

May 29, 2009

To: Whom It May Concern

From: Jonathan E. Hill, Chair, Faculty Governance Committee, 2008-09

Subj: Report on the Work of the Faculty Governance Committee, 2008-09

2008-09 was the first year of life for the Faculty Governance Committee. The FGC was one of the new faculty committees brought into existence by the recent overhaul and reorganization of the faculty committee and governance system. It inherited and absorbed responsibilities from several former committees, namely, the Review and Planning Committee, the Nominating Committee, and the faculty side of the Regents-Faculty Committee. It also inherited unresolved agenda items, notably from the first of these committees, relating to faculty elections.

The record of the FGC's handling of the matter of faculty elections, the principal focus of its work for the year, can be found in the seven motions (FGC 08/09, 02-04 and 06-09) that the FGC brought to the faculty for their approval. The FGC presented the first three at the December 4, 2008 meeting, and the last four at the May 7, 2009 meeting. The faculty approved all of these motions.

The December motions called for three practical changes in the condition of service on and the election to faculty committees. First, terms of office on all elected faculty committees, except for the Tenure and Promotion Committee, were reduced from three to two years. Second, electronic voting was adopted in place of paper ballots. Third, in the future, victory in faculty (and Faculty) elections will be decided on the basis of a plurality rather than a majority of votes (i.e. the person with the most votes will win). The green sheet versions of these motions, to be found on the college website under Faculty Meetings, contain the full rationales for each of these motions.

Having in the fall prepared new electoral procedures, in the spring the FGC spent most of its time preparing for the all-faculty elections in April. It found what so many erstwhile Nominating Committees had experienced in the past: it is a challenge to find a sufficient number of faculty available and willing to stand for election and make up complete slates. But the committee succeeded, and put together a uniformly strong set of slates, (just) in time for the April 2 faculty meeting. Thereafter, the five individual Faculty representatives on the FGC went back to their respective Faculties to help organize their elections.

It was clear before the individual Faculty elections took place that the manner in which Faculty elections were, according to the *Faculty Manual*, to be organized, independent of the FGC, was unsatisfactory. The procedure was a hangover from the days of a separate

faculty Nominating Committee; with the creation of the FGC the procedures represented was a poor use of faculty time. Individual Faculty Nominating Committees in their search for candidates were simply going over the same ground as had already been covered by the FGC. Accordingly, at the May 7 faculty meeting, the FGC proposed a motion that the FGC, rather than individual Faculties, conduct Faculty elections in the future.

One of the important side benefits of this change is that the FGC, now responsible for all elections, both at large and Faculty, will stand a better chance of ensuring various kinds of balance on faculty committees beyond those stipulated in the *Faculty Manual*. Ideally, it will seek to ensure balance in such areas as gender, Faculties, departments, experience and expertise, department representation, tenured and untenured, recent and more established faculty, and so forth.

The matter of balance will need constant attention by the FGC. It had already become a problem this past year as certain weaknesses or oversights in the design of the new committee system revealed themselves. One was in the personnel of the Curriculum Committee: it had a dearth of tenured members. Accordingly, the FGC introduced a motion at the May faculty meeting stipulating that of the twelve faculty on the Curriculum Committee, there should be at least one tenured member from each Faculty. In this motion, the FGC brought the stipulated proportion of tenured faculty on the Curriculum in line with that of other major committees. This kind of fine-tuning of the membership of faculty committees, and the improvement of wording in the *Faculty Manual*, will doubtless continue in the future.

At the May meeting, the FGC also proposed that in future it should appoint, rather than run an election for, the Parliamentarian and the Secretary to the faculty.

In both the fall and spring semesters the FGC took on another of its roles—to form from its own membership the five-person faculty portion of the Regents-Faculty Conference Committee. Rather than choosing five of its members to take on this task for the whole of the year, the FGC decided to set the precedent of choosing five members on the occasion of each Regents meeting. This flexible method spreads the responsibility of the task, allows Regents to meet with a broader range of faculty, and ensures that only those FGC faculty whose own schedules allow them to attend the meetings are selected for the task. It worked well, as did the presence on the FGC of the Observer to the Board of Regents and the Observer-Elect.

The FGC this past year comprised a genial, attentive and committed group of faculty who saw their efforts rewarded with constructive legislation and motions that were all successful in faculty meetings. To judge from its first year of existence, the FGC is a committee with a strong and effective future.

Jonathan E. Hill
Chair, FGC 2008-09

Copy: James McKeel, Chair, FGC 2009-10

Appendix A: Committee Membership 2008-09

Taylor Brorby (replaced Erik Lane, Spring 2009) – Student
 Paddy Dale (replaced Mark Schelske, Spring 2009) –SS 2009
 Robert Entenmann – IGS 2009
 Tina Garrett – At Large 2010
 Jonathan Hill, Chair – HUM 2009
 Kris McPherson – At Large 2011
 James McKeel – FA 2011
 Diana Neal – At Large 2010
 Bruce Nordstrom-Loeb – At Large 2009
 Wes Pearson – NSM 2010
 Mark Schelske (resigned Spring 2009) SS 2009
 Doug Schuurman – At Large 2010
 Karen Marsalek– Faculty Observer to the Board of Regents 2009
 Steve Reece – Faculty Observer Elect to the Board of Regents 2010
 David Anderson – President Ex-Officio
 James May – Provost and Dean of the College Ex-Officio
 Alan Norton – Vice President and Treasurer Ex-Officio
 Arnie Ostebee – Assistant Provost Ex-Officio
 Erik Lane (resigned Spring 2009) Student

Appendix B: Meetings 2008-09

The committee met at 3:30 p.m. on a Wednesday in Dittmann 204 on the following dates: 2008–September 3, 10, 24; October 1, 22; November 12, 19; 2009– February 11, 18; March 4, 11, 18; April 8, 22; and at noon on May 20. It met, therefore, fourteen times out of a possible twenty-six Wednesdays during the fall and spring semesters. The minutes of meetings are to be found on the college website.

Appendix C: Suggested Carry-over Agenda Items for 2009-10

1. The 2008-09 Annual report from the Chair (Karen Wilson) of the Tenure and Promotion Committee
2. The number of student members of the Curriculum Committee
3. The personnel on the Faculty Life Committee
4. The personnel on the Student Life Committee
3. The regularization of data collection in advance of the spring faculty and Faculty elections