

# Foothill Shared Governance: External Evaluation

Community & Communication Council Meeting  
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# The RP Group

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## **Mission**

As the representative organization for Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness (IRPE) professionals in the California Community Colleges (CCC) system, the RP Group strengthens the ability of CCC to discover and undertake high-quality research, planning, and assessments that improve evidence-based decision-making, institutional effectiveness, and success for all students.

## **Services**

Research, evaluation, planning, professional development, and technical assistance—designed and conducted by CCC practitioners

## **Organization**

501(c)3 with roots as membership organization

# Outline

- Purpose of Evaluation
- Methodology
- Findings and Recommendations

# Purpose of Evaluation

# This Evaluation Aims to...

Assess the effectiveness of Foothill College's redesigned shared governance model. In accordance with the [Foothill College Shared Governance Handbook](#), the working definition of effectiveness for this shared governance structure was rooted in the governance council indicators of success.

# Council Indicators of Success

- All members have the opportunity to participate in council discussion.
- Council input is used to help shape the direction of college plans.
- A variety of opinions on council agenda topics were welcome.
- The council fosters an environment where discussion topics could be viewed from different perspectives.
- All council members have an opportunity to influence the deliberative process of making a recommendation to the President.
- Sufficient information/documents are shared with council members so as to provide background on discussion topics.

# Methodology

# Evaluation Activity: Student Survey

Exploration of students' familiarity of shared governance and their perspectives of its effectiveness

## Participants:

- 466 Foothill students completed the online survey
- 138 students (30%) heard of the four governance councils
- 15 respondents participated in shared governance

# Evaluation Activity: Student Survey

<b>Most Attended Council</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Advisory Council</b>	8	53.3%
<b>Community &amp; Communication</b>	3	20.0%
<b>Equity &amp; Education</b>	3	20.0%
<b>Revenue &amp; Resources</b>	1	6.7%
<b>Total</b>	15	100.0%

# Evaluation Activity: Employee Survey

Exploration of Foothill employees' familiarity of shared governance and their perspectives of its effectiveness.

## Participants

- 121 Foothill employees completed the survey
- 63 employees did not participate in any of the councils
- 58 employees who participated on at least one of the councils between the 2018-19 and 2020-21 academic years

# Evaluation Activity: Employee Survey

Position at Foothill College	#	%
Administrator/Manager	13	22.4%
Full-Time Faculty: Instruction	20	34.5%
Full-Time Faculty: Student Services	3	5.2%
Part-Time Faculty: Instruction	1	1.7%
Classified Professionals	20	34.5%
Missing	1	1.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Most Attended Council	#	%
Advisory Council	12	20.7%
Community & Communication	12	20.7%
Equity & Education	14	24.1%
Revenue & Resources	16	27.6%
Missing	4	6.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

# Evaluation Activity: Student & Employee Interviews

In-depth look at participants' experiences in shared governance, perspectives on effectiveness, and recommendations for improvement

## Participants

- Only individuals who currently or had previously been involved in one of Foothill's Shared Governance Councils were invited
- 23 individuals volunteered to be interviewed; 18 selected for interviews

# Evaluation Activity: Interviews

<b>Position at Foothill College</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Administrator</b>	5	27.8%
<b>Full-Time Faculty</b>	6	33.3%
<b>Classified Staff</b>	6	33.3%
<b>Student</b>	1	5.6%
<b>Total</b>	18	100.0%

# Evaluation Activity: Interviews

Council Involvement	#	%
Advisory Council	4	22.2%
Community & Communication	8	44.4%
Equity & Education	8	44.4%
Revenue & Resources	7	38.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	

Council Role	#	%
Ex-Officio	3	16.7%
Facilitator	2	11.1%
Member	11	61.1%
Recorder	3	16.7%
Tri-Chair	10	55.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	

# Plan of Analysis

The data were analyzed in a circular manner:

- Survey findings informed the interview questions
- Interview findings helped inform further analysis of the survey responses

# Findings and Recommendations

# Presentation of Findings and Recommendations

Findings are presented in the following areas:

- Communication & Collaboration
- Agenda Topics
- Council Member Engagement & Value
- Decision-Making & Effectiveness

For each area, we share:

- Student survey findings
- Employee survey findings
- Interview findings
- Related recommendations

# Communication & Collaboration

## Student Survey

- Understanding of the council charges (64% agree)
- Clarity of topic jurisdiction (36% agree, 36% neutral)
- The councils working well together and having good communication (43% agree, 57% neutral)
- Not having overlap across council jurisdiction (50% agree, 43% neutral)

# Communication & Collaboration

## Employee Survey

- Understand the charges for their councils (42% agreement)
- Clear whether topic falls under jurisdiction of particular council (67% disagreement)
- No overlap in jurisdiction across councils (60% disagreement).
- Governance councils work well together (57% disagreement)
- Effective communication across the councils (43% disagreement)

# Communication & Collaboration

## Interviews

- Lack of clarity around the processes in and around shared governance, related to a lack of clarity on who has jurisdiction to discuss and provide recommendation on specific topics.
- Foothill employees learned about shared governance opportunities through informal communication lines, being appointed by supervisors, or through their Senates.
- Students are not actively recruited or informed of participation in shared governance.

# Communication & Collaboration

## Recommendations

- Generate a marketing and recruitment strategy
- Invest in additional formal orientation and training
- Refresh orientation binders and handbook to provide additional clarity on the councils, their charges and roles, and the shared governance process

# Agenda Topics

## Student Survey

- A variety of opinions are welcome (64% agree)
- Councils have the power to drive their own agendas (64% agree)

# Agenda Topics

## Employee Survey

- A variety of opinions on the council agenda topics are welcome (50% agree, 29% disagree, 21% neutral)
- Councils have the power to drive their own agendas (36% agree or neutral; 28% disagree)

# Agenda Topics

## Interviews

- Every respondent described strong alignment between agenda topics and college plans and priorities.
- The largest challenge is having enough time and information to discuss each topic thoroughly.
- Whoever controls the agenda controls the direction of the council.

# Agenda Topics

## Recommendations

- Breakdown high-level agenda topics from the President into smaller tasks tied to specific outcomes.
- Design agendas to include time for topics based on President's annual questions and emerging topics from the campus.
- Create a timeline to help prioritize topics and keep track on when recommendations are needed.
- To further capture student engagement, consider a student quad-chair position to ensure students have a seat at the table to set council agendas.

# Council Member Engagement & Value

## Student Survey

- The councils foster an environment where discussion topics can be viewed from diverse perspectives (71% agree)
- All members can influence the deliberative process of making a recommendation to the President (64% agree)
- Neutral to everyone can participate in council discussions (36%), influence the deliberative process of making recommendations (36%), feel participation is welcome across member roles (43%), and heard in meetings (39%)

# Council Member Engagement & Value

## Employee Survey

- *Participants feel their participation is welcomed within shared governance council discussions*
  - All members can participate in council discussions (69% agree)
  - All members can influence the deliberative process of making a recommendation (52% agree)
  - The councils foster an environment where discussion topics can be viewed from different perspectives (55% agree)
  - Participation is equally welcome (59% agree)
  - They feel heard in meetings (49% agree)

# Council Member Engagement & Value

## Interviews

- Redesigned governance structure increased engagement among students and classified professionals who described feeling grateful for the opportunity to be invited to the table.
- Faculty and administrator interviewees who had more experience within shared governance seemed to feel less heard within the redesigned structure.

# Council Member Engagement & Value

## Interviews

- **Positionality affects level of engagement**
  - Different personalities making up the councils and the inherit privilege driving those personalities.
  - Members feeling like they “know more” or “know less” than others on specific agenda topics.
  - Councils serving as a microcosm of campus hierarchy.
  - Valuing all council members’ time.

# Council Member Engagement & Value

## Recommendations

- Recognize how positionality affects open discussion by training council members -- particularly facilitators -- to approach meetings and policies with that understanding.
- Review the council composition and identify relationships that may suppress voices.
- Craft different ways to allow employees and students who may have constraints on their time to contribute their perspectives that still values their voices.

# Decision-Making & Effectiveness

## Student Survey

- There is sufficient information shared (64% agree)
- Council input shapes college plans (64% agree) and the President's decisions (71% agree)
- Feel that they are making a difference (64% agree)

# Decision-Making & Effectiveness

## Employee Survey

- Sufficient information is shared to discuss agenda topics (41% agree)
- Decision-making process within governance is effective (50% disagree)
- Council input is used to help shape the direction of college plans (41% agree)
- Governance has the power to affect decisions made by the President (39% disagree)
- I am making a difference (38% neutral)

# Decision-Making & Effectiveness

## Interviews

- Given the number of individuals representing their constituency groups, the group (rather than individual) voice can be elevated when voting on an issue.
- Some cases where votes may be uninformed.
- Feeling like the President has already made a decision on a topic.
- While the President makes the final decision, without effective communication back to the council members on how or why that decision was made it can leave the council members confused and frustrated.

# Decision-Making & Effectiveness

## Recommendations

- Invite experts to present on topics.
- Research ways to allay some of the influence occurring while members vote.
- Demonstrate that the council's opinions are taken into consideration when decisions are being made.

# Overarching Findings

- Primary success = Invited a more diverse group of perspectives to the table
- Primary challenge = Lack of clarity around all stages of the shared governance process:
  - Not clearly understanding their charges, purpose, and purview
  - Not having confidence in their understanding of an agenda topic prior to voting
  - Not understanding what happens with the recommendations made in shared governance

# Overarching Recommendations

- Structurally place the Advisory Council above the other three councils to serve as a centralized governance council to help clarify the shared governance process from start to finish.
  - Include representatives from the other councils to ensure there is no knowledge gap between the councils.
  - The Advisory Council tri-chairs are officially representatives from the constituency groups to prevent knowledge gaps.
- Remove “Neutral” option from Likert anchors on the survey items

# Questions?

# Thank you!