2011 Valencia College Governance Review
Inquiry Report
Table of Contents
Acknowledgements.............................................................................3
Executive Summary.............................................................................4
Purpose of the 2011 Valencia College Governance Review..................5
Purpose of this Inquiry Report............................................................6
Background on Collaborative Governance at Valencia......................7
Methods for the 2011 Governance Review Inquiry.............................11
  Soliciting Volunteers........................................................................11
  Committees & Meetings.................................................................11
  Design Principles, Joint Workshop................................................12
  Expanded Group Workshop.........................................................13
  Survey.........................................................................................14
  Faculty Council Focus Group.......................................................14
  Interviews...................................................................................15
Results of the 2011 Governance Review Inquiry..................................15
  Design Principles for Effective Collaborative Governance at Valencia......16
  The Survey: Who Responded?.........................................................17
  The Survey: How Involved Are People in Collaborative Governance?.........20
  The Survey: How We Communicate about Collaborative Governance........25
  The Survey: Rating Features of Collaborative Governance................27
  The Survey: If You Could Redesign Collaborative Governance.............28
  Expanded Group Workshop.........................................................31
  Faculty Focus Group Findings.....................................................32
  Interview Findings.......................................................................33
Summary of Key Findings................................................................36
Limitations.......................................................................................38
Next Steps.......................................................................................39
End Notes.......................................................................................40
Acknowledgements

This report is the work product of the Governance Review Steering Committee, an ad hoc committee charged by the College Planning Council to conduct a thorough review and redesign of the Shared Governance Process at Valencia College. The report represents tremendous effort by many individuals at the college. We thank the members of the Governance Review Steering Committee, Governance Review Resource Panel, those employees who participated in focus groups and personal interviews, and the entire Valencia community for their support and participation in the college-wide survey.
Executive Summary

The purpose of the Inquiry Report is to present the findings of the Inquiry Phase of the 2011 Governance Review process at Valencia College. The results found in this report will be used in the Action Phase of the Governance Review. The Action Phase will focus on determining what, if any, recommendations should be made to improve the effectiveness of collaborative governance at Valencia.

The report results from six different methods of acquiring and organizing information. These include working meetings of the steering committee, a joint workshop to define design principles that could be used to evaluate results. These design principles included the expected outcomes for collaborative governance at Valencia as well as the factors that would lead to those outcomes. Other methods included an expanded group workshop, a college-wide survey sent twice to every employee of Valencia, a Faculty Council focus group, and individual interviews with key informants who had been deeply involved with collaborative governance.

Three-hundred forty Valencia employees participated in the college-wide survey. They represented every campus and every job class. Administrators, professional staff and full-time faculty responded at high rates. Part-time career staff and adjunct faculty participated at much lower levels.

Many survey respondents did not have experience with shared governance at Valencia and were unaware of its impact. About one-third reported little or no knowledge about collaborative governance. Those with more knowledge of collaborative governance were more able to perceive its impact. In addition, however, seven in 10 perceive collaborative governance as important or very important.

Survey results suggest that there are opportunities to improve methods of communication about and for collaborative governance. Participants were most favorable about the role of shared governance in increasing collaboration and contributing to strategic directions. They were less likely to perceive that communication about collaborative is satisfactory or that governance at Valencia is transparent.

Ninety four of the survey respondents provided open-ended, written suggestions on how to make collaborative governance more effective. The number one type of suggestion had to do with communicating clearly and broadly. Results from the expanded group workshop, the faculty focus group and key informant interviews add richness and more precise observations to the survey results.

The next phase of the Governance Review is the Action Phase during which recommendations will be developed about whether and how to modify collaborative governance at Valencia.
Purpose of the 2011 Valencia College Governance Review

Collaborative decision making—sometimes referred to as collaborative or shared governance—was first initiated at Valencia College in 1999. Collaborative governance is a set of structures, processes and outcomes designed to draw on the knowledge and experience of the entire college community, such that groups who will be affected by policies have a role in helping to shape them.

Over the 12 years since 1999, Valencia College has nurtured its roots in collaborative decision making. Yet, much has changed over this time. Valencia’s student population has grown from 16,030 full-time equivalent students in 1999 to 29,296 in 2011. In 2011, this represents 59,661 different students taking at least one credit or non-credit course with Valencia.1 The number of employees increased from 3,170 to 4,202 active employees from March 1, 2000 to March 1, 2007.

While Valencia’s commitment to collaborative governance has not waned, growth at Valencia College, changes in the environments for education policy and practice, and lessons learned have compelled changes in collaborative governance. Collaborative decision making is and will be expressed in an organic, living, evolving set of structures, processes and outcomes.

Reflecting this long-standing tradition of deep commitment in light of changing circumstances, Valencia College has periodically conducted reviews of its collaborative governance. Somewhat more background is offered below on page 7.

Here, the intention is to make clear that this review takes place in an ongoing stream of continued commitment and change. For example, in 2001, the governance mechanisms at Valencia were redesigned to better manifest the goal of collaboration. At that time, the current system of four governing councils was formalized. A chief aim of that step was to create ongoing opportunities for broader participation in collaborative governance through membership on a council and/or serving a council through committee work or a college-wide process, such as a survey. Subsequently, annual reports about the work products from Valencia’s collaborative governance were produced in 2005 and 2006.

Two primary purposes, therefore, of the 2011 Valencia College Governance Review are to continue Valencia’s commitment to collaborative governance and also to create opportunities for adaptation and improvement. In February 2011, the College Planning Council formally launching this governance review process by releasing a document establishing the committees and the charge for this Governance Review. The charge to the committees described the purposes of this review in action-oriented terms, as follows: “...to assess our progress, evaluate our practice against stated objectives, and to create plans for evolving our governance system to meet the demands of the next decade.”2
Purpose of this Inquiry Report

This Inquiry Report presents the results of the Inquiry phase of the 2011 Valencia College Governance Review. In particular, the College Planning Council solicited volunteers to participate in a Governance Review Steering Committee and a supporting Resource Panel by college-wide e-mails on February 9 and 15, 2011. These volunteers were tasked with doing the ad hoc committee work for two phases of this governance review, as follows:

"The charge to the Governance Review Steering Committee and Resource Panel is two-fold:

**Inquiry**
- Review the current governance practices, procedures, expectations, assumptions, and results.
- Identify the benefits of our current system and the special features that should be preserved in a redesign.
- Establish the expected outcomes of an effective collaborative governance system at Valencia.
- Identify the factors, behaviors, and processes that enable effective governance at Valencia.

**Action**
- Assess our current practices against the established outcomes.
- Propose a revised governance system that meets the expected outcomes and enables effective collaboration and decision-making."

This Inquiry Report will serve as input to a broader engagement with the Valencia College community—the Action phase. In the Action phase, the findings presented here will be communicated, assessed and discussed by a variety of methods, such as presentations at the campuses and with the governing councils. A primary goal of these interactions will be to gather feedback from the college-wide community. The Governance Review Steering Committee will review feedback from these various interactions throughout Valencia College and incorporate input into a final report and recommendations.

The final report and recommendations will be presented to the College Planning Council. The College Planning Council will review the report and determine how to proceed. These steps are driven by Valencia’s 2008-2013 Strategic Plan (Goal 3, Objective A) as follows:

**Goal 3. Invest in Each Other:**
- **Objective A.** Establish operational systems based on collaboration and deep stewardship of our work.
Background on Collaborative Governance at Valencia

This is a brief primer on shared governance at Valencia. It provides some common grounding for all those employees who may engage in reflecting on how to improve shared governance at Valencia. During the Action Phase of this Governance Review process, the Governing Councils and the broader Valencia community will have opportunities to consider possible improvements. All involved need some understanding of the current state of collaborative governance at Valencia as they consider the results presented in this Inquiry Report—and take up questions about possible changes in the approaches to collaborative governance at Valencia.

Collaborative governance has a rich history among institutions of higher learning. Indeed, “for over a century the concept of shared governance has held a prominent place in the culture and mythology of academic organizations.” As organizations dedicated to learning and the love of learning, collaborating with others to generate and share knowledge is fundamental to the very definition of the terms: college and university.

The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) issued its first statement on “the importance of faculty involvement in personnel decisions, selection of administrators, preparation of the budget, and determination of educational policies” in 1920. Subsequent work eventually led to a 1966 AAUP statement on shared governance. This AAUP statement serves as a starting place for understanding collaborative governance in higher education, offering this broad characterization of shared governance: “appropriately shared responsibility and cooperative action among the components of the academic institution.” The American Council on Educators and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges commended this statement and later added to their formal support for shared governance.

There are many approaches to collaborative or shared governance. One common approach allocates decision-making privileges and responsibilities to specific groups in an attempt to take advantage of a coordinated division of labor. An approach that promotes an important and popular ideal but is rarely fully executed in practice attempts to drive all policy decisions through consensus-making processes. In a perhaps unique expression of shared governance, at Deep Springs College in California the student body is authorized by the Board of Trustees to choose the president, pick the faculty and determine the curriculum.
Embracing principles of collaborative governance is common. Yet, in practice, approaches to collaborative governance evolve and adapt over time. Core goals like “building trust” and “arriving at the best possible decisions” can focus effort over a long period of time and through many adaptations in approaches to shared decision making.

At Valencia, collaborative governance was adopted in 1995. Dr. Paul Gianini, then President of Valencia Community College, described that starting place in a presentation to the Annual Meeting of the League for Innovation in the Community College in New Orleans in 1999:

“Four years ago, we set about to transform Valencia into a more learning-centered institution with measurable improvements in student outcomes. That has involved changes of a transformational scope.

In considering how we would accomplish such a transformation, we knew that many others...had tried and failed....

We studied models of other institutions that had undergone successful change, and we considered the shared governance model that is our heritage in higher education. We arrived at the conclusion that the only way to be successful was to learn to collaborate.

This was no: necessarily a happy or comfortable conclusion. Some of us at Valencia are action oriented and...we want to move forward and move now. Some of us are suspect of change...and question the true motives of anyone proposing changes.... For yet others...change is welcomed when the impacted groups have had the opportunity to shape the change before it takes place.”

By 1999, the Faculty Association President, David Rogers, reported in an open letter at the end of his term that “the year of my presidency has been one of steady growth in collaboration and shared decision-making responsibilities for the Faculty Association.” Rogers reported that learning how to collaborate is not simple and raises many kinds of issues. As a result, he concluded: “This is the consummate challenge to the collaborative process—communications.”

Between 2000 and 2001, early in Dr. Sandy Shugart’s tenure as President, collaborative governance at Valencia took its current shape of four college-wide Governing Councils. Figure 1 shows that the councils are authorized by the President who, in turn, is authorized by the District Board of Trustees. In turn, the Governing Councils depend on standing and ad hoc committees—and the entire population of Valencia employees—for members, as well as input and feedback.
Valencia’s current model of governance "spreads... responsibilities among a variety of Governing Councils with representation from deep in the college." More information about Valencia’s Governance model and the charge and responsibilities of each Council may be found at http://valenciacollege.edu/governance. Example responsibilities include the following:

- College Learning Council oversees curriculum approval (receives recommendations from College-wide Curriculum Committee), program approval and review, credit and non-credit schedules, and catalog.
- College Operations Council oversees development and management of operational systems, the facility and technology master plan, and performs triage and addresses management issues beyond the scope of campus leadership or a single division.
- College Planning Council coordinates development of the Strategic Learning Plan and the annual budget, and recommends multi-year budget and staffing plans.
- The Faculty Council is the official voice of the faculty for college governance, faculty rights, privileges, responsibilities, curriculum, and teaching/learning matters.
The Councils are not charged to autonomously make decisions in these or other areas. Rather, the role of the Councils is to operate as leaders in fostering, promoting and engaging others in collaborative decision making. Their role, in the words of Sandy Shugart, is “…strategic. To say, ‘Okay, what is the most important collaborative work we can commission at the college? Who should lead it? What should their charge be?’ Then, commission them to do the work and bring it back in stages for the Councils to review it” and use that work to making recommendations that influence decision making for the college.\(^\text{12}\)

Moreover, the Councils are not expected to operate as a hierarchical bureaucracy. If one Council is responsible for a line of activity, it does not preclude another Council from collaborating in the work that accomplishes that responsibility. In fact, this principle of taking responsibility for the opportunity to collaborate is central to the current model of governance at Valencia College. This feature does not make things simpler. It is intended to facilitate both trust building and improved decision making.

A number of major decision making processes have been engaged and influenced by the Governing Councils and those committees and other employees who have participated. Major outcomes that have been shaped by shared governance at Valencia have included college-wide strategic planning, the faculty compensation plan, and tenure redesign/TLA (Teaching/Learning Academy).
Methods for the 2011 Governance Review Inquiry

Soliciting Volunteers

On February 9 and 15, college-wide e-mails were sent to all employees of Valencia College inviting them to volunteer to participate in ad hoc committees being established specifically for the 2011 Governance Review process. This invitation solicited self-nominations, which meant e-mailing “your name along with a statement of what interests you about this work.” Those volunteering were promised a role on the Governance Review Steering Committee, which would have seven to eight members, or a Governance Review Resource Panel. The first 10 bi-weekly meeting dates of the Governance Review Steering Committee were also provided in the invitation. The invitation briefly described the general purpose of the 2011 Governance Review, and included as an attachment the committees’ charge and expected tasks. The expected tasks for the Inquiry phase were listed as follows:

- Review the current governance practices, procedures, expectations, assumptions, and results.
- Identify the benefits of our current system and the special features that should be preserved in a redesign.
- Establish the expected outcomes of an effective collaborative governance system at Valencia.
- Identify the factors, behaviors, and processes that enable effective governance at Valencia.

These tasks were addressed through six chief methods of information gathering and related analyses. Each of these methods is briefly described.

- Working meetings of the steering committee
- Design principles joint workshop with resource panel
- Expanded group workshop
- College-wide survey
- Faculty Council focus group
- Individual interviews with key informants

Committees & Meetings

From among the 29 individuals who had self-nominated to volunteer effort for the 2011 Governance Review, eight individuals were selected to serve on the Governance Review
Steering Committee by the Chair and co-Chair. Governance Review Steering Committee members were selected on the basis of their written expressions of interest and to reflect diversity in the types of employees at Valencia. Members were also selected to ensure that individuals with little or no prior experience with collaborative governance at Valencia would be included. The twenty-one other volunteers were appointed as the Governance Review Resource Panel. The 2011 Governance Review process also received valuable and generous staff support from the Office for Organizational Communication and Development, formerly, the Office for Organizational Development.

The Steering Committee held 11 bi-weekly meetings between March 1 and July 26, each two hours in length. These meetings and additional duties taken on by subcommittees and individual members were used to gather, analyze and organize information. The resulting elements helped to accomplish the tasks for the Inquiry phase of Governance Review and prepare for the Action phase. Several of the following specific steps are described in additional detail in this section.

- Review of the history and procedures of collaborative governance at Valencia
- Review and discussion of published literature on collaborative governance
- Exploration and development of a statement on the expected outcomes of collaborative governance at Valencia and the collaborative habits that foster these outcomes
- Development of work plans for expanding sources of information
- Design and conduct of information-gathering workshops with the Governance Review Resource Panel
- Design and conduct a college-wide shared governance survey
- Design and conduct key informant interviews
- Design and conduct a Faculty Council focus group

**Design Principles Joint Workshop**

The Governance Review Resource Panel was asked to provide perspective as the Steering Committee began developing initial ideas about how to define the expected outcomes of shared governance and the factors leading to those outcomes. Fifteen members of the Resource Panel participated in a two-hour workshop on May 10. Members of the Steering Committee facilitated small group discussions with the aim of gaining Resource Panel members’ perspectives on design principles for collaborative governance at Valencia. This workshop focused on these six questions:

1. Describe Valencia’s practices and procedures for shared governance
2. What expectations do you have of shared governance?
3. What are your assumptions about shared governance?
4. What are the benefits of shared governance at Valencia? What features should be preserved?
5. Describe the outcomes that you expect from an effective governance system
6. What factors, behaviors and processes enable effective governance?

The Design Principles Joint Workshop Council was very important in helping the Steering Committee to challenge its own evolving assumptions and focus future steps. The Joint Workshop helped to bring a smaller set of candidate ideas into focus as the expected outcomes of collaborative governance: better decisions, a deeper understanding of the work people do at the college, and learning about when to collaborate and when not to. This improved focus fed into adaptations in the methods used for later information-gathering steps. This included the eventual adoption of six specific questions to guide later information-gathering steps.

Certain enabling factors for shared governance also came into focus, chiefly in two broad areas: inclusion and procedures. There was substantive discussion on the need for greater clarity on the various roles that make up the shared governance process, as well as opportunities for participation, especially by career and professional staff. These issues alerted the participants to the cultures of Governing Councils and the importance of certain critical procedures: training people for participation and for enabling participation by their staff as well as the need for more and more effective communication.

**Expanded Group Workshop**

The workshop was launched with an orientation to the Governance Review process and status to date. Guided discussions in small groups, exploring general questions, were followed by reporting back to the larger group. Subsequently, members chose break-out sessions, each of which was conductec in a separate workspace. Each break-out session focused on one of the following specific exemplars of collaborative governance at Valencia:

- Strategic Plan
- Faculty Compensation
- Tenure Redesign/TLA (Teaching/Learning Academy)

Notes on the results for each break-out session were gathered and retained using a common format. After these break-out sessions, participants reassembled for a plenary session. Summary results of the break-out discussions were presented to the whole group. The whole group was then engaged in a brainstorm-like session in which comments were gathered in response to the following questions:

1. What do we think about the processes and work that we just described
2. What would be the outcomes of effective collaborative governance at Valencia?
3. What behaviors enable shared/collaborative governance?

**Survey**
A college-wide survey was fielded from July 8 to July 15. This survey was sent by college-wide e-mail to every staff in all categories of employment (N = 4,219 as of July 1, 2011). The survey was initiated by clicking on a link in the e-mailed invitation to participate, and took about 15 minutes to complete.

The survey sought feedback on characteristics and processes related to Valencia’s collaborative (shared) governance. Respondents were asked 16 close-ended questions and one open-ended question. The close-ended questions solicited information in four areas:

1. Community members’ current and preferred means of learning about collaborative governance projects and results (e.g., e-mail, word-of-mouth, Atlas, etc.),
2. Attitudes and behaviors related to a person’s involvement in collaborative governance at Valencia, including how important collaborative governance is, how often they participate and how engaged they feel,
3. Ratings of seven aspects of collaborative governance as practiced at Valencia, including the degree of transparency, timeliness, effectiveness, etc., and
4. The respondent’s work location and employment status.

The open-ended question gave respondents an opportunity to make suggestions about how to improve collaborative governance at Valencia College. The question’s exact wording was as follows: *If you could redesign the system, what would you do to ensure that bold work can be accomplished?*

A total of 370 members of the Valencia College community started the survey. Thirty of these 370 individuals did not answer any questions. The results from the survey are detailed in the next section of this report.

**Faculty Council Focus Group**
The Steering Committee determined that a valuable source of information on collaborative governance at Valencia would be to explore key questions with current and recent leaders of one of the Governing Councils. The Faculty Council was chosen on the basis of the scope of its potential impact in terms of the number and prominence of faculty members in the Valencia communication network and the diversity of viewpoints among the faculty. For these reasons, Faculty Council experience was seen as a more challenging test case for the Governance Review process.
Six individuals were identified as recently or currently serving in a leadership capacity for the Faculty Council. A two-hour focus group was conducted on July 28, 2011. The proceedings were captured in real time and transcribed, and then used as a source of information for the Governance Review process. The Faculty Council Focus Group was organized around the same five common questions that were used in the key informant interviews, listed above.

**Interviews**

The Steering Committee determined that a valuable source of information on collaborative governance at Valencia would be key informant interviews with individuals who had prominent roles in collaborative governance. Five individuals were identified on the basis of the length and amount of their service to Valencia's collaborative governance process and/or their personal engagement in leading critical elements the process. Interviews of 60-90 minutes were conducted during July 2011 with these key informants by the Committee Co-Chair. The interviews were transcribed and used as a source of information for the Governance Review process.

The goal of these interviews was to capture both historical perspective and practical lessons learned from long-term engagement. A common set of interview questions was used to conduct each of these interviews. One or two special questions were sometimes added to gather information about some aspect of collaborative governance at Valencia for which that key informant has special knowledge and experience. For example, one individual was asked this special question: Over the past 11 years, do you think there was a time when collaborative governance was most effective? The five common questions pursued in all these interviews were the following:

1. Based on your experience with the shared governance system, what are the benefits of the current system?
2. What kinds of work should be part of the shared governance system?
3. If you were able to redesign the system of shared governance what would you do to improve its effectiveness and allow for bold work to be accomplished?
4. When a new model of shared governance is created, what methods would you use to communicate about the new model with constituents?
5. What ongoing forms of communication are needed for a collaborative governance system to work effectively at Valencia?

**Results of the 2011 Governance Review Inquiry**

This section presents the results of the Inquiry Phase. It is not presented as a chronology of results from each information gathering process. Rather, to facilitate understanding, it first
reports on the output most directly related to the Steering Committee's charge: the design principles for effective collaborative governance at Valencia. The design principles—expressed as expected outcomes and factors enabling those outcomes—provide an outcomes-focused framework within which the other results of the inquiry process can be better understood.

The exposition of the design principles is followed by the college-wide survey results. This more formal information, based on responses from the entire Valencia community, offers an objective and quantified platform upon which the more qualitative and subjective results can emphasize or add richness to the overall body of knowledge produced by the Inquiry Phase of this Governance Review.

Design Principles for Effective Collaborative Governance at Valencia

One of the key tasks in the charge to the Steering Committee was to learn what should be the expected outcomes of an effective collaborative governance system at Valencia. Exploring this task was one of the recurring actions throughout the Governance Review process, both in committee meetings and in the other information-gathering steps outlined above under Methods.

To accelerate progress toward achieving its tasks, the Steering Committee established two subcommittees on June 21. One of these subcommittees focused on data and assumed additional responsibilities for designing and conducting information gathering steps. The other of these two subcommittees assumed responsibility for crafting, testing and refining a precise statement clarifying the expected outcomes of an effective collaborative system at Valencia. This was a key task in the original charge to the Governance Review committees.

The statement on expected outcomes came to be understood as a lynchpin for the Governance Review process. A statement on the expected outcomes, after all, would be an attempt to formalize in the clearest and yet most complete sense the fundamental purposes for using a system of collaborative governance. In this sense, the statement on expected outcomes would tend to attempt an encapsulation or crystallization of the reasons for collaborative governance at Valencia. It would help organize and drive other steps in the Governance Review process.

But a statement on expected outcomes, the Committee learned, cannot stand alone. A statement on expected outcomes carries an automatic corollary requirement. Outcomes from a system or process necessarily imply inputs that lead to those outcomes. In a different manner of speaking, a theory about the purposes or ends that are desired from a system or process requires specification of the methods or means that lead to those purposes or ends. In yet other terms, if the goal is orange juice, you need oranges!

And you also need groves with mature trees, pickers, trucks, juicing machinery and....
In short, the statement of expected outcomes requires clear formalization of inputs. This requirement feeds into another of the tasks in the original charge to the Committee: Identify the factors, behaviors, and processes that enable effective governance at Valencia. Taken together, the purposes of collaborative governance and the associated inputs represent a theory of collaborative governance for Valencia College. The Governance Review process is a process of understanding, testing and improving this theory...so that it can be applied in the practice setting—in the next evolutionary step for collaborative governance at Valencia.

The following is the Steering Committee’s formal statement of expected outcomes and enabling factors as of the date of this report:

In order for planning and decision making to fully support a collective Vision for students, employees and the Central Florida community, Valencia College engages in a Collaborative System of Governance.

The desired outcomes of Collaborative Governance are better decisions and greater trust. These dual and interrelated outcomes are best realized through the following habits of collaboration:

- Decisions benefit from the expertise of those closest to the work being considered.
- Decisions are made after the process for engagement is communicated to stakeholders.
- Decisions are made in a timely manner with collaboration appropriate for the issue being considered.
- Decisions are made with the expectation that there is mutual responsibility for engagement.
- Decisions are clearly articulated and broadly communicated.

As a formal outcome of the work of the Collaborative Governance Review process, this statement provides a framework for understanding evaluating and improving collaborative governance at Valencia College. That is, the desired outcomes and the associated habits of collaboration represent criteria for evaluating the current system of collaborative governance and for imagining how to improve it. In addition, as this statement evolved and before it was finalized, it also provided guidance in the design of the various information gathering steps referenced in this report.

The Survey: Who Responded?
The college-wide survey represented the primary means of evaluating the current state of collaborative governance at Valencia with the assistance of a wide array of stakeholders. As
noted under Method’s above, the invitation to participate in the survey was sent twice by e-mail to all employees of Valencia College (N=4,219).

The survey was at least partially completed by 340 people. At least 292 people responded to each of the close-ended questions. The total number of respondents permits us to estimate a margin of error of ±2.9%.* This margin of error means that when a result is reported, for example that 16.5% of respondents say shared governance impacts their work once a month, the true value in the population of all employees is confidentially between 13.6% (16.5% – 2.9%) and 19.4% (16.5% + 2.9%).

Fifty-six respondents did not indicate a campus (Figure 2). West Campus had 126 participants for a response rate of 8.4% (percent of total employees on that campus). Eighty-four employees responded from East (6.0% response rate) and 31 from Osceola (5.0%). Other campuses had response rates of 8.5% (Winter Park) and 5.4% (CJI).† The Downtown campus appears to have been an outlier with a response rate of 19.4%. Large differences in response rates may suggest a bias by which employees on some campuses were more inclined to participate than those at other campuses. This bias would be most important when comparing campuses to each other. No campus-level results are presented in this report.

![Figure 2: Survey respondents by work location or campus](image)

Figure 3 shows the employment type of the 292 respondents who provided this information. Administrators (40.9% of 61 total administrators), professional staff (29.0% of 224) and full-time

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* The sample for this survey was not randomly selected. Unknown, systematic bias in who did not respond to the survey could affect the accuracy of this estimate. Readers concerned about response bias can ask themselves for each question: Would specific groups who I think did not respond to the survey consistently answer this question in a way that is different from the results reported?
† The staff populations at Lake Nona and Sand Lake are too few to calculate a meaningful response rate.
faculty (response rate = 28.2% of 362) were well represented among the respondents. Faculty with four or eight month contracts and full-time career staff had response rates of 15.9% (of \( n = 69 \)) and 8.9% (of \( n = 589 \)) respectively. By contrast, adjunct faculty (\( n = 1,797 \)) had a response rate of 1.6% and only 0.08% of 807 part-time career staff responded to the survey.

![Survey respondents by employment type](chart)

**Figure 3: Survey respondents by employment type**

Employment type may be expected to have an impact on an individual's interest in and/or opportunities for participating in collaborative governance. For example, some adjuncts may limit their engagement with the college specifically to their accountabilities for teaching. Part-time career staff in some departments may not have the impression that they are permitted to participate in collaborative governance. For reasons like these, it may not be surprising that adjunct faculty and part-time career staff responded at such low rates.

Where it is easy to imagine systematic reasons for some groups to participate at lower rates, a response bias may be affecting the survey results. For certain classes of employees, for example, structural features of their employment make it easy to imagine why they did not often respond to this survey or why they do not, as a group, often participate in collaborative governance opportunities. It is more difficult—but not impossible—to imagine a campus-level response bias. If one or another campus participates at a much lower rate, what factor affecting all employees at that campus could explain a campus-level response bias? Such a factor could be very important for effective collaborative governance.

Given the large number of employees who did respond to this survey, readers should feel confident about the overall results. Yet readers should keep these response rates in mind when making sense of results, particularly when systematic differences in groups of people may exist.
The Survey: How Involved Are People in Collaborative Governance?

Figure 4 shows how employees responded to this question: *How frequently does shared governance impact your work at the college?* Collaborative governance affects curriculum, certain issues related to salary and benefits, and the College strategic plan. The fact that nearly four in 10 offered No Opinion in response to this question suggests that the impact of shared governance is not apparent to a large number of employees. It is hard to interpret this as meaning that people are familiar with collaborative governance but see it as irrelevant. If people have knowledge of collaborative governance but think it is irrelevant, one might expect them to say that collaborative governance Never has an impact on their work.

It seems likely that those saying No Opinion have, in fact, been exposed to policies and procedures that derived directly from collaborative governance. Yet they were not offered a way of connecting these impacts to collaborative governance. That is, large numbers of employees may not be given information that helps them connect the dots from their experiences in Valencia College to collaborative governance.

<table>
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<th>Frequency</th>
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<tr>
<td>No Opinion</td>
<td>39.0%</td>
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</table>

**Figure 4: How often does shared governance impact your work**

The results in Figure 4 may provide an index of how many employees can currently connect these dots. Those who see a daily impact from collaborative governance may not be working in a different organizational context so much as they have gained richer information about how collaborative governance is tied to the policies and procedures that make up the context. The responses to this question appear to pose a fairly precise challenge: *By what means can leadership—and perhaps especially those directly involved in collaborative governance—more effectively connect the dots from real impacts on Valencia employees to collaborative governance?*
Figure 5 taps employees' knowledge of shared governance at Valencia. Remember that in Figure 4, four in 10 had No Opinion about the impacts of collaborative governance. We speculated that this may reflect a lack of knowledge about how real impacts on people's work connect to collaborative governance. Crosstabulations of the items on impacts and knowledge strongly support this speculation. Eighty-three of the 102 people with No Knowledge also had No Opinion.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge Level</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Knowledgeable</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledgeable</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Knowledgeable</td>
<td>34.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknowledgeable</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have no knowledge of shared governance at Valencia</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5: Knowledge of shared governance at Valencia
Among those reporting some level of knowledge of collaborative governance, there is a tendency for those with higher levels of knowledge to have reported more frequent impacts. More knowledge about collaborative governance at Valencia helps employees see its impacts on their work—its relevance.

**Table 1: Reported level of knowledge and perceived impact of collaborative governance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of Impact</th>
<th>Very Knowledgeable</th>
<th>Knowledgeable</th>
<th>Somewhat Knowledgeable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yearly</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6 shows that about half of respondents reported feeling Unengaged in collaborative governance. Of those reporting some level of felt engagement about half said they felt Somewhat Engaged, leaving one in four reporting that they felt Engaged or Very Engaged.

![Chart showing feelings of engagement in collaborative governance]

**Figure 6: Feelings of engagement in collaborative governance**

Table 2 illustrates a very clear pattern by showing the number of respondents in a matrix of knowledge about collaborative governance and one's feeling of degree of engagement. For each degree of engagement, the most frequent response highlighted (white printing on red background). Knowledge, feelings of engagement and perceived impacts on one's work are all related. There are substantial opportunities for helping more employees move up these stairs.
toward better understanding, more positive feeling and an ability to perceive the impacts of collaborative governance.

Table 2: Pattern of association between knowledge and engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Engaged</th>
<th>Engaged</th>
<th>Somewhat Engaged</th>
<th>Unengaged</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Knowledgeable</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledgeable</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Knowledgeable</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Knowledge or Unknowledgeable</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Despite a lack of familiarity with Valencia's system of collaborative governance, large numbers of Valencia employees think it is important.
Any opportunities to improve people’s knowledge of and engagement in collaborative governance should not be seen only as problems. There is a wide base of support for the idea of collaborative governance at Valencia College. Figure 7 reveals how respondents answered the following question: How important do you believe shared governance is at Valencia?

![Figure 7: Importance of collaborative governance](image)

Out of 340 respondents, only seven were willing to say that collaborative governance is Unimportant. As shown in the preceding pages, four in 10 have difficulty perceiving the impact of collaborative governance. A third report no knowledge and only a third report being knowledgeable or very knowledgeable. Half feel unengaged.

Yet, eight in 10 of these same people (80.1%) say collaborative governance is Somewhat Important (11.0%), Important (34.7%) or Extremely Important (34.4%). These results provide compelling and hopeful evidence that the will and support exist to overcome deficits in knowledge, felt engagement and perceived impacts. This suggests that very many employees support the goal of collaborative governance. And it also suggests that the opportunities for improvement may lie chiefly in execution.

In particular, three kinds of opportunities are revealed in these findings. One set of opportunities is about showing people how to connect the dots between their daily work and collaborative governance. Another set of opportunities rests on informing people about collaborative governance. And the third set of opportunities would enhance feelings of engagement.
The Survey: How We Communicate about Collaborative Governance

Figure 8 shows how people now learn about governance projects and results and Figure 9 shows how people would prefer to learn about them. Respondents were free to select as many choices as needed to reflect how they now learn or prefer to learn about shared governance. Email and Department/Staff Meetings are the top two items both for current learning and for preferences. On the next page, the current and preferred methods of learning about governance projects and results are combined into an index that may offer some guidance on where to explore for recommendations during the Action phase.

![Bar chart](image)

**Figure 8: How people learn about governance projects and results**

![Bar chart](image)

**Figure 9: How people prefer to learn about projects and results**
Figure 10 shows communication preferences relative to the current state. That is, what do people tend to prefer more of and what do they tend to disprefer? The numbers in Figure 10 are simply the result of subtracting the number of people currently using each communication method to learn about shared governance from number of people who prefer it for the future. As a result, methods of communication with a positive result are preferred even more than they are currently used. So, for example, E-Mail is currently the most common method with 75.7% of respondents selecting as a way they learn about collaborative governance projects and results. Even though it is the most common now, even more people prefer it, with 81.7% preferring it. Six percent more people prefer E-Mail than currently use it to learn about shared governance.

![Figure 10: Index of preference relative to current practice](image)

What is interesting is these results is that employees prefer more communication about collaborative governance in Department/Staff Meetings, via Participation, on the Valencia Website and by E-Mail. These are all methods that are (a) among the most popular currently and (b) amenable to systematic campus- and/or college-wide communications.

Neither Atlas nor The Bulletin is highly used as sources of learning currently. Word of Mouth is the sole method of communication that is dispreferred for the future. Word of Mouth is both (a) very clearly dispreferred for the future and (b) not amenable to systematic campus- and/or college-wide communications. These findings may offer clear guidance as recommendations are developed.
The Survey: Rating Features of Collaborative Governance

The survey asked respondents to express their level of agreement with seven statements about collaborative governance at Valencia. The items had these possible responses: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, or No Opinion. At least 293 people responded with one of these choices to each of these seven items.

Table 3 shows these ratings with Disagree and Strongly Disagree grouped together and Agree and Strongly Agree grouped together. The seven items are sorted from higher to lower levels of disagreement. Since each item is an affirmative statement of a feature of collaborative governance, higher levels of disagreement represent greater opportunities for improvement.

Four in 10 respondents disagreed with the statement that Communication to the college about governance work is satisfactory. The other top opportunities for improvement are transparency (with 37.9% disagreeing) and timeliness (31.2%). Large majorities agree that governance at Valencia is collaborative (59.5%) and contributes to the strategic direction of the college (64.7%).

Table 3: Rating features of collaborative governance at Valencia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication to the college about governance work</td>
<td>40.9%</td>
<td>39.9%</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance at Valencia is transparent</td>
<td>37.9%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>24.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance action is taken in a timely manner</td>
<td>31.2%</td>
<td>29.2%</td>
<td>39.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The governance decision-making process is effective</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
<td>47.0%</td>
<td>29.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My perspective is welcomed in the governance process*</td>
<td>22.3%</td>
<td>46.0%</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance at Valencia is collaborative*</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>59.5%</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance work contributes to the strategic direction of the college</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>64.7%</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis of variance revealed that administrative staff were more likely than faculty or professional and career staff to agree with two of these items. Administrators were statistically much more likely to agree that “my perspective is welcomed” and that “governance work at Valencia is collaborative.” These findings were both unlikely to result from random chance with a statistical confidence beyond 95%. Detailed results are provided in Table 4.

Table 4: Detailed results where administrators agree much more

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Detailed results</th>
<th>Agree%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20 of 24 administra tors agree, 3 disagree, 1 no opinion</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69 of 140 faculty agree, 35 disagree, 36 no opinion</td>
<td>49.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44 of 124 career &amp; professional staff agree, 24 disagree, 56 no opinion</td>
<td>35.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Survey: If You Could Redesign Collaborative Governance

One item in the survey was designed as an open-ended question specifically to solicit community-members’ idea about how collaborative governance at Valencia might be improved. The exact wording of the question was designed to be stimulative—that is, to provoke responses—without limiting community-members’ ideas. The wording adopted for this survey item was *If you could redesign the system, what would you do to ensure that bold work can be accomplished?*

The 94 written responses to this item were coded and examined using a Q-Sort process. Three independent judges coded each of the 94 responses. Judges agreed to code the explicit content of the respondents’ responses, and to avoid reading their own conceptions or imaginations into the coding. In later steps, methods of testing intersubjective agreement were used to ensure that individual judge’s biases were limited in their impact on the coding.

The 94 responses to Item 8 were coded in two ways. First, guided by the *statement on expected outcomes of shared governance* each response was coded as to the Habit of Collaborative Governance it represented. Second, each was coded as to whether the survey respondent made an explicitly negative or positive commentary about the Current or Present circumstances. Since the aim of the question was to solicit suggestions on how to redesign the system, a suggestion was coded as neither positive nor negative unless the respondent also included explicitly positive or negative commentary.

The coders worked independently. The judges subsequently met to resolve differences in coding. Where all three coders agreed, no further effort to achieve concordance was necessary. The coders then resolved through review and discussion each of the responses for which all three coders had not agreed. The results of coding the suggestions in terms of the Five Habits of Collaborative Governance are shown in Table 5.

**Table 5: Coding collaborative governance redesign suggestions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comments on the Five Habits of Collaborative Governance</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communicate clearly and broadly</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use the expertise of those closest to the issue</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expect mutual responsibility</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance timeliness and the cost of collaboration</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage first, then make decisions</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td><strong>72</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explicitly Wrote “Don’t Know”</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other, Not Related to the Five Specified Habits</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>94</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 11 below shows the percentage of respondents whose suggestions for system redesign exemplified each of the five habits of collaborative governance. The percentage of respondents making open-ended comments related to each of the five habits gives an idea of the overall importance of each habit among the respondents. Indeed, since the habits were developed independently and not communicated to the survey respondents, these proportions represent a fair test of how frequently members of the Valencia community would identify one or the other of the five habits as the primary opportunity for system redesign.

![Figure 11: The importance of each habit, based on stakeholders' suggestions](image)

Figure 11 may be taken as an index of how commonly or broadly each habit of communication may be in need of attention. That is, the habit of engaging first and then making decisions (related to 5.6% of suggestions) may be of equal or greater importance to the others on the basis of other criteria, but the habit of communicating clearly and broadly (37.5%) is most important in terms of how many people made redesign suggestions related to it. This habit of collaboration—communicating clearly and broadly—may have the most potential for redesign features that could improve the satisfaction and/or perceptions of shared governance for more people. The habit of using the expertise of those closest to the issue (30.6%) runs a close second in terms of it potential for meeting broader needs.
Individuals were asked for redesign suggestions. Making a suggestion is not negative. Some people made a point of adding explicitly negative comments to their suggestions. By “negative comment” we mean an explicitly negative comment, not necessarily a mean-spirited or emotionally laden comment. Coders were not attempting to read respondents’ minds, but to distinguish between suggestions and additional commentary.

For example, one participant wrote this response: “A structured system that is concrete that everyone can follow. Right now there is none or very little.” The first part of this response is a design suggestion that was coded as an example of the habit of communicating clearly and broadly. The second part, “right now there is none or very little,” does not appear to be intended in an emotionally loaded way. It was coded as a negative comment on the current state of the system because, in addition to a suggestion for redesign, the respondent explicitly makes a comment about a negative aspect of the current system. These negative comments can be taken constructively as indicators of weaknesses or problems in the current system.

Figure 12 shows the percentage of suggestions for each habit that were accompanied by negative comments about the current system. A habit’s proportion of negatives gives an idea of how likely negative perceptions are related to each Habit. For the habit—engage first, then make decisions—all four respondents who made a suggestion about this also made a negative comment about the current state. Because this habit is least referenced by suggestions (see Figure 11) it may not be affecting large numbers of people at this time. But because all four of the people who referenced it also made a negative comment about the current system, it has a higher frequency or intensity of negativity about the current system associated with it.
Expanded Group Workshop

The expanded group workshop was designed to explore the two key components of the design principles for collaborative governance at Valencia: expected outcomes of collaborative governance and factors that inhibit or foster collaborative governance. The method adopted for plumbing these areas thoroughly was to conduct breakout sessions in which people could reflect and report on specific shared governance processes that had already taken place. This helped participants be more concrete, practical and thorough than if they had been asked about expected outcomes and success factors in the abstract.

The three processes explored were strategic planning, faculty compensation, and tenure redesign/TLA. In-depth group discussion about things that worked, or plusses (+), and things that did not work, minuses (-), took place for each of these three shared governance processes. For examples, with respect to the strategic planning process, the following were included among the observations offered:

+ The process was started in a more inclusive way than in the past so that more interested people could be involved on the ground level
+ Organizational support was strong
+ Inclusion of outside people via the Valencia Foundation lent valuable perspective
  – Because goal teams were reconstituted each year, orientation and ramp-up time-costs were high. Mechanisms for more continuity might help.
  – Could it be advantageous to align the timing of strategic planning processes with the accreditation cycle?

After these three breakout sessions, groups reconvened to process and crystallize what they had learned about when shared governance has worked well and when it has worked not so well. The following are the top-level lessons learned from the Expanded Group Workshop:

+ Early on in the process, institutional support was evident.
+ Specific champions protected the process as it unfolded, as well as the results.
+ In every stage of the process, stakeholders benefited from the support of key staff and areas throughout the organization with special expertise.
+ Responsibilities were clear, and clearly communicated in the form a charge with specific tasks.
+ Availability and transparency of data and information played a key role.
  – There are many strong personalities here and sometimes trust was not sufficiently available.
  – There is a critical and difficult challenge in the balance between inclusion and trust-building on the one hand and timely completion of the process on the other.
Faculty Focus Group Findings

As described under Methods, the five central questions were used to organize the faculty focus group. A brief summary of the results of the faculty focus group is provided here.

1. **What are the benefits of the current system?**
   - Provides a platform or avenue for communication
   - Creates opportunities for faculty to have a voice, access to administration
   - Serves as a forum for identifying problems faculty can help address
   - Generates more genuine and functional practical engagement with administration now than when collaboration was first adopted as a concept at Valencia in 1995
   - Participation in shared governance opens the way to engagement in other ways
   - Fosters a stronger sense among faculty of being part of the community that is Valencia.

2. **What kinds of work should be part of the shared governance system?**
   - Strategic planning at the college- and campus-levels
   - Engaging faculty since they can be helpful in many issues outside strictly faculty issues
   - Communicating in ways that maximize awareness and the potential for collaboration throughout the college community
   - Learning and exercising the skills of open and respectful communication that foster trust
   - Building trust which, in turn, lays a better foundation for effective communication.

3. **If you were able to redesign the system of shared governance what would you do to improve its effectiveness and allow for bold work to be accomplished?**
   - Foster additional informal ways of learning about collaborative governance
   - Implement a process for systematically exposing faculty who are working toward tenure to the collaborative governance process, so that it is a part of their enculturation
   - Ensure ongoing effort for regular, open, transparent and two-way communication, both from and into the Collaborative Governance process.
   - Create means for more continuity, for example, by having past chairs, current chairs and chair-elects working with each other in respective roles

4. **When a new model of shared governance is created, what methods would you use to communicate about the new model with constituents?**
   - Regular distribution of agendas & minutes from Councils in easily consumed formats.
   - The Grove (Valencia's new internal communication tool)

5. **What ongoing forms of communication are needed for a collaborative governance system to work effectively at Valencia?**
   - One-on-one, personal communications about collaborative governance
   - Mentoring
   - Coordination among Councils as in the Council Officers Meetings that had previously occurred.
Interview Findings

During August 201, key informant interviews of 60-90 minutes were conducted with five individuals who have had extensive exposure to the shared governance process at Valencia. As such, their perspectives on practical issues of the governance process are particularly valuable. The interviews were organized around the same five critical questions used in the faculty focus group and in the survey. This section summarizes the informants’ responses to the five critical questions.

1. What are the benefits of the current system?
   - Collaborative governance works well when leaders are good process managers and help people tolerate ambiguity as they seek improvements.
   - The composition of the Councils’ membership allows people to know that anyone who wants to participate can do so.
   - Good decisions are made and there is a high level of collaboration.
   - All types of employees have a voice and actively participate.
   - Authorizing the councils to commission others to do the work is effective and avoids the “star chamber” effect.
   - The Councils have been relatively nimble.
   - Faculty in the co-chair seems to work, so long as the faculty has some experience in college-wide collaboration.
   - It created a culture of trust in which more people knew what others were working on and fear of failure was reduced. The weakness in this is that it sometimes slows things down.
   - Having a Faculty Council helps faculty to be more involved in decision making. On the other hand, if too few get involved an “elite group is then running things and this may not be effective.”
   - It is a voice, a collaborative public arena.

2. What kinds of work should be part of the shared governance system?
   - Improving student performance beyond their time at Valencia.
   - Internationalize the learning experience.
   - Building new pathways that have a deeper purpose for students.
   - Work in which collaboration will lead to a better decision in the end.
   - Work that does not require quick decisions.
   - Governance is about policy, not execution or management.
   - Operations Council is necessary, and it needs to refocus on major issues not management issues.
   - The Councils were designed to get work done, but not to do the work. The initial reporting structure was good, but we fell away from using it.
3. If you were able to redesign the system of governance what would you do to improve its effectiveness and allow for bold work to be accomplished?

- Ongoing development plan with training so people understand how collaborative governance works.
- Help the Councils focus on the few large and strategic issues to “do less in order to do more.”
- Help the Councils be and remain focused on defining and commissioning work to others rather than taking on too much work, which can get in the way of their strategic functions.
- There should be a single point person for handling decisions in different categories.
- Design flow charts showing how decisions should flow through the process.
- Provide a clear process for asking questions about decisions that does not halt progress.
- A special assistant for the learning-centered initiative is critical in order to facilitate collaboration among the Councils.
- There needs to be some flexibility in Councils’ agendas, but trying to set agendas a year out could help reduce redundant effort.
- Annual reports have been effective to show progress and to review what has not been accomplished to determine if work is still needed in that area.
- Set better ground rules for who is responsible for what by identifying major decision areas and allocating decisions to Councils based on these areas.
- Ensure that Councils are working on major issues.

4. When a new model of shared governance is created, what methods would you use to communicate about the new model with constituents?

- Use every method of communication, including but not limited to email, forums, division meeting presentations and a newsletter.
- Ensure access to everyone, perhaps a central website, not hundreds of e-mails.
- Help all staff understand how governance works.
- Lead supervisors to embrace their importance as an essential link in communications between Councils and the wider community of employees. They also need to model respect for collaborative governance.
- Personal forms of contact need to be use to supplement non-personal communications like email and the website.
5. What ongoing forms of communication are needed for a collaborative governance system to work effectively at Valencia?

- Communication cannot be static, like agendas and minutes, nor passive, like documents relegated to a website. Valencia needs a specific and clearly thought out communication plan so that larger numbers of employees can gain knowledge efficiently, easily, quickly. Perhaps interesting, periodic, one-page news reports with headlines, so people can decide which items they want more detail about.
- Participants in the collaborative governance process should understand clearly that part of their role within collaborative governance is to communicate about processes and decisions to others through appropriate, existing mechanisms.
- The new college-wide communication system should have a shared governance channel.
- Deans and Directors should be part of the process of communicating the results of shared governance to faculty and staff.
- There should be widely communicated clarity about the kinds of issues that come from and go to which Council so people can keep track of how the system works.
- A centralized web presence with links to supporting data and information.
- An RSS feed pushing the policy agenda to community members' computers.

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People with more experience with collaborative governance shared their views through workshops, focus groups and interviews. They affirmed many strengths in Valencia's approach to governance, including the openness of opportunities to participate in shaping strategic decisions and policies for the college. Based on their experience, they were also able to identify opportunities for improvement.
Summary of Key Findings

Six different methods of acquiring and organizing information were used to develop this report. These included working meetings and a joint workshop to help define the expected outcomes for collaborative governance at Valencia as well as the factors that would lead to those outcomes. These design principles provide an evaluative framework—a working theory—for optimizing collaborative governance at Valencia.

An expanded group workshop was conducted to identify strengths and weaknesses of the current system. It found that the collaborative governance process had worked effectively on some critical issues for the college. However, there remain some trust issues, particularly when strong personalities see things differently. On a more global level, Valencia’s collaborative governance process might benefit from a more explicit acknowledgement that collaborative work sometimes naturally conflicts with timely decision making.

Three-hundred forty Valencia employees participated in a college-wide survey, representing every campus and job class. There was a notable under-representation of part-time career staff and adjunct faculty, which should be taken into account when interpreting survey results.

The survey found that knowledge about collaborative governance and its impact on daily work was not widely held. However, those with more knowledge of collaborative governance were more able to perceive its impact. Despite low levels of awareness among a sizeable portion of the employees, seven in 10 perceive collaborative governance as important or very important.

Currently, most employees who do learn about collaborative governance learn about it via e-mail, following by departmental or staff meetings and word of mouth. In terms of employee preferences, the methods of communication for which preferences far exceeded current practices included departmental/staff meetings, direct participation in the process, and the Valencia website. The only method of communication about collaborative governance that respondents would prefer less than it currently happens is word of mouth.

Survey respondents rated collaborative governance at Valencia highest in terms of its impact on increasing collaboration and contributing to strategic directions. They were also very positive about the effectiveness of collaborative governance and that their perspective is welcomed. However, participants less often perceived that communication about collaborative governance is satisfactory or that governance at Valencia is transparent.

The survey results showed that perhaps the best opportunity for improvement lay among opportunities to improve methods of communication about and for collaborative governance. In addition, 94 of the survey respondents provided open-ended, written suggests on how to
make collaborative governance more effective. Most of them wrote down suggestions focusing on clear and broad communication.

Workshop, focus group and interview participants provided qualitative, practical and detailed information in five areas: (1) the benefits of the current system, (2) the kinds of work that should be done through the collaborative governance system, (3) suggestions for improving the effectiveness of collaborative governance, (4) how any changes that might be considered should be communicated, and (5) what forms of communication are needed to support the collaborative governance system at Valencia?

Participants in workshops, focus groups and interviews were, by and large, experienced with collaborative governance at Valencia. The knowledge gained from these sources of information, therefore, might not reflect the views of the overall population of Valencia employees as well as the survey results. However, these people with more experience in Valencia’s approach to governance bring a more expert perspective. A more expert perspective can be especially helpful in clarifying what participation is like, and in identifying pitfalls and specific recommendations.

These qualitative results highlighted four especially positive aspects of collaborative governance at Valencia. (1) Collaborative governance gives employees a voice, and a sense of participation. (2) Participation is open to all, does affect strategies and policies, and increases one’s sense of community. (3) Collaborative governance helps to identify and surface issues, as well as helping people focus on the organization’s key goals, like student performance. (4) A number of experienced employees noted that the college does enable genuine support for collaborative governance work.

Among other findings, these qualitative results also identified three major areas for improvement. Communication remains a key challenge, and needs to become both more efficient (quick and easy to use) and more broadly engaging. Coupled with broader engagement, participants also expressed a need for greater continuity so that, once trained in collaborative governance, people can deliver more productivity. Finally, Valencia’s approach might be improved through better coordination between bodies on areas of responsibility, as well as reinforcing openness to collaboration.
Limitations

Many members of the Valencia community contributed to the 2011 Governance Review process. They contributed via background research and Valencia’s history with collaborative governance, committee deliberations, focus groups, one-on-one interviews and a college-wide survey. Care and effort were invested in the goal of conducting an open-minded and reflective, yet rigorous, search for a truthful and complete picture of the current state of collaborative governance at Valencia College.

Nonetheless, it is always true that the available time and resources lead to choices that necessarily limit researchers to imperfect data. It is best to review potential limitations in the methods and results so that those reading the results can have a clear understanding of potential sources of error or bias in the results.

In this case, participation was theoretically open to all employees of Valencia. Yet several sources of bias may exist in this broad and open approach. For the survey, for example, every employee received two invitations to participation and there was no sampling. However, the overall response rate was 8.4%, so the results presented here may represent a biased perspective. That is, were those 8.4% who did respond systematically different from the other 91.6% who did not participate in the survey?

There is one area in which we can be sure that some form of systematic response bias does exist in the survey results. People with certain job classifications were under-represented in the survey results: part-time career staff and adjunct faculty. These groups were much less likely to participate compared to other classes of employees. On its own terms, this means that any special and systematic perspective of these two groups of people would not be well reflected in the results. This does not necessarily mean that the results themselves are biased, just that they may be if these two groups of people would systematically have different views on collaborative governance than others do.

In general, it seems reasonable to suppose that people who know nothing about collaborative governance would be less inclined to participate. This may explain the lower levels of participation by part-time people, but it does not necessarily mean the results are wrong. People with more knowledge about something should be expected to provide better information about it.

A more compelling question might be whether there is a bias toward more positive or negative responses to collaborative governance? That is, would people who are more positive or negative about collaborative governance be more likely to respond to the survey? With the existing information we are unable to tell how much a person’s attitude might have limited participation in the survey. Given that at least some people with negative feelings toward
collaborative governance did feel free to communicate their views, there is no good reason to believe that only positive supporters participated in the process.

People who were already more knowledgeable about or active in collaborative governance may have been more likely to volunteer to participate in the Steering Committee and Resource Panel for the Governance Review. There were a few individuals on both groups who had no prior knowledge of collaborative governance at Valencia. But it seems likely that volunteers to participate as a committee member in the Governance Review process were largely composed of people with more prior experience.

In addition, some information sources were deliberately designed to solicit information from those with more knowledge and opinions about the history, procedures and prospects for collaborative governance. The Faculty Council focus group and the Key Informant interviews were specifically designed to gather information from such people. The reader should bear this in mind when reading these results.

The timing of the information gathering phase of the Governance Review may have contributed to some measure of bias in participation. There is neither clear evidence nor a reason to be certain, but gathering data during the summer months may have contributed to an unknown type and amount of bias. This particular type of bias, if any, was largely predetermined by the deadlines for the process and so would have been largely unavoidable.

Next Steps
The next steps are the Action Phase. The ultimate goal of the Action Phase is to determine whether and how to modify Valencia’s approaches to collaborative governance.

During the Action Phase, the Governance Review Committee will communicate the findings of the Inquiry Report to the President and to the College Planning Council (CPC). The overall Action Phase process will included these steps:

- Solicit feedback on the findings (including college-wide mechanisms)
- Generate the recommendations
- Incorporate feedback from the college community to adjust the recommendations
- Repeat these kinds of steps until the recommendations are actionable and well supported
End Notes


7 Tierney., p. 134.

8 Ibid.


12 Shugart, S. Personal interview. August 2011.