

Ad Hoc Ad hoc University-wide Governance Committee

June 30, 2004

Minutes

Present: J. Acker, J. Altarriba (substituting for L. Schell), J. Bartow, B. Carlson, P. Eppard, G. Goatley (substituting for R. Bangert-Drowns), M. Fogelman, R. Geer, T. Hoff, J. Pipkin, B. Via, J. Wyckoff

Minutes: The minutes of June 23, 2004 were approved.

Discussion of committee charge, Faculty Bylaws, Senate Charter and issues concerning graduate curriculum and graduate academic standing, research programs and faculty promotion and continuing appointment:

Professor Acker distributed a document containing relevant portions of the committee's charge and provisions from the Faculty Bylaws and Senate Charter relating to graduate curriculum and graduate academic standing, research, and faculty promotions and continuing appointments. One of the charges of the committee is to examine the Bylaws and Senate Charter. The Bylaws changes would need to be approved by a faculty vote; Charter changes can be made through the Senate.

The committee agreed to focus discussions on each of the three issues within its charge (graduate curriculum and academic standing, research, promotion and tenure) at future meetings. Discussion for the current meeting would be devoted to research, while later meetings will address the other issues.

The discussion about research began with a question about indirect cost returns, including what devolution might mean for indirect cost recovery and whether indirect cost procedures are currently under the oversight of faculty governance. It was suggested that greater autonomy might allow schools and colleges to make a case for the recovery of different percentages of indirect costs. However, another opinion was advanced that the distribution of indirect costs is an administrative or budgetary matter that is outside of this committee's purview.

A suggestion was made that the committee at some point must grapple with giving content to core aspects of its charge, including the meaning to be ascribed to "autonomy" and "policy." A distinction was offered between the formal and the substantive meaning of rules, i.e., the difference between how the rules are written (which might appear to be inflexible and characterized by a "top-down" orientation) and how they actually are applied (which involves considerable discussion, consultation, and shared decision-making).

Another suggestion was offered that the committee's discussions should be organized around two central questions: (1) What would "greater autonomy" mean with respect to each of the issues within the committee's charge and what would be the respective benefits and costs of allowing greater autonomy in each area? and (2) Which "policies" are best made university-wide (or centrally) and which are best made within individual academic units?

Professor Pipkin offered four rationales that could be advanced and should be

examined when considering issues involving shared governance:

1) Quality control. For example, issues of quality control might involve

basic curriculum matters, the promotion and tenuring of faculty colleagues, and

come into play in other "gate-keeping" areas.

2) Impact assessment. In some areas in particular it is true that no unit

within the university is an island unto itself. Changes made in some areas

(e.g., curriculum) could cross school boundaries and affect other units.

3) Symbolic unity. In some areas, it may be especially important that

faculty are and perceive themselves to be working jointly toward common objectives

4) Shared interests in a unity of voice. On some issues it may be particularly important that faculty are able to speak with a single voice.

Several issues should be examined with respect to autonomy on matters involving

research. These areas include: (1) Establishing priorities for research and the

allocation of resources for research (e.g., indirect cost returns, FRAP, etc.);

(2) The creation and review of centers, institutes, and laboratories; (3)

Compliance policies (e.g., IRB, treatment of animal research subjects);
(4)
Efficiency in management of grants and related activities.

Questions were raised about the issues for which it is appropriate for university level review to take precedence. Examples were offered regarding when the Council on Research has an important role to play as an advisory or oversight body. It was suggested that situations do exist where the University might be adversely affected if the Council on Research does not conduct a review, such as compliance matters involving animal and human research subjects.

It was pointed out that teaching and research frequently go hand in hand, so that changes in research policies could affect teaching and the general teaching environment. It also was suggested that questions of efficiency and equity would be raised if individual units all negotiated different policies in areas of research.

Discussion turned to research centers and institutes and implications for greater decentralization. It was pointed out that to the extent such centers compete for external research funds, allowing competition could be desirable. It was suggested that although not all centers are subsidized by university funding, centers commonly rely on university funds for start-up and operating costs, thus making the perspective allowed by a centralized review process especially useful. The Council of Research has been instrumental in the past in ensuring appropriate consultation between and even within academic units concerning the creation of research centers and institutes. It was suggested that the real issue did not involve whether councils like the Council of Research should be eliminated, but rather carefully distinguishing between matters that should be controlled centrally versus locally.

Much support was voiced for a strong centralized body to oversee issues involving compliance. Very significant consequences can ensue throughout the entire university for failure to adhere to regulations in the area of compliance. In addition, there is value added by convening a body representing multiple perspectives, even when the research issues presented to the body involve specific or specialized subject. It was suggested that a case could

even be made for strengthening centralized oversight on compliance issues.

A general point was made that one consequence of devolving responsibility to local units would be to vest comparatively greater power in the deans vis a vis faculty. A different relationship exists between faculty and deans within individual units than between deans and a faculty committee comprised of representatives from throughout the university. Devolving too much authority to local units risks a diminished opportunity for a meaningful voice for faculty governance.

Correspondence

Following the discussion of research issues, a question was raised regarding whether correspondence distributed at a prior meeting had been discussed at the time of its distribution. It was explained that the correspondence had not been discussed but rather offered to committee members so they could read it. A suggestion was made that one of the distributed items had invited the committee to consider issues that were not properly before it.

Future Meetings

The next meeting's discussion will focus on issues related to graduate academic curriculum and graduate academic standing. It was suggested that that each member should come to the meeting with a list of issues that should be explored, and what should be covered or resolved by the conclusion of the discussion. Additional suggestions were welcomed regarding procedures and objectives for future meetings.

It was generally agreed that it would be useful to create three subcommittees (research, graduate curriculum and academic standing, promotions and continuing appointments). The subcommittees would take responsibility for clarifying the issues to be addressed in each area, investigating policies and practices at other institutions, and ultimately summarizing the committee's views about the

issues covered. Committee members were invited to consider proposed structures for the subcommittees, which subcommittee they would like to join, and what peer institutions should be consulted. Professor Acker indicated that he would invite committee members to let him know their preferences for subcommittee assignments.

Professor Acker reported that he has yet to be informed whether Interim President Ryan will be able to accept the invitation to join the committee for discussion on July 14. He reminded members that the July 7 meeting would take place at 3:00 in the Standish Room of the New Science Library on the main campus.

Meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Professor Acker, Chair of the Committee