

Jim asked about the committee members' availability for the fall Ad Hoc University-Wide Governance Committee

August 18, 2004

Minutes

Present: J. Acker, R. Bangert-Drowns, J. Bartow, P. Eppard, M. Fogelman, R. Geer, T. Hoff, L. Schell, G. Singh, J. Wyckoff

Committee members were reminded to fill out the schedule indicating when they would be unavailable to meet once the Fall Semester begins, to facilitate the scheduling of committee meetings after summer concludes.

Minutes:

The minutes of August 11, 2004 were not approved as written. One Committee member asked that additional specifics be included involving whether academic units that presently go through three levels of review in tenure and promotion matters should be given the choice of retaining three levels of review or instead opting to have only two levels of review. The minutes will be revised and brought back to the Committee for reconsideration at a later date.

There was discussion about whether the minutes are or should be made publicly available, and whether they should include a more detailed account of committee meeting discussions. It was suggested that including more details in the minutes would give a richer history of the committee's deliberations and allow consumers of the committee's eventual report to appreciate the consideration given to issues as well as the amount of work invested in the report.

Questions were raised about the form of the committee's eventual report.

A suggestion was made that it would be helpful to present alternative models or approaches with respect to the several issues being considered, as opposed to simply presenting the single model or approach favored by a majority of the committee. It was reported that some external observers may have a perception that the committee is likely to do little more than ratify the status quo. The

form of the committee's report could help ensure that it is apparent that, whatever the committee's recommendations may be, the committee considered different approaches and has taken a principled position with respect to changes that may or may not be recommended.

Questions were raised about whether committee members would vote point-by-point on the subcommittee reports, or vote on each report as a whole. It was pointed out that the committee's charge involves making recommendations about what changes, if any, should be made in specific Bylaws and Charter provisions, and that maintaining such a focus would be beneficial as the committee's work progresses and as a report is contemplated. Discussion continued on the interpretation of the charge and it was suggested that the Committee seems to be progressing toward making recommendations by: (1) identifying what sub-issues exist in each of the principal categories of governance being addressed (research, graduate curriculum and academic standing, promotions and continuing appointments; (2) identifying alternatives models or approaches with respect to each sub-issue; (3) identifying which models/approaches garner support (majority and minority) from the committee, with accompanying rationale; and (4) identifying the specific Bylaw and Charter provisions that would be affected by any recommended changes.

#### Subcommittee Reports:

Research Subcommittee: Professor Hoff reported that the subcommittee is scheduled to meet again. Because of members' absences, and because of the need to collect additional information from other institutions, the subcommittee does not expect to have a report ready until the week of August 30th. It was indicated that the five areas previously identified by the subcommittee will be addressed separately.

A question was raised about whether the Research Subcommittee should discuss the process for awarding Distinguished Professorships. Professor Acker offered his opinion that that topic did not appear to have been contemplated previously, but that if the subcommittee believed it was important to the Committee's charge

with respect to faculty governance in the area of research, they should retain it as a discussion item for the committee as a whole. He expressed his own view that the issue of how faculty members are nominated to be considered for Distinguished Professorships might be somewhat removed from the more central research-related issues.

Professor Bangert-Drowns reported that the School of Education had received a request from Interim Vice President for Research, Lynn Videka, encouraging the School to nominate representatives to the IRB. It appears that the School of Education generates a sizeable percentage of applications to the IRB, thus making it important that it be represented adequately on the IRB. Discussion ensued about the process for naming representatives to the IRB, and whether any requirements existed for proportional or balanced representation among schools and colleges. A question was raised about whether faculty within academic units are "deputized" by IRB to review their students' research proposals.

Discussion ensued about what issues constitute policies relevant to the committee's charge. One member offered the opinion that the Committee should be involved in crafting policy, and not just the administration of it, and that there is a role for a centralized Research Council in policy making, supported by administration. Another member agreed that faculty groups should recommend policy to the administration including the President, but pointed out that the critical issue is whether or not faculty recommendations should be university-wide or devolved to the schools/colleges. Another committee member opined that it is the Committee's job to try to draw out the procedural framework by which decisions are made, rather than attempting to resolve substantive issues that Councils might consider. For example, it may not be the job of the Committee to define what a conflict of interest is, but it is the Committee's role to make recommendations about the role that faculty governance will play in defining and considering conflict of interest situations. Another committee member expressed concern about this Committee trying to make specific recommendations, and suggested that the members of the Research Council

are more knowledgeable about the issues and may be more qualified to make decisions.

It was reported that the Curriculum Subcommittee did look at Charter and Bylaws provisions, and a suggestion was made that the Committee report does have to address such issues. The opinion was offered that the Committee should make clear suggestions regarding whether there should be increased devolution of faculty decision-making responsibility in each area. It was pointed out that the committee's work involves making normative judgments, including recommending what should be changed in the Charter or Bylaws.

Graduate Curriculum and Academic Standing Subcommittee: Professor Bangert-Drowns reported that subcommittee members will meet and discuss the information they have gathered from other institutions, try to identify themes, and make recommendations in their subcommittee report. He further reported that UAlbany's system with respect to graduate curriculum issues seems normative in comparison to other schools. He discussed graduate curriculum issues at length with representatives of the University of Michigan and found that such representatives were proud of the devolved system in place at that university. He asked how the faculty at the University of Michigan responded to the devolution of authority in matters pertaining to the graduate curriculum and he was told that devolution is the one area where no complaints are received from faculty at all. They consider their system to be efficient. For example, course proposals are reviewed and approved at the departmental level and are not considered again at the school level. If the department approves it, that action is final and the course is registered. One committee member inquired what would happen if two different departments have courses with the same title. Another committee member explained that courses are not currently reviewed at UAlbany for replication. He explained that it is rare that a graduate program incorporates coursework outside the department, unless it is an interdisciplinary curriculum. Another member suggested that there must be some level of coordination, or a student could take essentially the same course again

for credit. It was suggested that at the graduate level, the student would be likely to ask to have the course waived, before taking it over again.

A question was raised about whether there are mechanisms in place for decisions on more general curriculum issues at the University of Michigan, for example, eliminating or making major changes in departments or degree programs. Professor Bangert-Drowns replied that he believes the full faculty is involved in the Senate and that review of major program changes or elimination could occur there.

Discussion returned to how the committee's charge is related to recommending specific changes in the Faculty Bylaws and Senate Charter. Questions were raised about whether the Committee needs to go point-by-point over the Charter and make recommendations. One committee member suggested that consulting other institutions and gathering information about their governance policies and practices is a very important part of what this Committee should be considering.

One committee member suggested that the Curriculum Subcommittee should consider reviewing policies reflecting students' potential return to graduate studies, including how graduate academic standing might be affected by academic grievances. It was suggested that academic standing issues might be linked to admission issues. Currently, when the recommendation comes from faculty to terminate a student, the student can appeal to the Dean of Graduate Studies, or the GAC. The question is, should academic standing issues be considered in connection with admissions, through GAC, or at the Dean's level. It further was suggested that if the process is devolved and a graduate student was admitted and dismissed by the Dean of the school, an appeal process might still exist within that school. Questions might be raised about whether the dean responsible for discharging a student could impartially consider appeals from such a student.

Another committee member questioned whether academic standing is addressed in

the Bylaws. It was suggested that UAlbany requires the student to appeal to the GAC. Professor Bangert-Drowns reported that at the University of Michigan the grievance process ends at the school level and that each school has its own policies/appeal boards.

#### Promotion and Tenure Subcommittee:

Professor Acker mentioned that the Subcommittee report distributed on August 11th on promotion and tenure had specific propositions/recommendations with different models for consideration. The Subcommittee members supported a centralized model.

One committee member reported that he had discussed tenure and promotion review with some faculty in his school and that he sensed there was support for the "academic cluster" model rather than centralized (CPCA) final-level review. A two-tiered model was proposed in which larger schools would have an option of having a two-tiered review within their school, and would not be obligated to participate in additional levels of review, such as a centralized CPCA. Small schools could be given the option of joining or forming a cluster if they wished, or could rely on a centralized, university-wide committee for their final level of review if they preferred. Faculty members who felt they were not fairly reviewed would have an option to appeal to the university-wide committee.

It was brought up that the Committee previously had discussed that there is no UAlbany, SUNY or UUP policy that requires three levels of review. Support was offered for a model that would allow schools and colleges that have two internal levels of review to choose whether to have tenure and promotion cases go through still a third level of review, or instead rely exclusively on the two internal levels of review. It was suggested that allowing such choice would be consistent with devolving decision-making autonomy to the schools themselves. Another committee member agreed that this suggestion is an attractive model. It was suggested that the cluster model is a good idea, and that schools/colleges

could be given the option to include people from outside their confines for technical and other advice if they wished.

One member summed up the important issues as including:

- 1) whether all academic units have to look the same,
- 2) if no requirement exists to have three levels of review exists, should the individual schools/colleges decide (let them have the freedom to decide) how important it is to have a review outside the school/college, and
- 3) what should the level of review (if any) look like at the university level.

Another member suggested that the subcommittee report should mention that present University policies do not require a third level of review.

Professor Acker reported that Subcommittee had preferred a centralized university review, in part, to help promote consistency in the application of standards across the University, and to ensure consistent adherence to procedures. Some members of the group interpreted that as keeping the tenure and promotion process at the status quo, which they did not believe was desirable.

Additional discussion ensued about the current CPCA process, including the value of such review if decisions made at prior levels rarely are disturbed.

One member suggested that some issues may lend themselves to more final resolution by departments, schools, and colleges. However, other issues transcend local academic units and thus are best considered in a University-wide context.

#### Meeting Conclusion:

The meeting concluded with Professor Acker announcing that next week the Committee should not expect a report from the Research Subcommittee. The committee will hope to receive a report from the Graduate Curriculum and Academic Standing Subcommittee and may continue its discussion on promotion and tenure issues.