



VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY
FACULTY CONGRESS

COMMITTEE ON FACULTY
Academic Year 2006-2007

Definition of Collegial Governance

September 21, 2006

Revision (Feb. 16, 2006) of the COF draft of March 2005¹

Collegiality is an essential element of the spirit of community in any academic institution, and above all in one such as Villanova University, whose unique character derives from its Augustinian tradition and mission as well as from the particular character of its constituent groups, including the University's sponsoring organization, the Province of St. Thomas of Villanova of the Order of St. Augustine. Collegiality entails mutual understanding, respect, and trust among all these groups, based upon their shared sense that it is in the common interest of all to cooperate in promoting the general welfare and the mission of the academic community. At Villanova, the University's founding principles of *Veritas*, *Unitas*, and *Caritas*, or truth, unity, and love, shape its mission and foster an especially intense spirit of collegiality. In the words of its mission statement, Villanova is "a community of persons of diverse professional, academic and personal interests who, in a spirit of *collegiality*, cooperate to achieve their common goals and objectives in the transmission, the pursuit and the discovery of knowledge." Hence the spirit of collegiality is central to [OR: an essential dimension of] Villanova's mission.

Collegiality is also essential to the structure and process of university governance. Given the diversity of its constituent groups and its goal of advancing truth and knowledge, collegiality is unlikely to be expressed by the equal sharing of authority and power, nor by rigid hierarchical patterns. Instead, all constituent groups within the University community, including the Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, students, staff, and alumnae/i, are interdependent. In the joint effort to promote the University's mission, each group bears special obligations and primary responsibilities for matters lying within its particular area of expertise or legal jurisdiction, as defined by the institution's Charter and By-laws, and as shaped by its traditions and character. Hence each group within the University community must acknowledge and respect the particular roles of the others, and each must also strive to work in a spirit of openness with all the others, communicating fully and freely on matters of common concern, in order to maintain that atmosphere of mutual respect and cooperation essential both for collegiality and the advancement of truth. Moreover, collegiality must reflect the *principle of subsidiarity*, whereby the authority for decision making resides at the lowest level commensurate with the necessary legal jurisdiction, information, and resources, and responsibility for action should be as decentralized as possible. When a member or constituent group engages in decision making that significantly affects the rest of the University community, subsidiarity requires systematically and appropriately involving other members and constituent groups (or their duly-constituted representatives) in the process. In this way the community reflects its commitment to the advancement of truth in a decision-making process informed by unity and charity.

Circumstances may well arise in which strict adherence to this more intensive form of collegiality may not always be possible. So as to avoid undermining this special collegial spirit of Villanova University in such cases, it is the obligation of those who bear primary responsibility to inform the members of the community through an appropriate medium concerning why an abrogation of collegiality was necessary. They will thereby demonstrate respect and honor for all members and constituent groups, and further encourage their active participation in governance and decision making.

¹ The draft of March 2005 was done by Susan Mackey-Kallis, based on previous drafts by Jeff Johnson and Rich Jacobs; the present draft was revised by Jeff Johnson and Rich Jacobs, with input from Susan Mackey-Kallis. We propose this draft for approval by the Committee on Faculty on February 17, 2006; if COF approves this draft, we will submit it to the University Senate for further discussion and action, beginning with the Rules and Review Committee (or Mission and Social Justice Committee).