MULTNOMAH **M** UNIVERSITY

Commitment to Covenant Living
Expressed in Shared Governance

At Multnomah University (MU), we want biblical principles to guide our service together. We desire our policies and practices in shared governance to be informed by our faith commitments. Therefore, we choose to begin with a series of covenantal commitments and integrate these into our shared governance philosophy and approach.

A *relational work covenant* begins with humble acknowledgment that Christ is the head of MU and we are the stewards. As his stewards, he calls us to serve in ways that further his global redemptive work while also embracing and respecting the wisdom, gifts and experiences of all members of the MU learning community. Everyone is important, and while we may have differing roles and responsibilities, we all have the same Spirit and Lord. We also have the same responsibility to maintain the unity of the Spirit of Christ in our service together.

Additionally, as we pursue biblical wisdom, we acknowledge that the Holy Spirit speaks to our community in multiple ways. Foundationally, he speaks through the inspired, authoritative and written Word of God. The Holy Spirit also uses prayer to place us in positions of humility and readiness so we can hear him speak. Sometimes, he speaks through formal structures and groups; however, many times he may speak through informal gatherings, individuals or small groups. Whichever method God chooses to communicate to us, we commit ourselves to listen to our entire community and focus on hearing the full voice of God together.

The following document outlines our approach to how we serve together through relationship-based, shared governance that honors the dignity of all persons while considering the views of the board, faculty, staff, administrators and students on matters in which they have direct responsibility and reasonable interest.

1. **We commit to practicing biblical principles in our relationships and work.**

    Many of the following principles emphasize one-on-one relationships. As we apply these commitments to our community, we do so by also honoring MU's organizational structure. Respecting these organizational structures as outlined throughout this document provides order and trust.

    We commit to:

    - Embracing and respecting the dignity, gifts, wisdom and experiences of each member and of the entire group.
    - Listening to understand before responding.

- Speaking the truth with love and grace.
- Receiving the truth with love, grace and openness.
- Practicing self-reflection before we confront others.
- Granting and receiving forgiveness.
- Embracing healthy conflict and not allowing issues to intensify.
- Thinking well of each other.
- Speaking positively about each other and Multnomah.
- Assigning positive motives to others.
- Seeking reconciliation when offended.
- Releasing past offenses and any attempts to rehearse them.
- Granting trust to each other.
- Relating to others and our work with a servant's heart.
- Doing what we can to uphold the unity of the Body.
- Honoring Christ in all we do together and individually.
- Ensuring that Multnomah community members first hear information affecting them from their leaders — rather than hearing rumors from outside the Multnomah community.
- Soliciting meaningful input from others at an early stage rather than "symbolic approval" once the work is completed.

2. **We commit to providing and promoting healthy, open communication.**

Possession of information inherently places power in the hands of those who possess the most information. The Bible cautions that power can be abused, and Jesus modeled a power that seems contrary to the typical human exercise of power. So, we believe that safeguards need to exist to ensure that our Multnomah family members have the appropriate information they need to succeed in their various roles, so that power is handled fairly and everyone feels respected. Additionally, we acknowledge that there are times when privacy must be maintained and limited to a small group of individuals in order to appropriately protect individuals and/or the University.

In the relational life of the community, individuals or groups of board members, administrators, faculty and/or staff will have occasion to meet for various, helpful reasons. This may include social events, serving on task forces or attending the same church. We welcome these types of friendly, relational interaction. However, it is never appropriate for an individual board member to speak on behalf of the board or represent his or her views as those of the board. As authorized by the full board, only the board chair and/or president may speak for the board. Board members need to be cognizant of the confusion that can occur when they give individual feedback to other members of the community. The board is only a board when it meets and speaks as a whole.

Additionally, it is never acceptable for individuals or groups of faculty or staff members to circumvent the organizational structure by going directly to the board or its members — without administrative approval — to discuss university matters. This includes both formal and informal conversations. Board members should refer the faculty or staff member back to

the administration when approached inappropriately or when asked to participate in an unauthorized conversation about university matters. If the matter concerns ethical or moral issues, then the MU whistle blower policy and procedures should be followed.

Therefore, we commit to:

- Developing sustainable strategies for communicating with the entire Multnomah community.
- Working hard at communicating information openly and effectively with as much efficiency as possible.
- Identifying mechanisms for regularly scheduled, appropriate conversations between all members of our Multnomah family (students, board, faculty, staff, alumni, donors and administration), so we can hear each other's dreams, hearts and ideas.
- Developing safeguards to ensure that destructive communication patterns will not be allowed to gain a foothold within our community.
- Respecting the times when information and decisions must be confidential.
- Acknowledging that human communication is flawed, so mistakes will occur.
- Seeking resolution as soon as possible when mistakes occur.

3. **We commit to pursuing unity within identified roles, responsibility levels and decision-making authority.**

   Shared governance is a term commonly used to denote the delineated responsibilities of those charged with accomplishing the task of educating students and assessing the enterprise of education. The overarching purpose of shared governance is to involve all stakeholders in the educational process in order to work toward excellence in the education and training of students.

   a. **Definition of shared governance**

      Shared governance is a complex concept and difficult to effectively implement. It is a delicate balance between: board governance; faculty and staff participation in planning; work and decision-making processes; and administrative leadership/accountability. Authentic shared governance attempts to balance maximum participation in decision making with clear accountability. That is a difficult balance to maintain, which may explain why the concept has become so challenging. Genuine shared governance gives voice (but not necessarily ultimate authority) to concerns common to all constituencies as well as to issues unique to specific groups.

   b. **The philosophy of shared governance**

      Shared governance has the capacity to increase trust, create a sense of participation and accomplish efficiencies in the operation of academic institutions. Five basic principles are essential in order for shared governance to work properly.

Therefore, we commit to:

- **Shared love**
  Christ's sacrificial love serves as the basis for all our work together. We commit to acting in love with grace and truth.

- **Shared mission**
  It is the goal of shared governance to enable Multnomah University to more effectively accomplish its educational mission.

- **Shared ownership**
  This requires sharing information, decisions, insights and perspectives. The commitment fostered by shared ownership includes participation, responsibility, accountability and communication.

- **Shared efficiency**
  This requires the mastery of group process in a way that maximizes efficiency in order to avoid unnecessary work, costly delays, artificial consensus or forced unanimity.

- **Shared relationships**
  This requires more time spent together, prayer, professional respect, collegiality, mutual concern and the courage to confront among the administration and faculty. Building trust is essential to meaningful collaboration.

c. **Stakeholders in shared governance**

The Board of Trustees

The final administrative authority of MU is vested in the Board of Trustees. They retain the fundamental responsibility and ultimate authority for the institution's legal, fiscal, academic and operational well-being.

The president

The president is the chief executive officer of MU and is appointed by the Board of Trustees to exercise general supervision over all the affairs of the University, including the academic division. The president has final delegated authority over the educational activities of MU. The president assures that all actions and policies are in harmony with the institution's corporate and educational mission, doctrinal statement and appropriate Christian lifestyle. The president delegates responsibilities to other members of administrative team. For instance, the provost serves as the chief academic officer and is appointed by the president with confirmation from the Board of Trustees. The provost is accountable to the president and leads many of the educational and student life areas.

The faculty

The faculty (as a whole and individually) is responsible to the chair of their department, the chair and/or dean of their respective division, the provost, the president and, through the latter, to the Board of Trustees. The trustees and president have given delineated authority and responsibility to the faculty, as a whole, for matters related to the curriculum of the University and for all generated educational standing and special committees of the University.

The staff

The staff is responsible to their direct supervisors, area vice presidents and ultimately to the president. In support of the University mission, staff members carry out many of the critical administrative processes of the University. They have delineated authority through their reporting structure to complete their tasks.

The students and additional stakeholders

Students are the institution's main educational focus and have a legitimate interest in matters affecting their ability to complete their education. When appropriate, the faculty, administration and Board of Trustees should initiate communication with students.

Alumni, individual supporters and supporting churches are constituent stakeholders whose perspectives and insights are valuable and should be considered when appropriate.

d. **The roles in shared governance**

The role of the board in shared governance

The Board of Trustees acting as a whole — not as individuals — possesses the **final authority** for accomplishing the mission of the institution. The board's role is one of policy-making and oversight, not management or implementation of policy. Trustees have rightful access to all information necessary for successful oversight relating to the institution. It shall be within their power to formulate policies and to authorize all legal and business matters necessary to carry out corporate policy. Board members delegate authority to the administration, which delineates authority to faculty and staff.

Administrative and faculty decisions are subject to review by the Board of Trustees as defined above. Board members normally concur with the administrative and faculty judgments except in rare instances and for compelling reasons. In cases when the Board of Trustees has to veto an administrative or faculty decision, they will communicate the decision and its rationale in an open, clear and timely manner.

The role of the president in shared governance

The president is the chief executive officer of MU and is appointed by the Board of Trustees to exercise general supervision over all the affairs of the University, including the academic division.

The president has **final delegated authority** as described below:

- The president, as the chief executive officer, is responsible for the execution of the policies of the Board of Trustees and for the administration of the entire institution.

- The president, by virtue of office, shall be a voting member of the Board of Trustees and an *ex officio* voting member in all its committees.

- The president shall uphold the mission of the institution and its distinctive, educational aims and objectives.

- The president shall safeguard the doctrinal standards and the spiritual vitality of the institution through the selection of faculty and staff members who are wholly dedicated to Jesus Christ and competent in their chosen fields of service.

- The president shall delegate responsibility and authority to faculty and staff as appropriate to form an efficient organization that advances the institution's mission.

- The president shall be the chair of both the undergraduate and graduate faculties, delegating those duties as appropriate.

- The president is responsible for the hiring, promotion and termination of faculty and staff of the institution, delegating as appropriate those decisions to faculty or staff administrators and retaining veto power over faculty and staff recommendations.

- The president is responsible for the financial soundness of the institution and shall recommend an annual budget for trustee approval.

- The president shall represent Multnomah to academic, church and community constituencies in a Christ-like manner.

The president serves in three roles: board member, chief administrator and faculty member. He or she will delegate appropriate levels of authority and responsibilities to others so they can effectively participate in the fulfillment of MU's educational mission. By nature of office, the president must personally model the commitments defined above and serve as the chief communication officer in the following three areas:

- Assisting the board chair in communicating the heart, mind and decisions of the board to all other members of the MU family.
- Serving the faculty and provost in communicating the heart, mind and decisions of the faculty, staff, students and other constituents to the board.
- Leading in sharing the message of MU with all our constituents.

Additionally, the president and senior leadership team will work closely together to build an atmosphere of collaboration and consensus throughout the University. The goal is to meaningfully include affected parties in decision-making processes before the president and administrative team have made a final decision. In those rare cases when the president and/or provost have to veto a faculty decision, they will communicate the decision and its rationale in an open, clear and timely manner.

The role of faculty in shared governance

Faculty, as in any institution of higher learning, plays a significant role in the oversight of Multnomah University. Under the ***final authority*** of the Board of Trustees and the ***delegated authority*** of the administration, the faculty collectively will exercise ***delineated authority*** over instruction and curriculum and will ***share responsibility*** for many standards and policies. The recommendation of major changes in policy or the provision of advice to the administration or Board of Trustees on central issues of concern rests with the faculty as a whole.

Delegated authority

The Board of Trustees delegates the structure and operational processes of the academic division to the faculty as a whole or to properly established committees, schools and departments under the supervision of the department chair, the chairs and/or deans of the respective schools or divisions, the provost and the president. The faculty will exercise their delineated authority through the following:

- Formal action in faculty meetings
- Committees
- School meetings
- Department meetings

The latter three areas are designed to implement established policy, to develop and recommend changes and to interpret policy as necessary. Under the final administrative authority of the Board of Trustees and the delegated authority of the administration, the faculty is given responsibility for establishing a workable committee structure for the operation of the academic division and its respective divisions and departments for its implementation. Faculty members should not take it upon themselves, as individuals or as a group that has not been authorized to act on behalf of the faculty as a whole, to make decisions or enact or implement policy for the faculty without the consent of the

appropriate bodies. The responsibilities outlined above are subject to the review of the Board of Trustees and administration as outlined above.

Delineated authority

The faculty has delineated authority through the administration and the Board of Trustees for the development of curriculum, subject matter, methods of instruction, research, faculty recruitment and status, and many aspects of student life that relate directly to the educational process — including the assignment of grades. Faculty members also set requirements for the degrees offered in courses, determine when the requirements have been met and authorize the president and the board to grant the degrees achieved.

Faculty decisions are subject to review by the provost, the president and the Board of Trustees. They normally concur with the faculty judgment except in rare instances and for compelling reasons. A formal rejection of a faculty decision by any or all of the educational administrators or the Board of Trustees must be put into writing and distributed to the faculty together with the rationale for the rejection and any further desired action.

The faculty exercises three distinct roles:

- **A decision-making role**
  Faculty assumes a decision-making role in all aspects of the academic division outlined under "delineated authority" above. Faculty members, as highly credentialed and experienced individuals in various professions and disciplines, are entrusted with these areas of responsibility by the Board of Trustees.

- **An advisory role**
  The faculty has an advisory role in those areas of university governance that relate to the items listed under "shared responsibility" above. This would include the selection of leadership within the academic division, policies related to admissions requirements and faculty standards. In an advisory role, the faculty participates with the administration and the Board of Trustees in the decision-making process. This role gives the faculty voice in key decisions while trustees retain final authority. It would be highly unusual for the administration or trustees to move in a direction that the faculty opposes. In such cases, the faculty should receive a formal rationale for the actions of the administration or trustees.

- **A consulting role**
  The faculty has a consulting role on many items not specifically listed under "delineated and shared authority" above. In this role, faculty input may come in the form of representation on committees and task forces, surveys, open forums, focus groups, etc. Consultation votes *may* be taken in university faculty meetings, school and department meetings or in other forums.

Shared responsibility

The faculty shares, along with the administrative officers, responsibility for developing standards and policies for the admission of students and the establishment of criteria for faculty appointments, promotions and dismissal. In addition, faculty members are to be consulted in the formulation of policies related to changes in faculty benefits, job descriptions, student life, educational facilities, implementing educational technology and all long-range planning that impacts education. In consultation with the provost, the president is the final authority on hiring, promoting and dismissing faculty members.

The role of staff in shared governance

The staff has **delineated authority** through the administration and the Board of Trustees for the development and implementation of logistic processes critical to the success of MU. Supervisors will outline the scope and principles to guide staff decision making. Matching appropriate levels of authority with responsibility boosts morale by ensuring that staff members have freedom to lead in their areas. Staff members possess valuable expertise and firsthand information about how best to serve our students and potential students. When possible, faculty, the Board of Trustees and administrators should seek input from the staff when considering university changes and new initiatives.

The role of students and additional stakeholders in shared governance

Students, alumni, individual supporters and supporting churches are constituent stakeholders who have valuable perspectives and insights. While they have no primary initiating or implementing function, these constituencies have opinions that trustees, administration and faculty will wisely factor into long-range planning, assessment and decision making.

4. **We commit to regularly monitoring shared governance progress and providing a fair and judicious appeals process.**

Regular monitoring

The Board University Academic Committee, in collaboration with the provost and president, will periodically monitor how these commitments, procedures and policies are working. This monitoring may include surveys, focus groups and other appropriate means. From these findings, they will suggest to the board, faculty or administration any needed changes, improvements or revisions.

Judicious appeals

The University Task Force for Shared Governance will meet at least once annually (and as specific needs arise) to address concerns and appeals related to the above commitments, policies and procedures. After researching the concerns and appeals, the task force will make

recommendations to the board, faculty and administration for their consideration. The concerns and appeals will focus on adherence to these commitments, policies and procedures and in no way circumvent the other established appeal processes stated in the bylaws and or employee handbooks.

Appendix
Examples of applying these commitments

Example one: Strategic planning

1. The board would authorize the board chair and president to form a task force for the purpose of developing a university-wide strategic plan. The board would approve a specific purpose statement for the taskforce with timelines and outcomes included.

2. The board chair and president would appoint the co-chairs of the task force, one of which will be a board member. The task force will include members from the faculty, staff, administration, board and other appropriate stakeholders. The board chair and the president will serve as *ex officio* members. Biblical wisdom, humility, experience and giftedness in strategic planning and communication are the most important criteria for selecting members to serve on this task force.

3. Under the leadership of the co-chairs, the task force will develop a plan for completing their work, including a thorough communication strategy to generate input and counsel from all our university stakeholders. The goal is to develop consensus, broad ownership and excitement for the plan while benefiting from the wise counsel of our entire MU family.

4. The task force co-chairs will give regular updates to the full board.

5. The co-chairs of the task force will also ensure that all members of the MU family are given regular updates. The goal is to develop a broad base of ownership and excitement around the aspects of the strategic plan. The task force may solicit the use of the president, provost, deans, division heads, etc. to assist in this communication.

6. Once it becomes evident to the task force that a consensus is building around basic ideas for the strategic plan, they will ask the faculty, administration and board to approve the strategic plan.

7. Once the strategic plan is approved by the board, then the board will request the president to develop the tactical plans for successfully completing the strategic plan. The president will involve all appropriate members of the MU community to develop and successfully implement the plan. The president will give regular updates to the MU family on how the plan is being fulfilled.

Example two: Approval of a new academic program

1. Ideas for new academic programs may come from any member(s) of the community and expressed in numerous differing formats (e.g., board meetings, Lionshare meetings, faculty meetings, informal conversations).

2. The department heads, division chairs, academic counsel and provost are the official steps in formulating a plan to begin a new academic program. As an idea for a new academic program begins to gain momentum, it is critical to start a communication loop that includes all parties who may be involved in approving this new academic program. Gaining feedback in the beginning stages shows respect and allows important feedback to inform the next steps in this process.

3. Ideas for new academic programs coming from the board will be suggested to the administrative team by the president ASAP. The administrators will seek feedback from the academic council, enrollment management/marketing staff and as needed from the faculty.

4. The president will lead in communicating the possibility of new academic programs with the board and president's council. The provost will communicate with the faculty, and other administrators will communicate with their staff. Students also will be informed when appropriate.

5. When ready, the provost will instruct the appropriate faculty leaders to design the new academic program. The faculty has the expertise and delineated authority over instruction and curriculum.

6. Once approved by the faculty and the administration, the president will seek final approval from the board. The board will review the new academic program on the basis of alignment with university mission, vision, faith statements and values. Board members may review learning outcomes and course offerings in the proposed program. They will not review syllabi or instructional matters since these are the purview of the faculty. If the board judges that the new academic program does not sufficiently align with the criteria above, then they will instruct the president to return the proposed program to the faculty for further work. The president will bring the proposed program back to the board once adjustments have been made to bring the program into closer alignment with the criteria above.