



**中國地質大學**  
China University of Geosciences

# **Faculty roles in university governance at a Central China university**

**Prof. Jiang Hong-chi**

**Institute of Higher Education  
China University of Geosciences(Wuhan)**

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# Outlines

- Introduction
- Method
- Results and Discussion
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# Introduction

- **Governance** is a political term that refers to the administrative ways of government.
- Broadly speaking, **university governance** in higher education refers to the means by which higher educational institutions are formally organized and managed. It is related to the structure and process of authoritative decision-making issues that are significant for external as well as internal stakeholders within a university (**Gayle, Tewarie, & White, 2003**).
- University governance is a core issue of higher education. It concerns the existence, characteristics, and development of universities



## Introduction

- Simply stated, **university governance** is the mechanism by which universities are operated. The concept of university governance predominantly refers to the internal structure, organization and management of autonomous institutions.
- A suitable and meaningful role for faculty in this critical aspect of governance can improve the efficiency of university governance.
- University governance in this study mainly refers to **university internal governance, especially authoritative rights in decision-making.**



## Method

- This study is a case study. qualitative research methods are used
- The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the university governing structures and faculty primary roles in university governance.
- Data were collected from structured interviews, follow-up emails, and document analysis. A sample of 10 faculty members was selected

Gender (number of each gender)	Age (number of the age range)	Status (number of academic title)	Disciplines (Number of respondents)
males (5), females (5)	30-40: 3 40-50: 3 50-60: 4	lecturers (3) associate professors (3) full professors (4)	Political Ideology (1), Geosciences (2), Education (2), Chinese Language (1), Mathematics (2), Economics (2)



## Method

- After the participants were recruited, we interviewed them for about **30 minutes each**.
- During the interviews, we asked each of them **9 questions** on governing structures and roles of faculty in their university governance.
- To clarify the participants' perspectives, we followed up discussions by emails. When analyzing data collected, university documentations about university governance were also reviewed and analyzed.
- The nine questions are:



## Method

- (1) What do you know about the university governance?
- (2) What are the faculty's main roles at your university?
- (3) Can you make the final decision on the curricular issues at your university?
- (4) Who and what decide your appointments and promotions at your university?
- (5) What role do you play in student admission, evaluation, and graduation?
- (6) Can you have a voice for the selection of major administrative and academic officers, such as the president, dean, and chair?
- (7) What's your role in budgetary planning of your school and university?
- (8) Do you think it necessary to participate in the university governance and what about your role in your university governance?
- (9) What else would you like to say about the faculty role in your university governance?



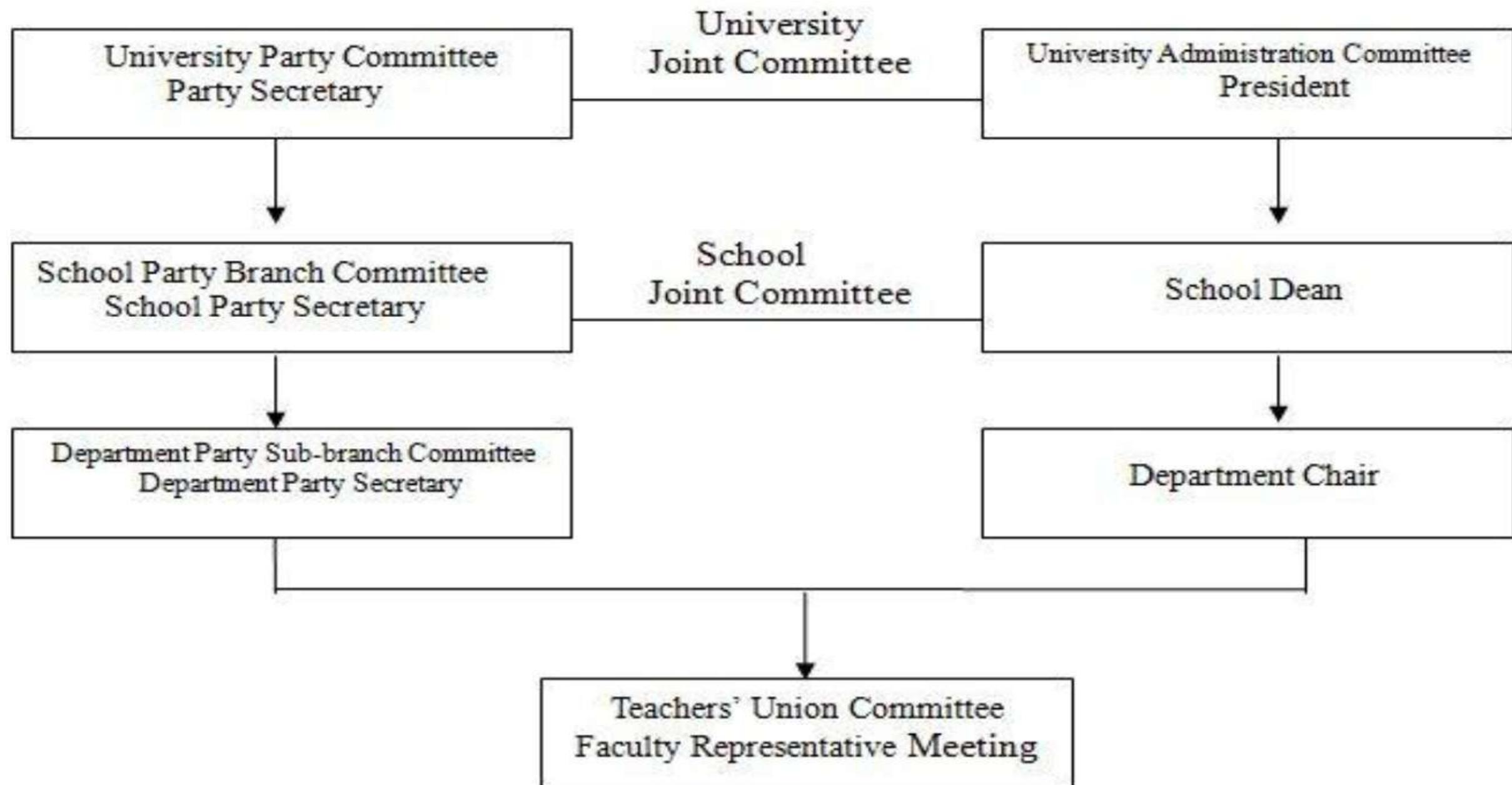
## Results and Discussion

- ***University Governing Structure***
- ***The Faculty Primary Roles in University Governance***
  - ***Curricular decisions***
  - ***Faculty governance decisions***
  - ***Student governance decisions***
  - ***Organizational governance decisions***



## *University Governing Structure*

- one distinctive feature of the governing structure was that there are two parallel governing bodies: **political and administrative**.
- The political governing body is parallel to the administrative body at all levels in the university. The political governing body is the Communist Party of China (CPC) University Committee, while the administrative body is the University Administration Committee.
- This binary governing structure is regarded as **dual leaderships**. Under this structure, there are two paralleled executive chief officers, and at each academic unit within the university, there are dual leaderships: the Party Branch Secretary (political commander) and the Dean/Department Chair (administrative commander)





## *University Governing Structure*

- The president is the chief executive officer for academics, and at the same time, the president is under the leadership of the University Party Committee, which is described as **president-in-charge under the leadership of CPC Committee**.
- it appeared that the dean has more power than the Party Branch Secretary at school and department levels. Although issues are normally discussed at the Administration-Party committee meetings and the Party Branch Secretary does have a supervisory role in assuring the academic administrators at school or department levels to implement their authority properly and efficiently, on critical issues, the dean has the final decision.



## *University Governing Structure*

- In terms of faculty roles in university governance, there **are no legislative acts regarding faculty involvement** at the University.
- faculty members have **limited impact** within the governing structure of the university.
- The duty of teachers' Union Committee is to serve the faculty and staff other than participating in internal government. it performs as **a trade union** and under the leadership of University Party Committee. The role that the Teacher's Union Committee plays in actual university governance is limited.



## *The Faculty Primary Roles in University Governance*

- ***Curricular decisions***
- the curriculum goals and standards are determined by outside authorities, and the faculty syllabi must also include these goals and standards and learning outcomes that are congruent to goals and the standards.
- Faculty members are limited in authority to make important curriculum decisions. Some curricula, such as political ideology, are formulated by the National Ministry of Education. The faculty members do not have any choice in matter of what to teach and how to teach.



## *I. Curricular decisions*

- Just as an associate professor of Political Ideology said:

*Political ideology is a very important course. It relates to the main ideology of our country. So I must teach the students according to the selected textbooks strictly and mustn't speak freely, especially against our government. That is, I just do what I am told to do.*



## *Curricular decisions*

- As for other curricula, the university usually has a curricular list for faculty members to choose from. But at the department level the faculty members usually have less choice for the curricula.
- The fact is that the curricula are assigned to the faculty by the Dean or the Chair.
- In selecting textbooks, the National Ministry of Education compiled a recommended list of textbooks for universities to choose from, and the faculty members are only free to choose what textbooks to use from that list. Although they are free to decide the way that they wish to teach, that “We have some limited freedom to choose what to teach and how to teach it” is a common voice when the University faculty members were asked about the curricular decisions.



## *II. Faculty governance decisions*

- it is concerned mainly with new **faculty appointment, faculty promotion, and faculty status.**
- the **university personnel department** is in charge of appointing new faculty.
- A Chinese Language professor stated like this:

*When appointing new faculty, this faculty position is advertised, and a Search Committee appointed by the school dean is convened to screen and interview the applicants. They determine who best fits in to the position. The committee consists of the administrators in the university personnel department, the head of the school and some professors in the division. The search committee makes the selection and submits the decision to the university personnel department for approval.*



## *Faculty governance decisions*

- There is no tenure system in China.
- Faculty promotion at the University is determined by an academic committee at the school level and by a promotion committee at the university level.
- But most of the committee members are administrators (heads of university and school). Thus, the faculty has a very weak voice for promotions.



## *Faculty governance decisions*

- A Geosciences professor of the University said that:

*One's promotion usually depends on **two aspects**: the availability of a vacant position, performance and personal relationship. Having a vacant position is a very important issue because the number of positions in the university is determined by the Ministry of Education. The faculty performance can be measured by the prescriptive rules made by the university. The faculty member's research or scholarly activity including peer-reviewed journals publications and grants are extremely emphasized in promotions*



## *Faculty governance decisions*

- At the University, there is little discrimination based on religious beliefs or ethnic backgrounds among the faculty members, according to all interviewees.
- faculty members (especially for the ones who are not full professors) have less power and a much weaker voice about faculty governance decisions than the administrators.
- the faculty members feel that they are inferior to the administrators when it comes to faculty governance decisions, and are eagerly waiting for their status to be improved. (Economics professor)



### *III. Student governance decisions*

- Student governance concerns student academic life. It includes both student affairs and academic affairs. Here we limit our discussion of student governance decisions **to student admission, evaluation, and graduation**
- At this University, admissions are under the charge of Student Affairs Department and student academic affairs are overseen by the faculty members and departments.
- The admissions quota is set by the National Ministry of Education. It requires that all students pass the College Entrance Examinations for admissions. Admissions for both undergraduate and graduate students mainly depend on the students' scores on the Entrance Examinations.



## *Student governance decisions*

- Just as an associate professor of Economics said that:

*Scores are the most important after all. The faculty's role in the student admissions is limited; but now the professor is playing a more important role in the doctoral student admissions process. At some universities, prestigious professors can waive entrance examination requirements for particularly talented graduate students.*



## *Student governance decisions*

- the evaluation of student academic performance at the University is determined by faculty members.
- But the graduation of students is determined by many factors, including the student's academic and non-academic performances during the course of their university study.
- The evaluations are administrated by different departments, inside or outside the campus. For instance, their foreign language performance is assessed by the College English Test, a proficiency test administered by the National Ministry of Education.



## *IV. Organizational governance decisions*

- Here we narrowly define organizational governance as **the selection of primary administrators, academic officers, and budgetary planning**
- At the University, the chief administrators, including the president, vice president, party secretary and deputy party secretary, are all named by the Ministry of Education.
- At the school level and department level, the immediate upper level of administration is in charge of the selection and appointment.
- The search process includes promulgating the advertisement of candidate recruitment, collecting the feedback, nominating the candidates and organizing the interviews.



## *Organizational governance decisions*

- The interview committee is composed of heads of schools and university administrators.
- After the interviews, the joint Administration-Party Committee discusses and makes the selection.
- Then the particular department publicizes the selection outcomes and leaves three to six days for feedback
- After this period, the particular department makes the appointments.
- A lecturer of Mathematics commented that: “During the whole process, faculty members have very weak voice for it. Some process is just showing the routine.”



## *Organizational governance decisions*

- As for budgetary planning of the University, Faculty members have no power at all.
- The university budgetary planning is controlled by the Financial Department, which is also led by the University President.
- The school budgetary planning is controlled and led by the Dean, who is consulted along with other heads of the school and perhaps some professors.
- “I know nothing about our university and school budgetary planning, neither do I have ways to know about it,” is common when the Chinese faculty members answered the questions of their roles in university and school budgetary planning.



## Conclusion

- the governance structure is described as **the president-in-charge under the leadership of CPC committee**. Political and administrative leadership are two parallel governing bodies.
- All important governing issues are decided by **the join Administration-Party Committee at university levels and most school/department levels**.
- The dual leadership governance structure of the Chinese university made the university a much **more bureaucratic organization** resulting in far less academic autonomy.
- the faculty members at the University seemed to have less power, and **they played less important roles** in university governance.
- the faculty roles in university governance are sometimes invaded and even substituted by administrators



## Conclusion

- **Effective university governance** generally requires that all the stakeholders be represented on budgetary, policy, and procedure decision-making entities.
- **Appropriate representations** of these groups are normally obtained through the university's council and committee structures. Elected and appointed representatives should, as far as possible, be selected specifically for the roles in which they will serve.
- **shared governance** is an ideal governance model for the university.
- Shared governance needs all of the stakeholders participating to realize their responsibility for decisions made in the governing process. It only works where there is a high level of participation from all the stakeholders.
- It seems that there is a long way to go for the university, but it is particularly suggestive that the Chinese university **develops authentic shared governance**.



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