

**A Smaller, more Effective  
Shared Governance Structure at KSU:  
The Rationale for the proposal approved by University Senate  
February 2006**

The new structure is intended to remedy problems identified by those active in that previous structure in recent years. Note: This document was written chiefly for a faculty audience, but the logic of the arguments below applies to all constituencies.

**1. University Senate held in low esteem by the faculty:** The AAUP faculty poll in the fall of 2005 indicated that 67% of faculty does not think the University Senate is an effective institution of shared governance. Moreover, an item analysis showed that the longer respondents have been at KSU, the lower their estimation of the governance structure's effectiveness. The negative campus culture means it is difficult to convince faculty, especially senior faculty, to run for the senate, or, if elected, to make significant sacrifices to attend meetings that are perceived to be a waste of time. **REMEDY:** A more focused, purposeful Faculty Senate, as proposed, is a far more attractive service option, and will be taken more seriously. (See the complete AAUP poll results at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/DisplaySummary.asp?SID=1279768&U=127976819305>).

**2. The University Senate as a large, unwieldy body:** The effort to achieve proportional representation among academic departments means some departments had three or four representatives. Yet the vast majority of decisions were made by consensus. The additional representation for each department meant duplicated effort and wasted time. In addition, when more than one person represents a particular constituency, senators often said that their absence is inconsequential because "so-and-so from our department will be there." **REMEDY:** The proposed structure has smaller, more focused, deliberative bodies; in the Faculty Senate, each department will have a single senator. )

**3. Duplicated effort by different bodies:** Under the previous structure an academic item is normally considered two times in BOTH the Faculty Council and at the University Senate. That's four times total. Since only faculty senators have an interest in academic matters the same people discuss the same issues in both bodies. Four times. **REMEDY:** The proposed structure greatly simplifies the deliberative process. Purely academic matters, for example, are considered only by the Faculty Senate.

**4. Senators as a captive audience:** When a purely academic matter, like Promotion and Tenure guidelines, was debated in the current University Senate, staff senators and students who have no standing and little interest in the discussion, were obliged to must sit through it nonetheless. Similarly faculty senators had listen to discussions of staff or student matters of little concern to them. **REMEDY:** Under the proposed structure each constituency has its own deliberative body, focused on matters of interest to that constituency.

**5. Debilitating Absenteeism:** Because of the problems described in items 3, 4, and 5, many senators attend its meetings irregularly. Although quorum is usually attained, when

more than one person represents a particular constituency, absenteeism is frequent. When too many are absent, and quorum is not achieved, everyone has wasted their time. **REMEDY:** Under the proposed structure, attendance should be far better; senators will feel their time is being spent productively and on business that is important to the people they represent.

**6. Shared Governance not taken seriously by upper administration:** The fall 2005 AAUP poll indicated that 65% of respondents did not think the upper administration was genuinely committed to shared governance. In part this reflects unhappiness that important decisions have often been made without serious consultation through the governance structure. An example often mentioned is the decision to move to NCAA Division I, a decision senators learned about only after the fact. But when faculty themselves do not take the structure seriously, for whatever reason, it is not surprising that the administration also treats it cavalierly. **REMEDY:** When faculty and other constituents take the shared governance structure more seriously, as we believe will happen with the new structure, the upper administration is likely to do the same.