

Ad Hoc University-Wide Governance Committee
October 22, 2004
Minutes

Present: J. Acker, R. Bangert-Drowns, B. Carlson, T. Hoff, J. Pipkin, L. Schell, G. Singh, B. Via

Minutes: The minutes of October 1, 2004 and the revised minutes of September 17, 2004 were approved.

Graduate Curriculum Discussion:

Clarification on definition of terms:

- ***Changes in programs*** include only major changes being approved above the school/college level.
- ***Continuation of programs*** includes both issues of assessment and whether a program should be discontinued.

Professor Acker read messages from people not in attendance today:

Jon Bartow: Has no strong feelings about centralized review of program discontinuations. They are once in a blue moon and essentially consultative only. As regards to academic standing issues, he is initially inclined to believe that a continued centralized governance role is fine, but will defer to committee vote without challenge.

Jim Wyckoff: On deleting a program favors leaving that to the School or College in the case where the unit (department) initiates the change, but moving to University level governance in other cases.

Professor Bangert-Drowns agreed with Professor Wyckoff's message, that if a department elects to eliminate a program, they should have a right to decide that, but he believes that GAC should still retain the right to terminate a program otherwise. Regarding interdisciplinary programs, when one party wants to terminate and the other wants it to continue a program, Professor Bangert-Drowns feels there should be a policy that allows that to happen.

Professor Hoff added that he would like to have the clause *originating from a department* added to the Committee's motion from the last meeting "decisions regarding the dissolution of graduate programs initiated by action within the involved School or College shall occur at the School or College level." This would allow the faculty in the department to have a say in the decision. Professor Hoff added that even if a decision comes from a department, it is something that the entire university should review.

Professor Acker agreed that an action as profoundly significant as terminating a program does impact the entire university academically and it is a matter that could be considered at a university-wide level.

Professor Bangert-Drowns did not agree for two reasons, 1) if it does go to the university-wide level review and at that level if they insist the department keeps the program, the people in the department may feel resentful, and 2) if the university-wide level insists that a department keeps a program, the department can still close it by not assigning students to the courses.

Professor Hoff suggested a scenario where at the college/school level it is decided to terminate a program, and the faculty in the department want to keep it, could GAC help or support the department to keep it; can GAC serve an ombudsperson role between the department and Administration. There was discussion on this issue and it was generally agreed upon that having GAC's support may help the department keep a program. If the program were being terminated for financial reasons, it would be impossible for a committee that has no resource allocation to decide that a program should not be terminated.

Professor Acker reminded the group that it voted that GAC ought to have a say in creating programs, and that deleting programs is just as significant.

There was discussion on the language in Senate Charter Section SX.4.5. The committee noted the somewhat ambiguous nature of the present Senate Charter section SX4.5, which provides only that GAC has the authority to "review" (as oppose to language more definitively providing authority to decide or make recommendations about) program continuation matters. Discussion included what the purpose of having a university level review is when the review does not include recommendations. One member suggested that the review would be a waste of time; another member suggested it allows a platform for everyone in the university to be made aware of what changes are occurring. Professor Bangert-Drowns suggested that the IT dissemination system previously discussed would be a tool for notifying interested parties.

Professor Acker moved to place Professor Wyckoff's motion on the table with his revision that it would be recommended that a proposal that arrives within a unit shall not receive review above the school or college levels, however, those that arise outside the department shall be subject to university-wide level faculty review and approval.

There was discussion that included adding a provision to Section 4.5. stating that *decisions regarding suspension or discontinuation of a program that originate within a department shall remain at the school or college level, schools that are not departmentalized will be treated as a department and then it will go to GAC for review.*

Another suggestion was to modify Section 4.5.2. to include language indicating that it is not a decision to be made at the university level if a department wants to discontinue a program.

Another suggestion for revision of Section 4.5. would be to include *the GAC should review programs when proposals originate from other than the 'home' unit.*

It was suggested to add a provision to the present Charter Section 4.5. that reads:
Decisions regarding the suspension or discontinuance of programs originating within a department shall be made at school or college level.

Discussion on the suggestion included that faculty would review the decision, and then it would go to the department for review. All members present agreed that the department should have the right to review decisions, and then the revisions can go to the university level for review, not recommendations. Thus, giving GAC the power to make recommendations, but no power to change decisions

The matter was discussed thoroughly and a motion was proposed and seconded as follows:

Proposals that would affect the continuation of graduate programs that originate within the affected department shall be subject to final resolution at the School or College level, without University-level faculty review. This motion did not pass by vote of Yes-3, No-5, Abstain-0.

At this point, the Committee members present agreed that members not present should have an opportunity to vote on this motion. It was discussed and agreed upon that there would be an email vote for those not present.

There was discussion on reiterating the present Section 4.5. and a motion was made and seconded to support it as follows:

Senate Charter sections SX.4.5, 4.5.1, and 4.5.2 should be reaffirmed. This motion passed by vote of Yes-4, No-3, Abstain-1.

Admission and academic standing discussion:

The Committee addressed Charter Section 4.7, discussing admissions to graduate studies, admissions to candidacy and academic standing or academic grievances. The committee noted the ambiguous power invested in the GAC to "review" standards, procedures, and actions, and in particular whether the power to "review" also includes the power to recommend or act on proposed changes. It was thought best not to try to interpret this and other portions of SX.4.7, but instead to express the views of the committee about the appropriate scope of governance authority in the respective areas encompassed within SX.4.7., i.e., (1) admission to graduate study; (2) admission to candidacy for graduate degrees; and (3) actions taken by deans and department chairs addressing matters of academic standing or academic grievances brought by an interested party.

Discussion included such matters as enforcement of university-wide standards regarding TOEFL scores, grade point average to remain in good academic standing or to graduate, general admissions standards, and whether local units should have the authority to define their own standards for degree candidacy. The sense of the committee was that the University should have the authority to identify MINIMAL or THRESHOLD standards relevant to graduate admissions and degree candidacy, but that local units should be free to develop and rely on their own innovative policies or practices as long as they are in conformance with the minimum or

threshold standards. The committee discussed, but did not believe it to be a realistic scenario, that a unit might want to define a minimum grade point average higher than the University's 3.0 requirement for remaining in good academic standing or for graduating. The following motion was made and seconded:

The GAC shall establish minimal criteria for graduate admissions, academic standing, and candidacy for degrees. Senate Charter SX.4.7. shall be modified accordingly, and SX.4.7.1 and SX.4.7.2 shall be eliminated. This motion passed by vote of Yes-8; No-0; Abstain-0.

Discussion on Charter sections SX.4.7.3 and SX.4.7.4 were brief and it was agreed upon by the seven remaining Committee members that they should be reaffirmed.

The Committee will review the entire draft report next week in addition to discussing the matter of individual grievances.

Minutes prepared by Jayne VanDenburgh