

Report of the Committee Re-envisioning Faculty Governance
at Indiana University, Bloomington
September 3, 2010

Executive Summary

The committee recommends changes in BFC leadership, elections, meetings, and communication:

1. LEADERSHIP

A. Create an Executive Committee to replace the Agenda Committee and give it the power to act for the full Council when needed.

B. Membership of the Executive Committee would include chairs of four standing committees: Educational Policies, Budgetary Advisory, Faculty Affairs, Long Range Planning.

C. Chairs of all BFC committees will meet with the Executive Committee twice each year.

D. Create positions of President-Elect, President, and Past President, with one-year terms in each office.

E. BFC leadership should meet with governance leaders in the schools twice each year.

2. ELECTIONS

A. Elect BFC President by a vote of the entire faculty, rather than just BFC members.

B. Candidates for the office of President (and later Executive Committee) should provide position statements and/or information in a standard format for the listing relevant experience.

C. Vote electronically.

3. COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

A. Review and update the mission statements of all BFC committees.

B. Reconstitute and redesign the Budgetary Affairs and Long Range Planning Committees.

C. Educational Policies, Faculty Affairs, Budgetary Advisory and Long Range Planning will be designated core Council committees.

4. MEETINGS

A. The BFC Executive Committee will meet weekly.

B. The four major BFC Committees will meet at least once a month and will set fixed meeting times.

5. COMMUNICATION

A. The BFC Secretary will write and circulate executive summaries of each BFC meeting within three days following the meeting.

B. BFC President and Chief of Staff will circulate a one to two page newsletter of Council business to all faculty two to three times per year.

C. The Chief of Staff will take minutes for BFC committee meetings and circulate these to all BFC members. Committees may close their meetings or portions of their meetings. Minutes report the general topic under discussion only.

Report

The committee was charged to address:

defining the authority of the faculty in a specific and operational way. What should we be doing? What is properly within the realm of administration and what is in the realm of faculty? Which actions are properly decided and taken directly by the administration, and which actions should be taken only after consultation with the proper faculty representatives?

Based on a renewed understanding of the purpose of faculty governance, the committee will recommend changes in the offices, structures, and processes that would allow faculty governance to be an effective partner in shared governance of the campus and university. (Circular B18-2010)

In more prosaic terms, the committee sought ways to improve the BFC's nimbleness in handling time-sensitive matters.

The committee met over the summer and conducted telephone interviews with Gary Engstrand, Secretary to the Faculty at the University of Minnesota and William Tierney, Director of the Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis at Stanford University.

The questions about the roles of faculty and administration have no simple answer. Tierney encouraged us to emphasize deliberation and creative conflict rather than consensus. The following recommendations seek to maximize faculty voices at the table, enable debate, and encourage discussion that reaches closure. The BFC should look for ways to initiate discussion, identify and take up challenging issues, and generally help drive the agenda.

To accomplish this, the committee recommends changes in BFC leadership, elections, meetings, and communication:

1. LEADERSHIP

A. Create an Executive Committee to replace the Agenda Committee and give it the power to act for the full Council when needed.

This is specifically designed to increase faculty responsiveness in "emergency" situations, particularly those that require faculty input or action before the BFC can meet as a body. The new ExCom would have expanded membership, doubling the current number from six to twelve to ensure a broader range of expertise. It would adopt the responsibilities of the current Agenda Committee, but have power to act independent of the Council under certain circumstances.

Those actions could be retroactively annulled by the Council, but only by a two-thirds vote. This would provide faculty governance with a credible “quick response” capability in consultative contexts.

The expanded membership would include a president-elect and a past-president, as well as the chairs of four committees, as specified below.

B. Membership of the Executive Committee would include chairs of four standing committees: Educational Policies, Budgetary Advisory, Faculty Affairs, Long Range Planning.

These ex officio voting members of the ExCom would tie critical committee activities and expertise more closely to the Council’s executive arm. The EPC and FAC represent long-standing high-profile groups that drive many of the Council’s legislative initiatives. The semi-independent BAC is the Council’s chief representative body for consultations on current budget issues. The LRPC has not previously been an active committee; we recommend a reconfiguration of its mission to plan and consult with regard to long-term budget-related issues, as a complement to the BAC, as discussed below.

C. Chairs of all BFC committees will meet with the Executive Committee twice each year.

This will encourage awareness of key issues as they develop and increase opportunities for discussion and coordination of BFC activities.

D. Create positions of President-Elect, President, and Past President, with one-year terms in each office.

This would help provide continuity on the Executive Committee, expand the range of experience, and raise the EC’s credibility with administration and trustees. If the presidents are elected popularly, then it would also create an additional basis of legitimacy. To accomplish this, the term of the presidency is shortened to one year, while the total commitment of each elected president would extend to three years. That would mean that only every other president would serve as senior co-secretary to the UFC.

E. BFC leadership should meet with governance leaders in the schools twice each year.

This is in the by-laws but has not been implemented recently.

2. ELECTIONS

A. Elect BFC President by a vote of the entire faculty, rather than just BFC members. Candidates for the office of President should provide position statements, to be posted online during the voting period.

This provision is designed to promote faculty engagement, to ensure that opportunities will exist for important issues to be discussed in a faculty-wide forum each year, and to add to legitimacy

of faculty governance by leading to a contingent of three BFC officers elected by the full faculty serving on the Executive Committee. Presidents elected in this way would hold the title “President of the Faculty.” As is the case in the current system (though not explicitly stated in the current Bylaws), nominees would be designated by the Nominations Committee. The committee has not made a recommendation concerning the electorate for the office of President of the Faculty (specifically, whether it should include faculty other than those listed under sections 1.1 and 1.2 of the Constitution), but notes that this is a matter that should be resolved by the BFC and made explicit in the Constitution.

B. Candidates for the offices of Secretary, Parliamentarian, and at-large elected Executive Committee *all elected by the incoming Council from among its members*, should provide position statements and/or a standard format for the listing relevant experience.

This would allow incoming Council members, who may have no personal knowledge of the candidates recruited by the Nominations Committee for these positions, to make better informed choices.

C. Vote electronically.

This would make dissemination of information about candidates easier; it could also clarify who votes in which races and possibly increase participation. Cost estimates for e-voting from several years ago indicated that initial development costs would be recovered by reducing the cost of paper ballots in three years or less.

3. COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

A. The mission statements of all BFC committees should be reviewed and updated to reflect both current practices and any revised roles for the future.

B. The Budgetary Affairs and Long Range Planning Committees should be redesigned to complement one another, the BAC focusing on short-term campus budget issues, particularly for the current and upcoming years, with the LRPC working consultatively with the administration on long-term issues, including budgetary affairs. Committee memberships should overlap.

In recent years BAC attention has been restricted to questions of Provost Fund allocation and the LRPC role has declined. Establishing a broader and richer pattern of consultative work with the administration on budgetary and other key planning issues will create the basis for governance that can be well-informed and responsive. Although it is not fully within the scope of the BFC, we also strongly recommend that the BAC and LRPC be well articulated with the Capital Priorities Committee, a campus committee with BFC representation. As the seat of long-range planning and short-term renovation on the IUB capital plant, the issues that face Capital Priorities should be integrated with other budgetary and major planning processes.

C. The following BFC committees should be designated as core Council committees: Educational Policies, Faculty Affairs, Budgetary Advisory, Long Range Planning. The Nomination Committee should make particular efforts to ensure that recruited membership in

these committees provides the expertise, experience, and commitment necessary to make them effective.

We have singled out these four committees because of their broadly important portfolios. The EPC and FAC have historically generated a disproportionate amount of BFC business, while the BAC has functioned as a semi-autonomous arm of the Council. With redesign, the LRPC would join that group of key committees. More specialized committees – Fringe Benefits, Library, and so forth – also require expertise and commitment, but with narrower portfolios.

4. MEETINGS

A. The BFC Executive Committee will meet weekly.

This was past practice, every other week's meeting being with the Provost, which is what we recommend. It may make sense to stipulate that the four ex officio committee chairs who are members of the ExCom attend only a subset of meetings by default.

B. The four major BFC Committees will meet at least once a month and will set meeting times and places fixed from year to year.

This is part of an effort to raise the profiles of these committees. By establishing regular meeting frequencies and times, faculty interested in service can plan their teaching schedules accordingly and relevant administrators will be better able to arrange participation. Fixing the location will ensure room availability and help institutionalize the activities of these committees.

5. COMMUNICATION

Recommendations in this section are intended to increase faculty knowledge of and potential involvement in BFC activities.

A. The BFC Secretary will write and circulate executive summaries of each BFC meeting within 3 days following the meeting. (The posting of verbatim minutes will continue.)

This revives an earlier custom. It will permit faculty to get a snapshot view of BFC activities from a colleague who can highlight points of importance in a way that verbatim minutes cannot. We are envisioning an email normally of perhaps 2-3 screens in length.

B. BFC President and Chief of Staff will circulate a one to two page newsletter of Council business to all faculty two or three times per year.

This is designed to increase the governance contribution to faculty collegiality. The only all-faculty newsletter currently produced at IUB is the AAUP Report, prepared by an extra-governmental faculty group. A BFC newsletter would also keep a popularly elected president in touch with a faculty constituency.

C. The Chief of Staff will take minutes for BFC committee meetings and circulate these to all BFC members. The goal of the minutes shall be to disseminate important information developed in committee before reports or action recommendations reach the BFC floor, although when confidentiality is essential for committees to function properly, committees may close their meetings or portions of their meetings, such that minutes report the general topic under discussion only. [This will be phased in, starting with just a few committees.]

The BFC office, including the Chief of Staff and hourly employees, currently provides staffing for many BFC committees, but minutes are not invariably maintained and are not circulated broadly. We recommend stipulating the Chief of Staff's involvement in the four core Council committees and ensuring that the record-keeping process is more regular and, unless confidentiality is required, more transparent.

The BFC President will prepare a document presenting the Standard Practices of the BFC to provide guidance on carrying out the activities required or implied in the BFC Constitution and By-Laws and in past practice.

The Committee has drafted revised language for the Constitution and By-Laws to implement these changes.

Members of the Committee:

Erika Dowell, President pro Tempore of the Bloomington Faculty Council, Chair

Robert Eno

Donald Hossler

Jane McLeod

Debora Shaw

Attachments:

1. Suggested revisions in the Constitution
2. Suggested revisions in the Bylaws