

**TO:** UFC Agenda Committee  
**FROM:** Craig Dethloff & Erika Dowell  
**SUBJ:** UFC Reform Issues and Initial Recommendations  
**DATE:** January 28, 2011

The University Faculty Council Reform Task Force was assembled during the spring semester of 2010 and given the charge to examine the structure and functioning of the Council to address certain key items of concern. Their report (U5-2011) summarizes those concerns as follows:

Some believe it is insufficiently nimble, taking too long to act of significant matters. Some believe it is too large and that that, among many things, explains difficulties it has had with attendance and, on occasion, getting or holding a quorum. There has been criticism of the effectiveness of its committee structure. On some campuses, it has been difficult to recruit members to represent the campus on the UFC. Knowledge of the UFC's actions, and even interest in its actions, appears to be low among our faculty colleagues which, in turn, adversely effects the ability of the UFC to attract members and the credibility of its actions.

Although the Task Force offered eight recommendations in their final report, the committee provided little in the way of a rationale as to how they believed these recommendations would address the criticisms enumerated above, and largely made a case for maintaining the current structure of the UFC.

This report is intended as an extension of inquiries made by the Faculty Council Office in support of the work of the Task Force and an attempt to examine alternative strategies by which the Council may seek to address some of these same criticisms.

#### 1) Attendance

Attendance at the UFC is a central concern. The number of voting members of the Council as it presently stands is 64, making the minimum number required for a quorum 33. Over the past three years (2007-2010) attendance at the UFC has failed to reach this mark over sixty percent of the time. This number rises to seventy-five percent if the academic year 2007-2008 is not included. This comes also despite the fact that for the past two years, the number of UFC meetings per year has been cut back from seven to four and that, due to videoconferencing and a call-in option, travel has not been a requirement for participation.

The three largest voting blocks of the BFC are the contingents from IU Bloomington (15), IUPUI (14) and the ex officio membership (10). Over the past three years, the attendance numbers of participating ex officio members has held steady at around thirty percent, while IU Bloomington has wavered between forty and sixty percent. IUPUI has shown a sharp decline from eighty-five

percent in 2007-2008 to thirty-eight percent in 2009-2010. The regional campuses have largely held steady with full or nearly full attendance with only IPFW as a notable outlier.

Lack of attendance makes it difficult to achieve the quorum required by the Constitution and hampers the ability of the Council to perform vital, time-sensitive business. It carries with it also the risk of institutional inertia and a vicious spiral of decline. When members attend meetings only to be frustrated by the inability of the Council to take action, it makes them less inclined in the future to devote time to governance matters rather than to their own teaching and research agendas. As mentioned above, reducing the number of meetings and eliminating travel has not led to any appreciable gains in the number of attending members. It is therefore unlikely, that increasing the number of meetings or requiring Council members to travel hours away from their home campuses will prove useful.

Noting that the regional campuses offer the only example of representative groups whose attendance numbers have held steady at full or nearly full levels, a reduction in the number of representatives from IU, IUPUI, and the ex officio ranks of the UFC offers a possible solution to this dilemma. The UFC Agenda Committee already operates efficiently with a reduced membership and therefore should provide, if not the core, at least a reference to which a reformed Council should look. Here are two possible scenarios.

A) Eliminate regular meetings of the UFC while continuing regular meetings of the Agenda Committee.

Meetings of the Agenda Committee are well attended by members from all campuses with frequent positive remarks made about the quality of faculty commitment and collegiality regardless of whether they are held in person or virtually. Accepting that the number of items requiring action by the full Council over the past two years has declined to the point where only four meetings have been enough to accommodate them, and that in three of these four meetings a quorum was not achieved, is an argument *de facto* that full, regular meetings of the UFC are already an exception to the norm. Acknowledging this formally through either through revision to the Constitution and Bylaws or informally through a change in convention would seem a necessary first step before adapting other mechanisms to obtain faculty consultation, discussion and response.

B) Eliminate the current membership structure of the UFC and change the Agenda Committee into an Executive Committee.

Adoption of this change would entail deeper, but not necessarily more difficult, revision to the shape of faculty governance at Indiana University. Among the possible consequences would be to make the representatives on this committee more responsible for representing the views of their campus constituencies in university matters. There would also have to be a rethinking of representation to include undergraduate, graduate and possibly non-tenure-track representation, and there would have to be the institution of a weighted voting system to allow for different faculty populations.

## 2) Standing Committees

We recommend acknowledging that the committees described in the Bylaws Section 8.A.i are no longer standing, but are appointed as circumstances warrant. If there have been difficulties in forming these committees in a timely manner, the changes to the authority of the UFC Agenda Committee may provide for swifter action by that committee directly.

## 3) Agenda Committee

In cases requiring emergency action within a period during which no meeting of the Council is scheduled, including during the summer sessions or when making changes in Faculty Council policies and documents including the Constitution and Bylaws to reflect changes in titles of administrative offices or officers, the Agenda Committee is delegated to act without prior consultation as the executive agent of the UFC. Actions taken by the Agenda Committee as delegated executive agent for the Council require a simple majority. Actions taken by the Agenda Committee as delegated executive agent for the Council may, at the request of an elected representative of the Faculty Council, be reviewed by the Council at its next subsequent meeting and, where feasible, may be overruled by a two-thirds vote of the Council.

## 4) Communication and Engagement

The junior Co-Secretary of the Council will be charged with publishing a statement once per semester informing the faculty of the business of the Council.

## 5) Election Reform

Currently the electoral cycle mandated by the Bylaws of the Council are not followed. Indeed when they were first introduced a motion was made to remove them as unworkable. This measure was overruled, but the objection has since proven to be true. A new task force should be appointed for the specific task of revising the Constitution and Bylaws of the University Faculty Council.