

REPORT OF THE LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE

In the early spring, the Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) of the Bloomington Faculty Council asked the members of the campus faculty to help identify matters of urgency and strategic importance. The responses to this inquiry were, naturally, quite varied, and input was received via formal emails (approx. 50 or so), informal conversation, and confidential communiqués. The report was designed as qualitative in nature and confidential and thus specifics on the responses and details of the responders were not kept. As the responses from faculty arrived, the LRPC met with administrators and staff across the campus, and began the process of sifting through the various issues raised. We met every week of the spring semester, beginning in early January, and quickly came to the conclusion that the central challenge facing the campus faculty was the future of faculty governance. And, in follow-up interviews and conversations, on and off the record, we traced this conclusion to its logical endpoint. Here, we issue a brief, constructive report of the three major concerns of the faculty, as we understand them.

1. RELATIONS WITH THE ADMINISTRATION:

The paramount issue relates to communication between the faculty and the administration. Indeed, the absence of clear and regularly used lines of communication between the faculty and the administration complexifies every other issue, including some with significant greater structural consequences. In general, the functioning and decision making process of the administration remains opaque to most of the faculty. From the perspective of rank and file faculty there seems to be little consistency in how information is gathered and shared, released or kept in confidence. Additionally, there is for them, as well, the appearance of a disjointed communication loop, so that policy issues don't run through a route in the same way that degree proposals do - starting at the department, moving to the school or college, and then to the campus – but instead proceed to be vetted and debated at multiple levels, often in ad hoc groups, often in advance of faculty input.

Relatedly, there is concern on the part of the faculty about the weight the university administration and the Board of Trustees give to the role of faculty in shared governance. Major new initiatives such as the campus master plan and the New Academic Directions process - seem to originate at the very top, and while they are very much aimed at improving the university, their conception and refinement has left little room (in the public eye) for the established and formalized faculty voice and agency. This eschewal of regularized channels in turn is partly a reflection of the need of the university, now more than ever before, to move quickly, to form ad hoc response committees with minimal relationships to the BFC.

At this moment, the faculty seems particularly in the dark about the implementation of the New Academic Directions (NAD) plan. Most respondents seem to believe that this is an administrative directive, disconnected from faculty governance, being "rolled out" over time. There seem to be different aspects of the NAD plan (the proposed School of Public Health and the School of Area and International Studies) in the works with little obvious connection to one another. There is no publicly identified clearinghouse NAD implementation committee connected to the BFC. As another example, within that proposal there are multiple iterations of "public health," all of them interlocking and rapidly evolving, with enormous financial consequences, but without larger public university/faculty conversation.

2. TENURE AND PROMOTION:

Faculty members have a keen interest in the principle of academic tenure, and in the campus criteria and procedures for tenure and promotion. Three short term and longer term challenges confront the faculty with regard to tenure and promotion decisions:

First, and most immediately, new media, shifting disciplinary boundaries and digital technologies for the dissemination of research and creative activity will have an impact on tenure and promotion decisions, in some units more quickly than in others. There should be campus-wide discussions and an accurate dissemination of criteria to candidates, and the committee lauds the efforts of the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs to this end.

Second, proposed changes in the New Academic Directions report are also likely to have an impact on the procedures for tenure and promotion. For example, the impetus to remove barriers to interdisciplinary research motivates an NAD proposal that departments and schools play a different role in some tenure and promotion decisions, and that decision-making defer to the campus or university in some cases. As a longer-term example, the possibility that the university will expand its international presence raises questions about the status of faculty with off-shore appointments. The absence of a New Academic Directions implementation committee makes it difficult to frame conversations about how these recommendations relate to longstanding departmental, school, and campus procedures.

Third and most importantly, these internal challenges have to be addressed in the face of eroding state and national support for the principle of tenure. With this in mind, faculty encouraged us to think about developing a post-tenure review policy. A reminder of the relevant policy might be in order: viz. Policy E-2: "The principle of faculty tenure imposes reciprocal responsibilities on the University as a body politic and on the faculty member. In order to meet its responsibilities to its students and to society, the University must attract and retain a faculty of outstanding quality. To that end the University safeguards academic freedom and economic security by its policy of faculty tenure. The faculty members, on their part, are obligated to maintain high

standards of teaching, research, service, and professional conduct.” With an eye to that last line, the Bloomington faculty might, some suggested, move to develop a post-tenure review process. There is also great concern that the percentage of NTT faculty not increase beyond a certain threshold, as the university can only expect TT faculty at a R1 to conduct the best balance of research, teaching and service. The recent report of the IUB branch of the AAUP indicates that ranks of NTT faculty are growing faster than the ranks of TT faculty. There is related concern about the role of NTT faculty in faculty governance and the LRPC strongly urges units to make clear to their faculty the proportion of tenured and tenure –probationary FTE faculty, clinical and lecturer appointees in accordance policy A-1, which states that, “The faculty of each school shall specify the minimum proportion of tenured and tenure-probationary FTE faculty for that unit, with the base of the proportion derived from the total FTE tenured and tenure-probationary, clinical and lecturer appointees, and the dean of the school shall file this specification with the campus academic officer.”

3. The BFC:

The committee has registered a growing unwillingness to believe that the BFC can assertively represent the interests of the faculty. Respondents point in particular to health care and to the implementation of NAD as examples of the failure of the BFC to safeguard the long-term interests of the faculty. The recent release of the NAD update *after* it was shared with the Trustees, and then without formal discussion between the administration and the BFC or UFC, is both an example of the communications issues mentioned above and a sign that the BFC is not taken seriously on issues not related to the important minutia of classroom and teaching policies. Many faculty members felt that the BFC's focus should be on broader subjects related to the vision and mission of the campus, and not on the minutiae of preapproved administrative dicta.

Voting patterns in the 2012 BFC election suggest a dismal future. Even in a boom year, with the highest voter participation in the last five years, less than 20% of the faculty - just 453 out of 2585 possible participants - voted. Among the tenure-eligible - a key constituency at an R1 - votes were cast by 129 Full Professors, 80 Associate Professors, and only 41 Assistant Professors. At a moment of great urgency, few members of our faculty are voting in the election for the body chosen to represent it in conversations with the administration and the Trustees. Untenured and mid-rank TT faculty members seem increasingly disinvested.

Matthew Guterl, Chair
James Capshew
Deborah Cohn
Lamonda Horton-Stallings
Patricia McManus
Joel Stage

Appendix 1. LRPC Recommendations

1. Initiate a) an internal 'self study' and subsequent to this b) an 'external review' of shared faculty governance at IU. This would include a review of the structure and function of the BFC and related committees and include a critical look at the relationship between the BFC and the administration. Specifically: reflect upon the success and or failures of recent changes (3 yrs.) to the constitution and bylaws and put this into context with external shifts in factors that influence how 'the modern university' operates.
2. Review the potential benefits (and the means for doing so) of providing tangible incentives for all who significantly contribute to faculty governance and those who serve on the BFC (in particular, the President of the BFC, who plays such a critical role in the process of faculty governance).
3. Reconstitute the MRE committee, clearly identify its role and the extent of its authority and distribute minutes to the faculty on a consistent basis.
4. Develop formalized, regular lines of communication between administration/faculty/ BFC. For example explore the use of periodic 'Town halls' and or discrete formal faculty and staff convocations and or 'conventions'.
5. Streamline information sharing such that it's more accessible and convenient to the administration and faculty.
6. Examine the mechanism of advocacy for faculty. Review the intended and unintended outcomes of the decision to eliminate the Dean of Faculties Office.
7. Examine the productivity and teaching accomplishments of post-tenure faculty to see if a post-tenure review policy is indeed needed on this campus.
8. Study the role and contributions of NTT (and develop expectations and parameters for their contributions to department/faculty governance).
9. Reconstitute the External Relations committee and distribute minutes to the faculty on a consistent basis.
10. Take the necessary steps to restore a 'sense of community' to the campus as opposed to simply a 'place where faculty and staff go to work.'

Appendix 2. Procedures Followed by the 2011-2012 LRPC

The committee convened in the fall semester of 2011 with the first task being to revise and review the committee's statement of charge and secondarily solicit input from the faculty and administration concerning priorities for its activities throughout 2011-2012.

It was subsequently agreed by committee members that the LRPC would meet Monday mornings at 9 a.m. throughout the spring 2012 semester.

The committee agreed that the priority for the committee would be to act as a communication channel between the faculty and campus administration.

To do so, on Monday, January 9th, 2012 the committee decided to begin soliciting input from the administration (Trustees, the Provosts, etc.) specifically focusing upon 1) faculty involvement in long range planning and 2) faculty assisting the administration in establishing campus priorities.

The chair of the LRPC, Matt P. Guterl, then met the following day (January 10th 2012) with the Ex Committee of the BFC to solicit support for this. The executive committee and BFC president Carolyn Calloway-Thomas "*endorsed the idea(s), but suggested, wisely, that we write to the faculty first, and then approach the more searching conversations with administration after receiving that feedback.*" (From M. Guterl email, Jan 12, 2012)

The LRPC met first to draft and then approve the request for input and thus on two occasions, Jan 24th, 2012, and Feb 2nd 2012 (with the BFC acting as a facilitator for the LRPC), a global email (IUB-faculty @listserve.indiana.edu) was sent to the faculty, asking for their direct input. The request was as follows:

"Dear Members of the Bloomington Faculty,

In the spring of 2011, the Bloomington Faculty Council enhanced its commitment to proactive governance by expanding the Long Range Planning Committee, and adding its chair to the BFC's Executive Committee. The members of that committee - the LRPC - would like to hear from the Bloomington faculty, and would be interested to learn what the faculty sees as the most important priorities for the BFC and for the LRPC, in the near-term and long-term future."

The faculty were asked to respond to the LRPC through the email link and or contact members of the committee directly with their input.

"Comments, thoughts, and suggestions should be directed to: bfc-lrpc-l@oncourse.iu.edu

Thank you for your support of faculty governance,

Sincerely,

James Capshew

Deborah Cohn

Matthew Pratt Guterl (chair)

LaMonda Horton-Stallings

Patricia McManus

Joel Stager"

Immediately thereafter, input was received by individual committee members as well as by the link provided within the email solicitation.

As this was perceived as the first step in the process and a qualitative exercise, no attempt was made to quantify the number of similar responses or determine any thematic frequency. Responses were received from approximately 50 to 60 faculty members, the majority via email, and supplemented by individual conversations with LRPC members.

Committee members were asked, however, to review the comments and consider ways to organize them into common central themes. The LRPC then met and reviewed each comment as a means *"to categorize the input and select specific portions (of the responses) in order to retrieve administrative input or make into formal action items (for the LRPC)*. LRPC email, March 4th, 2012).

The committee continued to meet through March and April in order to review new faculty input, integrate this with previous input and begin to construct a document that appropriately reflected that input.

A draft of the report back to the BFC and faculty was distributed to the committee on April 18th and subsequently unanimously approved.

The report was sent to Carolyn Calloway-Thomas, Lauren Robel and Tom Gieryn via email on April 23rd 2012.

On April 24, the following email was received by the committee from Calloway –Thomas specifically pertaining to the LRPC document:

"In light of the important concerns that you raise below, I will discuss matters with members of the BFC Executive Committee in keeping with Article III of the Constitution and Bylaws 16A, i-ix. Since the chair of the Long Range Planning Committee serves

as an ex officio voting member, you will, of course, be invited to the meeting. Although the item should not “get bottled up” in the EC, it does require due diligence.”

Additional dialog continued with the Provost and vice provost over the wording of various sections of the report with proposed edits continued for the next several days.

As an example, Vice Provost Gieryn writes to the LRP committee on April 28th 2012: *“If the plan is instead to send out this report to all Bloomington faculty, then the section on NTT faculty should probably be rewritten as well. Our hardworking and veteran lecturers and clinical professors could easily be offended, if not insulted, by the implication that there are too many of them (or that their ranks are growing faster than those of tenure track faculty)”*

The committee and LRPC Chair, however, felt that to significantly edit the report so as not to offend, criticize or insult various administrative or campus factions would cause the report to appear to be unreflective of the input and perspectives of the campus faculty. The LRPC W took what was said seriously and considered these comments and their implications fully.

The final interaction and feedback from the 2011-2012 LRPC Chair to the committee was as follows: *“our report seems hopelessly bottled up”* (M. P. Guterl, May 8th 2012).

The 2012-2013 LRPC has been unwilling to formulate a strategic plan and unable to significantly move forward on the agenda for the year due to the inability to finalize and disseminate last year’s report. Though the committee met several times during the course of the fall semester (including with Herb Terry), it was concerned about undertaking new projects when the product of last year’s efforts remains in limbo.