

Recommendations of the Taskforce on Indiana University Faculty Governance

Fall 2011

INTRODUCTION

In March, the University Faculty Council (UFC) directed a taskforce to review and revise recommendations to give Indiana University a more effective university-wide faculty governance structure. This follows a review by a similar taskforce in 2010, whose recommendations were not accepted by the UFC. The current taskforce was asked to conduct the review within a framework adopted by the UFC (Appendix A). We make a number of recommendations, whose adoption will require significant amendments to both the constitution and bylaws governing university-wide faculty governance.

BACKGROUND

CURRENT STRUCTURE OF UNIVERSITY-WIDE FACULTY GOVERNANCE

The current structure is delineated in the IU Faculty Constitution and in the Bylaws of the University Faculty Council, but current practice diverges from these documents in a number of significant ways.

The University Faculty Council voting members are as follows¹:

1. The President of Indiana University
2. The Vice President for Research
3. The Chancellors and Provost
4. The campus faculty governance leaders
5. One representative for every 100 voting faculty or major fraction thereof
 - a. The current numbers of representatives in this category are:
 - i. Bloomington 15
 - ii. Indianapolis 14
 - iii. South Bend 2
 - iv. All others 1
6. Student representatives – 6

The President of the University is the presiding officer of the UFC². A majority of voting members must be present to do business³. The UFC is required to meet at least once in each of the Fall and Spring semesters⁴.

The Agenda Committee of the UFC has the following membership⁵:

¹ Constitution Article 4.1; Bylaws 4A

² Constitution 4.4.C

³ Bylaw 3

⁴ Constitution 4.5

1. The campus faculty governance leaders
2. Additional representatives from Bloomington (2), Indianapolis (2) and the regional campuses (1) elected by the members of the UFC.

The “political leaders” of the UFC are the Co-Secretaries⁶. They are *de facto* the faculty governance leaders from Bloomington and Indianapolis, although the Bylaws specify that they should be elected annually by the Agenda Committee. They are designated as co-chairs of the Agenda Committee.

All business requiring faculty action at the university level requires action by the UFC or by a meeting of the University Faculty and confirmation by mail ballot of the faculty.

THE ROLE OF FACULTY GOVERNANCE AT THE UNIVERSITY LEVEL

Through discussions at the UFC over the last few years and the work of this and the previous taskforce, there is a clear consensus as to what the structures of faculty governance ought to accomplish:

- Represent the “voice” of the Indiana University faculty as a whole to both internal (Trustees, administration, students) and external (public, ICHE, General Assembly) constituents;
- Formulate policy for areas subject to faculty authority, where it is necessary or desirable that policy be applied university-wide;
- Provide advice to the administration and Trustees as needed;
- Ensure clear and frequent communication between the various campus faculty councils/senates on matters of common interest.

RECENT PROBLEMS LEADING TO THIS REVIEW

This review is the result of widespread awareness that IU faculty governance is not fulfilling the objectives listed above. There are a number of problems that appear to prevent effective faculty governance that are discussed below:

Lack of faculty engagement with the work of UFC. This is really the fundamental problem that underlies most of the others, and itself is attributable to a number of factors. Some are changes in the expectations of faculty and the demands on their time, and any future for faculty governance must accept this new reality. This issue is common to faculty governance everywhere, and to governance at the campus level. However, it is clear that this disengagement is significantly worse at the UFC level than at the campus level. Faculty are unaware of issues or policies under discussion at UFC. They are ignorant of the role played by UFC. In many cases, this ignorance extends to faculty who are otherwise quite engaged in their campus faculty governance. UFC attendance is poor (so poor that very few recent meetings have achieved a quorum). Council members often read documents for the first time

⁵ Constitution 4.4; Bylaw 5

⁶ Bylaws 5 & 6

at council meetings where they are supposed to vote on them, and certainly before they have had an opportunity to canvass opinion on their home campus. Addressing this problem is partly a matter of better communication. Changes in UFC structure to improve efficiency and timeliness suggested below could indirectly help to address this problem, for example by increasing the weight given to UFC action by the administration.

Inability of the UFC to do business in a timely manner. Relying on the full UFC to act on business often leads to delay. This has become particularly problematic since poor attendance frequently means a quorum is not present. This increases the tendency for individual campuses to formulate policy independently, leading to conflicting policy and practice across the university. It also increases the tendency of the central administration to operate independently of the faculty and increases the risk of conflict and the tendency to further marginalize the UFC.

Lack of administration engagement with UFC. The factors above have contributed to a disengagement of the administration from the UFC. In general, contact between campus administrations and campus faculty governance structures is robust and there are productive and regular discussions on a range of issues. Administration-faculty dialogue is sporadic at best at the university level.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address these problems we recommend both changes in the structure of UFC and changes in practice to help assure healthy operation of these structures. Current provisions of the Constitution and Bylaws that are not addressed below would continue unchanged.

THE STRUCTURE OF UNIVERSITY FACULTY GOVERNANCE.

We recommend a number of changes to the IU Faculty Constitution and the UFC bylaws that are intended to streamline the operation of the UFC, while retaining strong faculty representation from all campuses. Amendments to the Faculty Constitution and to the UFC Bylaws will be required to give effect to our many of our structural recommendations. Amendments are detailed in Appendix B.

1. The UFC

- a. **Composition of the UFC** *The following recommendations are intended to address the problem of attendance and quorum at UFC meetings by decreasing the number of voting members to the minimum needed to afford representation of faculty on all campuses. Changing the basis for representation from 100 to 200 decreases the size of the council to a manageable 30 members, and still retains a reasonable ratio of faculty to representatives for all campuses. The large fraction of administrative representatives has been a barrier to achieving a quorum in recent years, so removal of voting privileges is recommended. The UFC is the*

principle interface between the faculty and the President of IU, so we recommend that the President continue to be the presiding officer of the council. The number of student members is reduced along with the size of the council.

- i.** We recommend that the number of elected faculty members of the UFC be reduced. Each campus would elect one representative for every 200 voting faculty or major fraction thereof, instead of 100 as at present. This would give a total of 21 elected representatives with the current number of voting faculty (Bloomington 8; Indianapolis 6; regional campuses 1 each).
- ii.** We recommend retaining the eight faculty governance leaders as voting members of the UFC.
- iii.** We recommend that the number of student representatives be decreased to two, representing the undergraduate and graduate students respectively. Student members would be voting members. The All-University Student Association would decide how these representatives should be chosen.
- iv.** We recommend that the President of the University be the presiding officer of the UFC, with the ability to vote only if necessary to break a tie.
- v.** We recommend that the administrative officers listed in Bylaw 4A have membership with voice but no vote.
- vi.** A majority of voting members (categories i-iii above) would constitute a quorum to do business.

b. Meetings of the UFC *The number of regularly scheduled meetings is reduced to diminish the time burden for UFC members. For a meeting of the size of the UFC, technology does not yet afford a good format for discussion among the members, so we recommend that the meetings be in-person.*

- i.** We recommend that the UFC meet only once each semester, in November and April. We strongly recommend that members attend in person. The university should defray travel expenses to make this possible. As presiding officer, the President's attendance is expected and UFC meetings should have the same priority as Trustees meetings in her/his schedule.

2. Executive Committee

a. Name and Composition *The Agenda Committee has functioned well with its current composition, and any reduction in representation would either eliminate representation for some campuses or distort the*

balance between large and small campuses. The name change reflects the expanded role for the committee outlined below.

- i.** We recommend that the Agenda Committee be re-named as the Executive Committee, to reflect its expanded role.
- ii.** We recommend that the composition of the committee not be changed (8 faculty presidents, 5 members elected from the UFC membership).
 - 1.** Elected UFC representatives from the Bloomington campus will elect 2 members of the Executive Committee from amongst themselves.
 - 2.** Indianapolis UFC representatives will elect 2 members of the Executive Committee from amongst themselves.
 - 3.** Regional campus elected representatives will elect 1 member of the Executive Committee from amongst themselves.
 - 4.** Election may be at a caucus of the representatives or by other means (e.g. email discussion) as is most convenient.

b. Meetings *The Executive Committee is the best forum for frequent and candid discussion between the IU President and faculty leadership from all campuses. It is important that meetings be reasonably frequent.*

- i.** We recommend that the Executive Committee meet monthly during the school year.
- ii.** The President of the University will preside over Executive Committee meetings. The Executive Committee may, if it so chooses, meet in the absence of the President, in which case the senior Co-Secretary will preside.

c. Role and Powers *The Executive Committee is given expanded powers to facilitate the conduct business between UFC meetings. Safeguards are built in to ensure that if there is disagreement or a need for wider discussion, matters will be referred to a full UFC meeting. Certain matters affecting the structure or rules of faculty governance are of necessity matters for the full UFC.*

- i.** The Executive Committee would be the official faculty advisory body for the President of the University.
- ii.** The Executive Committee determines the agenda for UFC meetings. The UFC agenda and associated documents should be finalized by the Executive Committee and distributed a minimum of two weeks prior to the UFC meeting to allow for discussion on the campuses.
- iii.** Similarly, the Executive Committee should distribute its own agenda to all UFC members at least one week in advance of the Executive Committee meeting, especially if it is proposed to take action under (iv) below.

- iv.** To expedite action on non-controversial proposals and policy revisions, the Executive Committee should be empowered to take any action that falls within the authority of the UFC, provided that:
- 1.** There is unanimous consent of the Executive Committee (including the President);
 - 2.** Following a brief remonstrance period (seven calendar days, not including university holidays), not more than five members of the UFC have notified the UFC office of their opposition to the proposed action; and
 - 3.** During the same remonstrance period, no campus faculty governance leader notifies the UFC office that her/his campus requests reconsideration of the proposal.

Otherwise, the proposal shall go into effect as though it had been passed at a full meeting of the UFC. This includes policy approvals and faculty approval for honorary degrees. However, the following UFC actions would always require a vote at a full UFC meeting: Actions under section 2.4.c.4 of the faculty constitution (limiting power of campus faculties); Amendment to the UFC Bylaws; Proposed amendments to the faculty constitution.

- 3. Committees** *The UFC standing committees have ceased to function as intended. There is a limited set of business that requires appointment of a UFC committee. The appropriate venue for in depth discussion of particular issues is best determined by the Executive Committee on an ad hoc basis.*
- a.** All the standing committees listed in Bylaw 8.A.1 should be abolished.
 - b.** The Honorary Degrees Committee is retained.
 - c.** The Executive Committee should refer proposals to one of the following for discussion:
 - i.** Campus faculty council/senate standing committees
 - ii.** Ad hoc UFC committees appointed by the Executive Committee. These committees would naturally include members of relevant campus committees. To facilitate this, the UFC office should keep current rosters of standing committees on all campuses.

BEST PRACTICE FOR IU FACULTY GOVERNANCE

The committee notes that structural changes alone cannot produce a system that functions well and the culture of engagement, ownership, responsibility and productive dialogue that should characterize good faculty governance. We suggest below some aspects of best practice that should be adopted to strengthen the institutions of faculty governance.

1. ***Better Communication and Advanced Planning*** Campus faculty governance leaders should ensure that all matters on which the UFC or its Executive Committee propose to act have been communicated to appropriate bodies on their campuses (faculty council/senate, appropriate committees) before action is taken. This means that the Executive Committee will need to anticipate business that may come before the council well ahead, so that there is time to have discussion on all campuses. There is a reciprocal responsibility for campuses to communicate matters that may require UFC action as soon as it is recognized that such action is necessary or desirable. Better awareness and communication of issues under active discussion between campuses is the critical element here. A planning of the Executive Committee ahead of the fall semester each year, at which upcoming business could be anticipated and plans for the year developed, would be useful.
2. ***Better Informed Representatives*** Faculty governance leaders should ensure that UFC representatives are well informed about pending issues and business. One method is to have regular meetings of the UFC representatives on each campus (clearly, this is more important at Bloomington and Indianapolis).
3. ***Better Informed Faculty*** The UFC needs to improve the way it communicates its activities and its importance to the faculty at large. The UFC Office should develop a regular means of communication with faculty – email newsletter etc. Campus faculty governance should include information about UFC activities in their communications with faculty. The UFC and campus faculty governance should work hard to ensure that faculty as a whole take an interest and an active part in governance.
4. ***Acknowledgement of the Role of Faculty Governance by the Administration*** These reforms are designed to enhance the decision-making ability of the UFC. But they will be ineffective if the UFC is not acknowledged as the voice of the faculty by the Trustees, President and Administration. Other bodies (The Alliance of Distinguished and Titled Professors, for example) are not representative of the faculty, and should not be regarded as such. Faculty will only take an interest in governance mechanisms when they are seen to have an impact on key issues at the university level. When the university is operating in a healthy, effective way, this should be routine. Meaningful service in faculty governance merits recognition when decisions are made on promotion and tenure or on merit raises.

University Faculty Council Reform Issues, Revised Recommendations
March 29, 2011

This document attempts to summarize a developing consensus on the reform of the UFC based on recommendations from two documents (cited below) and related discussion at meetings of the UFC. It is intended to inform the work of a new task force which will revise the Constitution and Bylaws of the University Faculty Council in time for a vote in the fall of 2011. Some recommendations can be implemented without any revision to the Constitution and Bylaws.

1. UFC Membership

Shrink the size of the Council by at least one third, by adjusting representation from IU Bloomington, IUPUI, student, and ex-officio ranks. Each regional campus should be allotted two representatives, at minimum. Preserve proportional representation through weighted voting, if necessary.

2. UFC Agenda Committee

Authorize the Agenda Committee to act on behalf of the UFC on any matter under the UFC's authority. Define appropriate parameters for such action, including a defined quorum, voting requirements, and remonstrance procedures. Preserve proportional representation through weighted voting, if necessary.

3. Quorum & participation

Set up structures online to encourage activity and discussion between official meetings.

Develop policy and/or procedure for asynchronous online voting to ameliorate problems attaining a quorum.

4. Meetings

Plan three UFC meetings per year, with the first meeting being the annual State of the University address by the University President. Whenever possible hold meetings in person, at the Indianapolis campus.

Shorten meeting times to a maximum of two hours, preferably 2:30 to 4:30 pm, on Tuesday.

Plan meetings of the UFC Agenda Committee monthly, with the University President whenever possible. Whenever possible hold meetings in person, at the Indianapolis campus.

Discontinue the practice of holding Agenda Committee meetings immediately preceding meetings of the full Council.

Plan teleconference meetings of the Agenda Committee approximately two weeks ahead of the meetings of the full Council. Circulate the meeting agenda one week before the meeting, to encourage online discussion and give time for members to consult on their campuses.

5. Election reform

Revise the election cycle currently mandated by the Bylaws of the UFC to develop realistic election policies. Current policy is unworkable and not observed.

6. Standing committees

These recommendations do not cover the role of standing committees, an issue which has not received enough discussion to merit the proposal of a consensus view.

DOCUMENTS

Circular U5-2011

UFC Task Force Recommendations, November 30, 2010

<http://www.indiana.edu/~ufc/docs/circulars/AY11/U5-2011.pdf>

Memo, Dethloff & Dowell, Proposal for the Reform of UFC, January 28, 2011

<http://www.indiana.edu/~ufc/docs/addDocs/AY11/UFCMemo.pdf>