

2022-2023 Year-End Committee Report

Committee:	Secure Faculty Survey Committee
Charge:	Works with the Provost Office, the Office of Administration and Planning, and other relevant units on the implementation of the Secure Faculty Survey.
Chair:	Gina Petersen
# of Meetings:	7

Completed Business and/or Accomplishments

The committee reconvened this year after having been inactive. We needed to establish committee goals and relationships with University Administration. The committee completed an immense amount of work this year. This is particularly noteworthy since we added new members midyear.

After comparing a vendor survey to a 2015 internally created Northwestern Survey, the Secure Faculty Survey Committee recommended to the Provost's Office that administering a modified version of the 2015 Perspectives Survey is a better option than fielding a vendor survey.

It is the collective understanding of the Secure Faculty Survey Committee and Faculty Senate generally that there is a commitment from the Provost's Office for conducting a comprehensive survey of faculty. The Salary Equity Study and Northwestern NUTURE's implementation of the C-Change Faculty Survey are currently taking precedence, and there is support for those both the Salary Equity Study and NUTURE within the Senate.

In addition, the committee surveyed Faculty Senators regarding their experience within the Senate, to improve Senate operations. The survey, which was initially drafted by a sub-committee got a 66% response rate. We shared high-level findings at the June Meeting of the full senate and had small group discussion.

Unfinished/Continuing Business

The discussion of the results of the Survey of Senators will need to continue.

The committee will need to follow up with the Provost's Office regarding a comprehensive survey of the faculty.

Another goal, largely untouched this year, would be to have a 2-3 question survey of faculty, that is specific to the Senate's purposes. Such a survey could provide the Senate with another avenue of feedback from the faculty writ large.

New Business for Next Year

Faculty Senate Survey of Senators 2023

June 2023

Prepared by Secure Faculty Survey Committee

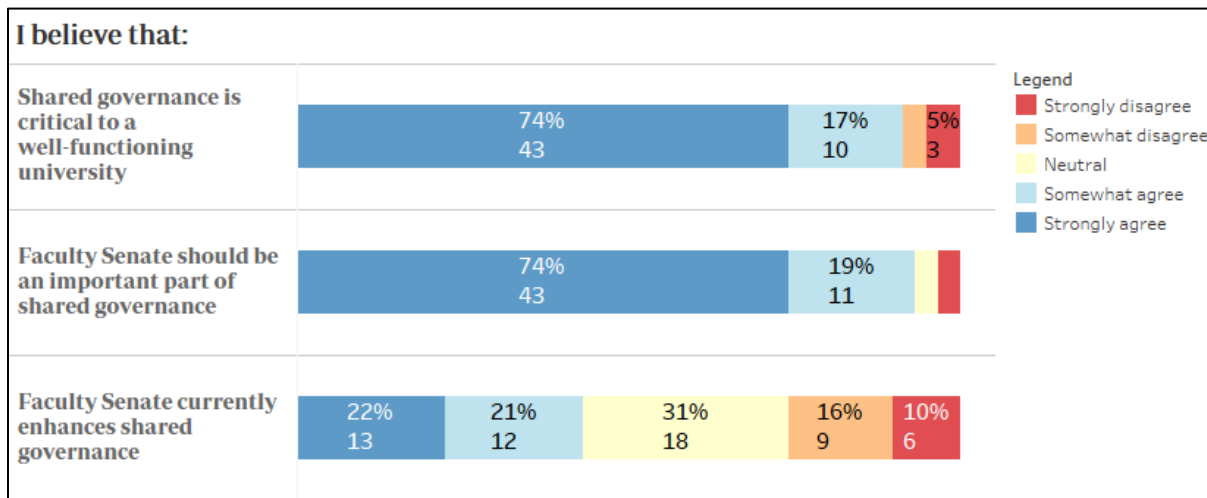
In May 2023 the Secure Faculty Survey Committee of the Northwestern Faculty Senate solicited thoughts from senators about Senate operations.

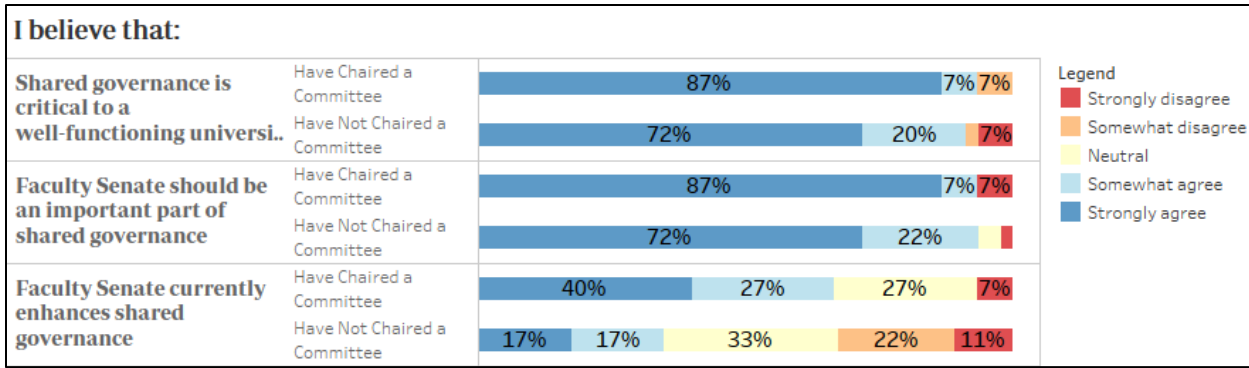
This brief report highlights key survey findings. The Senate will discuss these findings at the June Faculty Senate Meeting. 61 of the current 92 senators responded. The response rate for Weinberg (14/25 = 56%) was slightly lower than the rate for other schools, which averaged 70%.

Shared Governance

Three quarters of responding senators reported strongly agreeing to the belief that “shared governance is critical to a well-functioning university” and that “Faculty Senate should be important part of shared governance”.

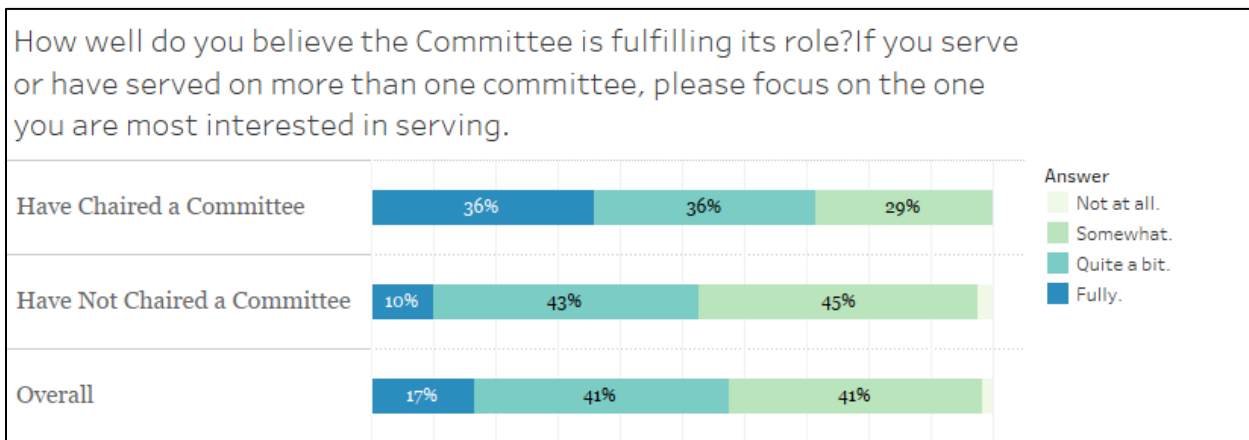
There was less strong positive agreement that “Faculty Senate currently enhances shared governance” (22% strongly agreed). 67% of senators who had chaired committees strongly or somewhat agreed with the statement, whereas only 34 % of other senators strongly or somewhat agreed with the statement and 33% strongly or somewhat disagreed with the statement.





Committee Workload and Effectiveness

Committee Chairs are more likely to report that their committee is “fully” fulfilling its role than those who have not served as committee chairs.



Improving Shared Governance

When asked how to improve Shared Governance, one theme that arose was the Chicago-Evanston Divide. An *ad hoc* group of senators is considering these issues.

Other comments mentioned the Senate’s role on campus, wondered about resolution follow-through, and discussed representation.

“Faculty Senate should understand and represent Faculty interests. Shared governance only works if all parties’ interests are represented and promoted. Right now, I feel the Senate is far too passive.”

“It’s not always clear to me that the resolutions passed by the Senate go where they need to go, or are seen by the leaders they’re intended for. I don’t know how to change that, but it seems necessary.”

“It seems that there is representation by school or department and that representation may be quite uneven. I represent a school and there are at least 100 or more faculty members. I get the sense that others represent departments and the numbers are much smaller. ...”

Senate Meetings

"I would like to see more thoughtful, spirited debates between senators on important topics, therefore, more discussion."

When asked about changing how meetings are run, half of the respondents to the question (26/52) indicated being "happy with how meetings are currently run." Respondents who indicated having chaired a committee were more likely to select this option (11/14).

The 26 respondents who did not select the option that they are "happy with how meetings are currently run" selected "question and answer portions" (15), "resolution discussion" (14), and "reports from central administration units" (11) most frequently as areas for improvement.

Comments about meetings had several themes, including a desire for more discussion, that a few voices currently dominant meetings, and a desire to improve reports from administration. Susan Davis' presentation at the May 2023 meeting was mentioned as a positive example, being "*more discussion than presentation*", which sparked dialogue.

Some senators wondered how meeting agendas are set, including which administrators present at meetings. One senator suggested, "*In the first meetings of the academic year we should debate between us what issues need our attention.*"

The pace of Senate work came up in varying ways. While one person mentioned that the pace of Senate work, overall, is slow, another talked about meetings being rushed, stating, "*The reports from outside units that we haven't requested to hear from take too long, and we are often rushed with resolution discussion time.*"

Initiatives for Next Year

Responding Senators expressed positivity toward several meeting options for next year, including holding a Faculty Senate Meeting on the Chicago campus, a Senate-wide orientation at the beginning of the year, and Senator-only receptions to foster camaraderie. These will be explored by Senate Staff and Leadership.

Discussion Questions

The survey is meant to be a platform for discussion and innovation. During the June Faculty Senate meeting, we will hold small group discussions addressing these three questions.

- Please generate a few suggestions for changes that you would like to see in FS meetings next year.
- Please generate suggestions that could improve committee effectiveness.
- An item that Senators seem to want to discuss is the Senate's role in 'shared governance.' Please generate thoughts on whether and how such a conversation might proceed.