First of all I want to thank Cheryl Ernst for the nomination. Trust, transparency and shared governance is a tall order and even if just a few people thought I helped things along in a good way, it makes all the effort worth it!

There are official guidelines for shared governance—but not for trust and transparency. That’s because we’d have to write novel with a couple of very long chapters on vulnerability and humility. Strangely, neither of those things seem to come naturally to university faculty and administrators.

I am no better than the average person at being humble and making myself vulnerable to others’ perspectives. I thought I was. Two simultaneous life events taught me that I was wrong about that, going into administration, and parenting.

Anyway, the basic task in front of us seems simple. Keep asking questions, and listen to every answer as if it held the golden solution, and then collectively, the best idea somehow magically surfaces. Sounds lovely, doesn’t it?

Good shared governance is always complicated because on any given day, any one of us might just be stressed out enough to forget to engage the pre-frontal cortex and instead communicate with the amygdala....That speech is about 48 minutes long, so instead, I’m going to share with you my self-talk. This self-talk has worked for me in all of my roles—faculty member or administrator. Before I talk to a colleague about a change, or proposed change, here is what I say to myself:

1. “I have only one head, therefore, my knowledge is incomplete.”

2. “Any response to my viewpoint, whether delivered with a smile or flaring nostrils, is based in important and positive values.”

3. “Even if I have spoken with numerous other people about this change already, here is a new head different from all other heads, and potentially a new perspective.”

4. “I will explain my core values beneath my viewpoint, even if it adds 42 seconds to the conversation.”

5. “I will solicit the values beneath the rationale of this person’s viewpoint, even if it adds yet another 42 seconds to the conversation.”
6. “If what I learn in the course of this conversation shakes my confidence in my own viewpoint, that could be a good thing.”

7. “I am prepared to change my viewpoint as a result of learning things in the course of this conversation.”

8. “I want my colleagues to hear and participate in my idea process, no matter how messy or unfinished it feels at this moment, because otherwise, they will not know what I value.”

9. And finally and perhaps most importantly:
   “This interaction, like all others, is an opportunity to add to, or subtract from, trust. There is no neutral.”

Thanks to the university for opportunities to participate in leadership, to the faculty union for including shared governance in the CBA, to the Senate for their work, and most of all thanks to my wonderful colleagues at the AEI who have reminded me that in the many, many moments (and opportunities) between decisions, we are not alone.