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Shared Governance Spotlight - CU Colorado Springs [1]

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Samantha Christiansen

Assistant Professor of History, CU Colorado Springs
Member, Faculty Council Executive Committee
Secretary, Faculty Council Women's Committee

What does shared governance mean to you? Why is it important?

To me shared governance is a commitment to working collaboratively in the best interest of everyone who is part of our university system. It means including the voices and ideas of faculty, staff, and students in decision making processes, but also recognizing that there are all sorts of layers within these stakeholder groups. It also means having mechanisms of accountability to maintain a balance of power in a fully effective manner. Shared governance is important as a critical link between the institutional management goals and the academic mission of the university. As a public university system, honoring the values of democratic representation in the power structure of our institution is crucial and shared governance is a responsibility that must be taken with seriousness and sincerity.

Tell us about your role on the Faculty Council, how long you have served in this role, and what your initial motivations were for engaging in this type of service.

I first came to Faculty Council as a member representing UCCS on the Women's Committee in Fall, 2020. I have since taken the role of Secretary on that committee, as well as serving as the Women's Committee representative on the Faculty Council Executive Committee as of this current academic year. I was motivated initially by my own commitment to the importance of shared governance, but I was also really drawn to the idea of working as a community at the system level; sometimes the distance between our different campuses feels very wide and I was excited to join together with faculty across disciplines at all of the different campuses. While many issues we face are locally specific, there is a massive body of shared interests we have at the system level. The Women's Committee made perfect sense to me as an important system level conversation because it was so clearly addressing concerns that could not be confined to a single campus.

I also think there is somewhat of a misconception that serving in shared governance is the place of long-time, senior faculty and staff, but it is important to have the voices of junior faculty represented as well; the entire academic/higher education landscape has changed drastically in the last few decades and while we definitely need the experience and historical memory of those who have served for a long time, we also absolutely need voices from those who have joined more recently and can represent that perspective. So, I guess one way of thinking about my motivation for this type of service is that I wanted to bring my lack of

experience to the table!

What makes this work rewarding? Can you share some of your committee's or the Council's initiatives or achievements that you are particularly proud to have contributed to?

I've found the work of the Women's Committee to be very rewarding and I am excited for the work of the Faculty Council Executive Committee this year. On a personal level, I have met amazing people from literally every campus in our system and I really enjoy being part of the CU community that transcends campuses. I came to the Women's Committee as it was undergoing a period of reassessment and refocus, and I have been really excited by the work the committee has put into addressing issues of intersectionality and solidarity. We worked collaboratively to gather input from many perspectives and build a new vision and charge for the committee that is more reflective of a multiplicity of meanings of the idea of "women faculty" as well as laying the groundwork to address related issues of equity. Another project has been focused on understanding the impact of the COVID pandemic across campuses and drawing together and amplifying some of the fantastic more specifically campus-focused work that has been providing insight and recommendations that can also inform the policies at the system level.

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