

# Best Practices for Student Voices in Shared Governance

Governance is defined as “the ongoing and integrated process of planning and decision-making. Based on the assumption that the active participation of all constituent groups and consideration of diverse viewpoints are essential for effective college planning, governance at De Anza College includes faculty, staff, students, and administrators.” (<https://www.deanza.edu/gov/>)

The spirit of this document comes from the desire for all members of the De Anza College community to engage in mutually meaningful participation in the process of shared governance.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will develop skills in leadership and advocacy.
2. Students will understand how to work within a complex bureaucracy and be effective.

DASG will...

1. Make sure there is student representation for all the shared-governance committees.
2. Maintain a list of student representatives and their mentors by the DASG Vice President.
3. Check in regularly to ensure the process is functioning.
4. Offer trainings to student representatives.

Individual Student Representatives will...

1. **Receive annual trainings through DASG** on effective advocacy in shared governance committees in order to understand the governance processes at De Anza College and their role as student representatives in this process.
2. Come to shared governance meetings **prepared**, having reviewed the agenda, and reaching out to the respective chair if clarification is needed.
3. **Maintain consistent communication** by announcing information at shared governance committees and reporting back to the DASG Senate as needed.
4. Reach out to committee chair and request an appropriate mentor.
5. Connect with fellow students and speak on behalf of the students during the meetings.

Committees and committee chairs will...

1. **Model** positive communication and equitable leadership practices to create a safe space that is mindful and inclusive of students.
2. Be aware of the **impact power dynamics** have on students' comfort levels and encourage ongoing attendance and participation.
3. Establish a regular committee attendee (faculty, staff, or administrator) to serve as a **“shared-governance mentor”** to the student representative. The mentor should have more than 3 months experience on the committee and be passionate about student empowerment. Their role is to:
  - Work with the student to establish role and provide training.
  - Help the student feel welcome and supported.

- Meet with the student before every meeting to answer any potential questions, explain the agenda items' impact on the student side, or give any background information if needed.
  - Sit by the student during the meeting to quietly answer questions and clarify material if needed.
  - Check in with the student after the meeting or on a regular basis.
  - Support student through troubleshooting if issues come up.
  - Understand their **role as mentors** for student leaders and model effective participatory practices.
4. Be mindful of the impact of items that should be sent to DASG for consultation and **ask the student representative their feedback** on student oriented issues or agenda items.
  5. Ensure that every student oriented agenda item **explains how students will be impacted** and provide the opportunity for the student representative to **voice questions and/or concerns**.
  6. Encourage the student representative/s to **share agenda items discussed with DASG, gather feedback and information, and return to meetings** with questions or feedback when needed.
  7. **Allocate agendized time** for students to provide updates from DASG Senate and report any appropriate student issues, asking questions if needed.
  8. **Remain in contact** with the DASG in the event the student representative stops attending, the committee meeting time or location changes, or if any other concerns arise.
  9. **Incorporate** these practices into bylaws or protocols.

Developed by DASG Shared Governance Committee

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