

June 11, 2002

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CAMPUS

Dear Brit:

The report of the Presidential Commission on University Governance was reviewed extensively. The document was analyzed by a number of individuals, several of whom wrote full scale reports on the recommendations. In addition, the Secretary of the Senate asked the chairs of Senate committees to analyze all recommendations in the Governance Report affecting their respective committees and to reach a judgment about whether the suggested changes were advisable. In its capacity as the Committee on Committees, Steering conducted a similar analysis of recommendations directed at committee structure. Steering's analysis, as well as the comments of each committee were given to an ad hoc committee of Faculty Council which had been convened to create a white paper describing the advantages and disadvantages of adopting the recommendations in the Commission Report. The ad hoc committee, thus, assimilated all analyses conducted and presented the results of those analyses to Faculty Council.

Faculty Council met on three occasions over the 2001/2002 academic year to consider the recommendations of the Presidential Commission on University Governance. At each meeting, the quorum requirements were met. Faculty Council accepted 14 of the 17 recommendations of the Commission. These recommendations have either been implemented or are in the process of being implemented. Faculty Council rejected recommendations (2) and (3) with unanimous votes in each case. The reasons for rejecting these recommendations are elaborated below. Finally, Faculty Council voted to accept several components of recommendation (8) and to reject others. These decisions, too, are explained below.

Recommendation (1). Retain the model of a University Senate. This recommendation was accepted although not unanimously. There were several individuals who thought that we should move to the more traditional faculty senate. However, a majority of Faculty Council felt that the university senate model allowed for vetting of proposals with administration and students prior to consideration by the Senate and that this model was more productive than the faculty-only alternative.

Recommendation (2). Broaden the University Senate to include staff. Everyone on Faculty Council recognizes the valuable contributions of staff to the university. However, Faculty Council did not agree that staff should be included in Senate membership. The rationale for this decision is presented in great detail in documents written respectively by Susan Fisher, Secretary of the Senate, an ad hoc committee of Faculty Council, and by Gerald Winer, president of AAUP. These documents are available for inspection on the Senate website. An abbreviated list of reasons for rejecting this recommendation is:

1. Staff cannot be elected, which vitiates the concept of representation.
2. Staff do not have a defined role in the formation of academic and educational policy, the primary function of the Senate.
3. The mechanism identified for selecting staff for Senate service is flawed in that it would not identify staff with experience relevant to the work of the Senate. It would require service on USAC, which would disenfranchise the majority of the 14,000 staff who are not on USAC. It also would not include collective bargaining staff and, thus, would create an odd kind of discrimination even while attempting to remedy the same problem for some, i.e., non-bargaining staff.
4. There are entire groups of faculty that are not represented on the Senate. These groups include regular clinical faculty, whose ranks will be considerably expanded by the recent passage of the Clinical Faculty rule in chapter 48. It struck Faculty Council as wholly inappropriate to be granting to staff privileges that are denied to some faculty.
5. According to two university lawyers, giving staff voting rights on the Senate likely could lead to an unfair labor practices law suit by unionized staff. It would not be beneficial either to the Senate or the university to become embroiled in a lawsuit over this issue.

Recommendation (3). Reduce the size of the Senate to 100 voting members. The rationale for this recommendation is that smaller is, by definition, more efficient. Faculty Council rejected that notion because the number 100 is, by admission of the Commission, arbitrary, and reduction to that size would destroy the current method of selecting Senators that assures representation of every college. In the absence of a plausible alternative for representing all colleges, and in the absence of a strong rationale for changing, Faculty Council rejected this recommendation.

Recommendation (4). Recognize participation in the Senate. Faculty Council accepted this recommendation but recognizes that without additional resources, this goal will not be realized. The Secretary of the Senate renews her call for providing committee chairs with either a stipend or other inducements such as course reduction or a GRA.

Recommendation (5). Student participation in the Senate should increase. This recommendation was accepted and various initiatives have begun to facilitate this. Students are now invited to the new senator orientation at the start of fall quarter. The Secretary of the Senate and the chair of Faculty Council began meeting periodically with student government leaders to explore common interests and discern ways of working together. Passage of the resolution on domestic partners

and the changes to chapter 47 are two examples of this collaboration. We have also incorporated student feedback into decisions about where to hold Senate meetings and other logistical arrangements to assure student participation is not reduced by these decisions.

Recommendation (6). Change the day and time of Senate meetings. This recommendation was accepted and enacted. In addition, feedback from the Senate on a variety of programmatic issues has been solicited and will result in changes of format in the future. The Program Committee is embarking on a “continuous quality improvement” initiative to assure that optimal use of Senate time is made.

Recommendation (7). Senate should have a role in formation of university-level ad hoc committees. Faculty Council accepted this. Thus far, the record of practice is mixed. The Senate clearly played a lead role in the issues of GEC reform and Calendar Conversion. However, the Senate was bypassed in selecting the various committees that were impaneled to address the possible restructuring of the arts and sciences. Clearly, implementation of this recommendation will require affirmative actions from the administration as well as the faculty.

Recommendation (8). Reorganization of Senate committees. Some of these recommendations were accepted, some were not. These decisions are elaborated below.

- (a) The Senate Steering Committee should take a leadership role in determining the charge to Senate Committees. This is a work in progress as seen in the newly revised rules for the Fiscal Committee and the Library/Technology Council. The Senate Office is pivotal in making sure that specific charges are well vetted in the Senate Committees, and periodic meetings of the Secretary of the University Senate, Chair of Steering, and Chair of Faculty Council will help in this process.
- (b)-(e) CAFR, FCBC, Honorary Degrees and Hearing should report to Faculty Council, not the Senate. All four recommendations were rejected. The premise that Faculty Council would be invigorated by this move was not persuasive, because the Commission report was silent on what would happen to Faculty Council recommendations for action. Would they go directly to the Board of Trustees? If so, Faculty Council would be truly invigorated. However, if Faculty Council recommendations were instead sent to the full Senate, Faculty Council’s decisions would effectively be second guessed by people who were not a part of the conversation. This would emasculate Faculty Council and accomplish the opposite of what is intended. Moreover, Faculty Council found the assertion that the full Senate shouldn’t be bothered with issues that only concern faculty to be insulting.
- (f) Faculty Council should develop improved procedures for committee appointments. For the first time this year, committee appointments were made by Faculty Cabinet as well as the Executive Committee. In addition, input was sought from the Vice President for Research, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Graduate School for those committees on which they serve. We will reassess next year to see if these changes are working and whether additional changes are warranted.

- (g) Program should be incorporated into Steering. Program continues to meet separately from Steering, but this recommendation has been implemented by putting all of the faculty members on Steering on the Program Committee. Program, on its own initiative, has inaugurated a series of changes in the format of Senate meetings designed to increase interaction and efficiency of the proceedings.
- (h) Council on Enrollment and Student Progress and the Council on Academic Affairs should be more closely linked. This recommendation was accepted. Liaisons were set up between the two committees to facilitate interaction and information transfer.
- (i) The Legislative Affairs Committee should be eliminated. An ad hoc committee of Steering was convened to consider this. Consultation with current and past chairs of Legislative Affairs was conducted. The input of Colleen O'Brien was solicited. The result of this extensive review was the decision that a Legislative Affairs Committee should be retained as part of the Senate but that significant reorganization was desirable. A rule change is now pending to codify the reorganized committee.
- (j) Create a Learning Access and Learning Technology Council (and abolition of the University Bookstores Committee). This recommendation was accepted in principle, but further discussion with the Library Council and OIT led to the conclusion that an arrangement different from the one recommended by the Commission was optimal. Specifically, the Library Council was expanded and renamed to include Learning Technology. The Bookstore Committee was abolished and the functions turned over to Helen DeSantis, who will convene a committee (non-Senate) consisting of faculty and students to advise Barnes and Noble. The expanded Library Council rule change has passed the Senate. The abolition of the University Bookstores Committee will be considered by the Senate during the next academic year.
- (k) Athletic Council. The basic recommendation from the Commission is that there be a tighter relationship between Athletic Council and Council on Student Affairs. That has been accomplished by designating liaisons who attend each other's meetings.
- (l) Committee on the Physical Environment. The Commission made no recommendations.
- (m) Council on Academic Affairs. The Commission's primary concern was about workload. Steering and the Secretary of the Senate have had a couple of conversations with Randy Smith about optimization of CAA. It now appears that CAA will allocate some of its activities to subcommittees. We will continue monitoring the situation to see if additional modifications are needed.
- (n) Council on Student Affairs. The major recommendation was that COAM be incorporated into CSA. After extensive consultation with COAM, Faculty Council does not believe that this is a workable idea and has rejected it.

- (o) The Fiscal Committee should have greater influence. Faculty Council agrees with this recommendation and, in fact, undertook a major reorganization of the Fiscal Committee which has now been codified in the faculty rules.
- (p) Diversity Committee. The Commission had no recommendations on the Diversity Committee; but Faculty Council, Steering and the Secretary of the Senate have been helping the Diversity Committee to reorganize and redefine itself so that its activities are consequential and are set apart from the Diversity Commission.
- (q) Research Committee should be reorganized. There was considerable debate about this recommendation but, in the end, Faculty Council rejected most of it. A couple of changes to the Research Committee Rule were made to expand the term of service to four years and to allow for participation by the Vice President for Research and the Dean of the Graduate School in choosing faculty members on the committee.

Recommendation (9). The Senate should improve review of proposals. Faculty Council accepted this recommendation. The Secretary of the Senate is formulating plans to improve the processing of documents. A tracking system is being developed which will allow the Secretary to follow: a) where documents have been sent for review; b) when responses are due back; c) which parties have finished the review and from which responses are still due. This will help assure that documents have been appropriately reviewed and that the reviews are conducted in a timely fashion. In addition, greater use of the Senate website is being made to extend the opportunities for feedback across campus.

Recommendation (10). Chairs of major Senate committees should be compensated and recognized. Faculty Council accepted this recommendation. Requests for compensation for Senate committee chairs has been a component of the Senate budget request for the past two years. It has not been implemented due to the current fiscal crisis.

Recommendation (11). Institute a broadly inclusive Senate orientation program. Faculty Council accepts this recommendation. The fall orientation has been expanded to include student senators, and the chair of USAC is now invited. Orientation materials are continually revised and updated to give new senators a better understanding of what their roles and responsibilities are.

Recommendation (12). Improve communication between the Senate and campus community. Faculty Council accepts this recommendation. The Secretary of the Senate has undertaken a variety of steps to improve communication including:

- a. the creation of a reflector list that includes all tenure-track faculty members on campus. We can instantaneously send message to all faculty on issues of importance.
- b. The Senate web page has been updated. Major reports are posted. We now have a mechanism for collecting feedback on the documents.
- c. The Secretary regularly sends messages to OSUToday for posting to the campus community.

- d. Emily Caldwell of On Campus has agreed to write at least one article per quarter on the Senate and its activities.

Recommendation (13). Improve efficiency of full Senate meetings. Faculty Council accepts this recommendation. In conjunction with the Program Committee, the Secretary of the Senate has initiated the following changes to optimize the use of Senate time:

- a. The routine constituency reports have been reduced.
- b. The annual reports of standing committees are merely received; they are not scheduled for an oral report unless such a request is made by the committee chair or the Program Committee.
- c. Major issues are discussed in open fora that increase the level of interaction among senators.
- d. The Program Committee will annually survey the Senate to ascertain whether additional changes in the format of Senate meetings are desired.

Recommendation (14). New educational and informational materials about the Senate should be prepared. Faculty Council accepts this recommendation. The Secretary of the Senate has written a couple of documents describing various aspects of the Senate for different audiences. In addition, the Senate makes regular use of electronic media for conducting Senate business. Unfortunately, a poll of sitting senators indicates that we should not do away with the hard copy of the Senate document which is sent to all senators one week before each Senate meeting.

Recommendation (15). Strengthen ties between Board of Trustees and Senate. Faculty Council accepts this recommendation and has made various attempts to forge this relationship. However, the board appears not to be interested in an expanded relationship with the Senate. If this is going to happen, it will require intervention at the level of the president.

Recommendation (16). The respective roles of the Secretary of the Senate and the Secretary of the Faculty should be clarified. Faculty Council agrees with this recommendation. An ad hoc committee of Faculty Council was convened in the summer of 2001 to make recommendations. The recommendations of the ad hoc committee were incorporated into the university rules. The two secretarial positions now have distinct roles which are codified in the university rules.

Recommendation (17). The Senate Office should receive increased central support. Faculty Council agrees with this recommendation. Such support has been requested but not yet granted due to the constraints of the current fiscal climate.

In summary, the Report of the Presidential Commission did not slumber on a shelf in the Senate Office. Rather, all of the recommendations of the Commission have received serious consideration and substantive review. With few exceptions, all of the recommendations that were accepted have been implemented, are currently in the process of being implemented, or will be implemented when various third parties contribute to the effort. In several cases, the Faculty Council review led to changes that were even more ambitious than those recommended by the Commission. Most importantly, the extensive and rigorous review of the Senate and its activities

has led to a cultural change in the Senate such that self-review is now part of its constitution, and future changes will occur as a normal part of this continuing review process.

There were only three recommendations which were rejected all or in part by Faculty Council. We appreciate the sincerity with which these recommendations were made. However, it was Faculty Council's considered view that implementation of these recommendations would not have the desired results espoused by the Commission but might actually be inimical to the Senate and its ability to function. We did not reject these recommendations lightly. However, we stand unanimously behind the decision to do so.

We greatly appreciate the hard work and energy that went into creating and running the Commission on Faculty Governance. We believe that the Senate will be a better institution for having undergone the review and having made the relevant changes. We look forward to having another such review in less than the 30 years it took to undertake this one.

Sincerely,

Marilyn J. Blackwell  
Chair, Faculty Council

Susan W. Fisher  
Secretary of the University Senate

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cc: Edward J. Ray, Executive Vice President and Provost  
Caroline C. Whitacre, Chair, Presidential Commission on University Governance  
Gene Mummy, 2002-03 Chair, Faculty Council  
Jane Case-Smith, Chair, Steering Committee