



Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Faculty Governance

August 26, 2013

Shared governance is a fundamental characteristic of the university. In 1966, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) adopted the Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities that describes general principles outlining the roles of faculty, administrators and governing boards. According to the AAUP (1994) the views of the faculty should be given the greatest weight in those areas in which faculty have the greatest expertise and responsibility. Thus, the faculty has primary responsibility for academic concerns including

- Curriculum
- Methods of instruction
- Subject matter
- Policies for admitting students
- Standards of student competence
- Maintenance of suitable environment for learning
- Aspects of student life that relate to the educational process

In addition, the faculty also has primary responsibility for issues related to faculty work life and professional responsibilities, including but not limited to

- Standards of faculty competence
- Research
- Faculty status

BACKGROUND

Western Kentucky University has a long-standing commitment to a collegial system of shared governance. From 1965 to 2000 the faculty of WKU were represented by a dual system of governance in which curriculum matters were overseen by the Academic Council while issues related to faculty work life were overseen by the Faculty Senate. In AY 2000 – 2001, following the recommendation of the Fisher Report, this structure was replaced by a single body, the University Senate.

The University Senate currently has four standing committees. The curriculum duties previously under the purview of the Academic Council are now handled by the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, the Graduate Council, the Colonnade Committee (previously the General Education Committee) and the Academic Quality Committee. The matters that were previously under the purview of the Faculty Senate are now overseen by the Faculty Welfare and Professional Responsibilities Committee and, when applicable, by the Academic Quality Committee.

At its March 2010 meeting, the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee voted to form an ad hoc committee¹ to examine faculty curriculum and governance at WKU. At the April 2010 meeting, the Chair of the University Senate broadened the scope of the committee to include a full examination of the governance process. At that time, Andrew McMichael, committee chair, noted that there was a widespread perception on the part of the faculty and administration that the current governance process, including the curriculum process, was ineffective and moreover, that it was unlikely to be made more effective through mere modification.

In November 2010, the committee surveyed faculty members who had served as members of governance committees. A total of 68 responses were collected. One of the dominant themes to emerge from this survey was the perception that there is too little time or resources in the current structure to adequately address both curriculum issues and faculty welfare issues. This concern led the committee to consider a return to the previous system in which these issues were handled by two separate governance bodies. In March of 2011, a single-item survey was administered to the entire faculty assessing preference for the current, single body governance structure versus the previous system. Sixty percent of the respondents indicated that they somewhat, or strongly, preferred a system in which curriculum is reviewed by one body and non-curricular issues are reviewed by a second, separate body.

In the spring of 2011, the Senate created a second ad hoc committee charged with the task of outlining this new structure. In meeting this charge, the committee extensively considered the strengths and weakness of current and past structures. The attached documents describe a new structure that ideally, will meet the needs of a changing university.

OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED STRUCTURE

In brief, the proposal describes two bodies, the Academic Council and the Faculty Senate. The Academic Council, working through its standing committees, will ensure high quality academic quality and standards throughout the University. The Council will review proposals brought to it from the college curriculum committees and make recommendations on all matters related to academic quality and standards. One of the most frequent complaints about our current system is the perception that curriculum approval is slow. The committee determined that curriculum should be reviewed by a university-wide group of faculty, even though this does tend to slow the approval process. However, the proposed system would streamline the approval process by having all curricular standing committees beyond the college level working in parallel and resolving concerns when the entire Council meets (see figure in Academic Council Bylaws).

¹ Original committee members: Andrew McMichael, Paul Markham, Julie Shadoan, Michelle Hollis, Douglas Smith, Robert Dietle, Nevil Speer, Dawn Bolton, Larry Snyder, Sherry Powers and Kelly Madole.

The second governance body, the Faculty Senate, working through its standing committees, will function as the official representative voice of the faculty on matters relating to faculty status, faculty responsibilities and welfare, academic requirements and policies not otherwise under the purview of the Academic Council. The current proposal represents an attempt to broaden the scope and responsibilities of the standing committees and establish communication between the Senate and the numerous University committees with faculty representation.

Both bodies will have departmental representatives and college at large representatives. An issue that is often raised about faculty participation in governance is the need for some level of institutional memory among the faculty representatives. In order to better meet that need, the proposed term of membership has been set at 3 years, with no term limits. In addition, elections will be staggered, so that only 1/3 of the membership will be eligible for election each year.

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON FACULTY GOVERNANCE

Sharon Mutter, Chair (Psychology)

Mark Baum (Professional Studies)

Jim Berger (EALR, representing Academic Affairs, non-voting)

Mel Borland (Economics)

Brian Coutts (Library Public Services)

Robert Dietle (History)

Gordon Emslie (Academic Affairs, non-voting)

Claus Ernst (Mathematics)

Said Ghezal (Professional Studies, Business Management)

Cindy Houston (Teacher Education, Graduate Council)

Kelly Madole (past University Senate Chair, non - voting)

Julie Shadoan (Professional Studies, Paralegal Studies)

John White (Public Health)

PROPOSED TIMELINE AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REVIEW

Recommendations on the review process for the proposals of the ad hoc committee on Faculty Governance are listed below:

Phase 1 (Fall Semester 2013): Consultation with University Senate Executive Committee and WKU Faculty:

In August 2013, the ad hoc committee on Faculty Governance will submit its report to the University Senate Executive Committee for review and comments.

The SEC will post the report on the Senate website and invite faculty to read and comment on the proposals.

In October, the SEC will sponsor at least one public forum to allow faculty to comment and suggest changes to the proposal. For full consideration, suggestions for amendments to the proposal should be submitted to the Senate Chair in writing.

NOTE: The SEC will be responsible for evaluating all faculty comments and suggestions.

After the public forum, the SEC will review faculty comments and consult with the ad hoc committee on changes to the proposal. The SEC has the final authority to amend the proposal as it desires and the SEC (or persons the SEC delegates) will have the responsibility to make changes to the proposal to bring it into final form.

The SEC will forward the proposal, amended if necessary, to the full Senate with its recommendation.

Phase 2 (January and February 2014): The University Senate considers the proposal during the first two meetings of 2014.

At this point in the process, we recommend that:

- the Senate consider the entire proposal as a whole;
- the Senate have two readings of the proposal and vote on whether to accept the proposal after the second reading;
- the Senate specify that there will be no rewriting, editing, or amending the proposal on the floor during the voting process;
- in the event the Senate rejects the proposal, the Senate must decide whether it wants to continue efforts to create a new governance structure.

Phase 3 (February - March 2014): If the Senate approves the proposal, it will sponsor at least one public forum to allow faculty to discuss the final version of the proposal. After this forum, the Senate will hold a faculty referendum in March 2014. If the

proposal is approved by 2/3 of votes cast by 75% of the faculty who are eligible to vote, the charters of the new governance structure will go to the April meeting of the Board of Regents for approval. After BOR approval, elections will be held in late April or the beginning of May and the new governance structure will go into effect in Fall 2014.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR CHANGES IN FACULTY GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE AND PROCESS

1. Structure
 - a. Two governance bodies
 - i. Academic Council (AC)
 - ii. Faculty Senate (FS)
2. Function
 - a. FS
 - i. New section for Academic Affairs policies
3. Composition
 - a. AC & FS
 - i. One departmental representative and at-large representation equal to 8% of full-time faculty in the college
 - b. AC
 - i. Non-voting advisory members organized into an Instructional Council
 - c. FS
 - i. Ex Officio Membership does not include a member from Staff Council
4. Term of Membership (AC & FS)
 - a. Three years, no term limits
 - b. Only one-third of representatives change at any election. Terms are staggered after the initial election by randomly assigning members to serve 2, 3, or 4 years (i.e., 1/3 of the first members will be replaced or re-elected after two years, then three years, and so on).
5. Officers
 - a. AC
 - i. Chair and Vice Chair
 - b. FS
 - i. Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary
6. Faculty Governance Administrative Assistant to perform various administrative tasks for both AC and FS
7. Standing Committees Added or Changed
 - a. AC
 - i. Undergraduate Curriculum Committee
 1. Now receives all UG proposals directly from college curriculum committees, including those with Professional Education component
 2. Includes a member of the Professional Education Committee in an advisory role
 - ii. Graduate Curriculum Committee
 1. Now receives all Grad proposals from college curriculum committees, including those with Professional Education component

- 2. Includes a member of the Professional Education Committee in an advisory role
- b. FS
 - i. Added Fiscal Affairs Committee
- 8. Faculty Representation on Other Committees
 - a. FS
 - i. Faculty Handbook Committee reports to Faculty Welfare and Professional Responsibilities standing committee
 - ii. Guidelines for appointment to Advisory Committee on Faculty Continuance and Tenure, an Advisory Committee on Faculty Grievance, and a University Complaint Committee are now in the Faculty Handbook and so were removed from FS Bylaws.
- 9. Proposal Process
 - a. AC
 - i. Parallel Review Process
 - 1. All proposals, including those with a professional education component, are forwarded from the college curriculum committees directly to the Faculty Governance Administrative Assistant who will review them for compliance with AC guidelines.
 - 2. Compliant proposals will be posted to the Council website and the Chair of the Council will route them simultaneously to the Instructional Council, one or more of the standing committees, as appropriate and to the Chair of the Faculty Senate, as appropriate.
 - 3. Edits, comments, and recommendations from each committee will be posted to the master copy.
 - 4. The chair will review the edited master copy and any conflicts between committees will be addressed at the next Executive committee meeting. Proposals with unresolved conflicts will go back to the college for revision.
 - ii. Provost review and report responsibilities outlined.
 - b. FS:
 - i. Provost and president review and report responsibilities outlined.