**
- **See the whole picture—step back from ‘silos’**
- **Celebrate the diversity and complexity of University**
- **Engage in vigorous academic debate and provide enthusiastic support for common sense and “warranted risk taking”**
- **Pay diligent attention to the business of Council through preparation, active participation in Council and Committee work, communication with constituents, consulting, voting . . .**
- **Keep the debate at the level of policy and direction**
- **Be mindful that Council decisions have important academic, financial, public policy and operational implications**

Making a difference...

- **Make sure the meetings are in your calendar!**
- **Be prepared (homework)**
- **Share the workload with Chair and other members**
- **Appreciate the diversity of views on the committee**
- **Be prepared to speak up at Council meetings**
- **Be fully present at meetings, and aim to make a positive difference on each occasion**



Questions?