

Blueprint for Reforming the Committee Structure

Recommendations from the Faculty Committee on University Governance

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We offer the following recommendations on reforming our committee structure and our understanding of faculty service. Discussion of reforming our committee structure has been ongoing for the last three academic years on FCUG. We accept the truism that no governance structure is perfect and, further, that historically the trend has been that the number of committees grows until such time as it seems unwieldy, is then cut back, only to grow again. We do not claim that this effort will necessarily break the cycle. Still, we recommend here substantial changes that should achieve several goals:

1. A more efficient and meaningful use of faculty time.
2. Better communication and coordination among committees and between committees and the administration.
3. A stronger and more effective role for faculty in shared governance.

All three goals should be served by the reduction in number of committees (and therefore faculty committee assignments), the increase in responsibilities of those committees remaining, and the acknowledgment of FCUG's central role in the coordination of, and communication about, work of other committees.

In drafting these recommendations, we have been guided by: previous discussions on FCUG over the last few years; the minutes of the April 16, 2010 faculty meeting; the survey of faculty opinion on service and committee work taken in spring 2012; conversations with President Jill Beck and Provost David Burrows; discussion at two town hall meetings held in January 2013; and informal comments and discussions solicited by FCUG over the last several months, including from current and former members of individual committees.

These recommendations are presented for discussion. Ultimately, we hope that they will be adopted through the appropriate mechanisms in the 2013-2014 academic year. In some cases this will require legislation to be brought to the faculty for a vote; in others, a decision by the President.

Substantive Recommendations on the Committee Structure

1. **A Second Associate Dean of the Faculty:** We recommend that incoming President Burstein and Provost Burrows discuss the feasibility of appointing a second Associate Dean of the Faculty. Several of the tasks currently done by faculty committees would be more effectively and efficiently taken on by a second Associate Dean of the Faculty. We recommend that the distribution of tasks between two Associate Deans be worked out by the Provost and Dean of Faculty. At the same time, we note that tasks related to assessment, teaching development, and diversity might make for a coherent portfolio. Finally, we emphasize that we do not see any of our other recommendations as dependent on the appointment of a second Associate Dean.
2. **Chairs of Faculty Committees:** We recommend that chairs of faculty committees (not presidential committees, such as Tenure) be named by FCUG during the process of assigning faculty to committees in the spring. This will serve to avoid the occasional scramble at first committee meetings over who might be chair. Further, we recommend that only tenured members of the faculty serve as chairs of faculty committees.

3. **Merger of Curriculum and Instruction Committees:** We recommend the establishment of a single Faculty Committee on the Curriculum, with the following membership: one tenured member of the faculty from each division, an at-large tenured member of the faculty to serve as chair, the Provost and Dean of the Faculty, the Dean of the Conservatory, the Director of the Library (ex officio), and two students.

This committee would continue to fulfill the functions of the current Curriculum Committee. We also recommend that the Curriculum Committee regularly review the process and format of our student course evaluation system. Finally, we recommend that Curriculum incorporate the results of assessment efforts in their planning. For this purpose, the Chair of Assessment should regularly report to Curriculum. If the Assessment Committee is eventually dissolved in conjunction with the addition of a second Associate Dean of the Faculty (see below), the Curriculum Committee and the Associate Dean should distribute the tasks associated with assessment.

The functions of the current Instruction Committee would be distributed as follows:

- Student designed majors would be reviewed by the Associate Dean of the Faculty and sent to the Curriculum Committee for discussion and approval.
 - Course proposals would be reviewed by the Associate Dean of the Faculty and the Registrar and sent directly to the Faculty meeting for approval.
 - GER designations and class-time exceptions would be approved by the Associate Dean of the Faculty.
 - Three members of this committee would serve on the **Subcommittee on Academic Actions** as needed along with the Registrar and the Dean of Student Academic Services. This committee would perform the functions of the current Subcommittee on Administration.
4. **Elimination of the Enrollment Committee:** We recommend elimination of Enrollment as a standing committee of the faculty. We acknowledge that the individual faculty members serving on this committee have benefitted by becoming more informed about enrollment-related issues. In order to more efficiently educate the entire faculty, we recommend the establishment of regular educational sessions for faculty (perhaps once or twice a year) that would be led by the Office of Admissions, and would focus on important topics related to enrollment. Because enrollment and retention remain high priorities for the university, however, we also recommend the creation of a short-term task force charged with developing and coordinating enrollment strategies. Members would include one or two faculty members, the Provost, the Dean of Admissions, and others to be determined.
 5. **Future of the Environmental Sustainability Committee:** This is a Committee of the President, created in 2009 with a three-year charter that ends this year. The committee has achieved many of its goals, including raising campus-wide awareness of the need for energy and water conservation and solid waste reduction. Improving our environmental stewardship is an ongoing endeavor and continues to be an institutional priority, as noted in the strategic plan, but according to past chairs and members, the Sustainability Committee would not need to continue as a faculty-led committee in order to carry out its tasks in the future. Some of these tasks, such as completing paperwork for 'green campus' ratings through the American Association for Sustainability in Higher Education, would be more efficiently completed by a permanent member of the staff, rather than a faculty member who may act as chair for only one year.

We recommend that the Sustainability Committee be replaced with a Sustainability Coordination Committee whose members would include:

- The Director of Facility Services
- Director of the Warch Campus Center
- A faculty member from the Environmental Studies Program

- A representative from Campus Life (the ‘Green’ Residence Hall Director)
- A student member of the LUCC Environmental Responsibility Committee (ERC)
- A student representative from GreenFire
- A student representative from the Sustainable Lawrence University Garden (SLUG)

The committee would oversee environmental matters on campus including:

- Coordinating campus events and initiatives related to sustainability
 - Playing an advisory role in distributing and investing funds from the student environmental sustainability fee for projects proposed by students, staff and faculty
 - Collecting and submitting data for environmental rating systems and competitions
6. **Future of the Wellness and Recreation Committee:** Now that there is a centralized Wellness Office on campus, we recommend the elimination of faculty membership on the Wellness Committee (which is a Committee of the President). We recommend that the committee be reconstituted to include staff members involved with wellness issues and that clear mechanisms for communication be established between this renewed committee and faculty, staff, and students in order to identify and address specific needs. The Conservatory in particular may want to designate a liaison to work closely with the committee to develop programming specific to musicians.
 7. **Elimination of the Committee on Teaching Development:** As reported by the current committee, “currently the Committee on Teaching Development is not an effective policymaker because of the limitations of [its] advisory and support role. Policy changes affecting teaching would best come from the Tenure Committee or the Curriculum Committee.” While recognizing the importance of ongoing teaching development, we have concluded that organizing such work is not appropriately assigned to a faculty committee. We therefore recommend the elimination of Teaching Development as a standing committee of the faculty and that the Associate Dean of the Faculty take responsibility for the organization of pedagogical workshops, presentations, and related tasks. The work of teaching development is integral to faculty development more generally, and we envision the role of our proposed second Associate Dean to include the strengthening of a mentoring and faculty development program.
 8. **Elimination of the Technology Advisory Committee:** At present, this is a faculty committee with two faculty members, one of whom serves as chair. The committee meets periodically and its workload varies from year to year. We recognize the importance of faculty input on technology, and of communication across different parts of the university, but have concluded that a faculty committee is not necessary to achieve those goals. Instead, we recommend the appointment of a faculty technology representative as a service position assigned by FCUG. The designated faculty member would serve as a liaison with Information Technology Services and the Director of Instructional Technology on all aspects of technology of interest to faculty and would be invited to participate in relevant staff meetings.
 9. **Merger of Positions of Faculty Secretary and Parliamentarian:** We recommend that these two positions be merged and placed under the authority of the faculty (at present, the parliamentarian is a presidential appointment). Rather than three positions (faculty secretary, parliamentarian, and alternate parliamentarian), we recommend that there be two people appointed, one of whom will be an alternate.

Changes to Committee Charges or Membership

1. **Diversity:** This Committee of the President plays a crucial role in identifying and addressing issues of diversity that affect students, faculty, and staff. Two faculty members serve on this committee (with one serving as chair). FCUG does not recommend changing the composition of this committee, but does suggest the following changes pertaining to the diversity committee:

- a. The Associate Dean of faculty should chair this committee in order to provide continuity to its work.
 - b. The faculty members on the Diversity Committee should play a more direct role in tenure-track faculty searches in order to more effectively carry out university policy regarding faculty hiring and diversity. This should include developing and disseminating resources that can aid search committees in the identification and attraction of diverse candidates. FCUG recommends that search committees consult with the Diversity Committee at key stages of the search process. If a second Associate Dean is added, some of this work might be taken on and coordinated by that person.
 - c. Former Posse mentors have special expertise and experience with issues pertaining to diversity and should be considered as desirable candidates for service on the Diversity Committee.
2. **Sexual Harassment and Assault Resource Board:** FCUG doesn't recommend any changes to the configuration or charge of this Committee of the President. However, we recommend that SHARB increase and regularize its efforts at education and preventive programming for the entire Lawrence community, most especially in the area of training faculty and staff (chairs, supervisors, etc.) to handle grievances according to university policy on sexual harassment and assault. FCUG also encourages SHARB to pay careful attention to the stricter interpretations of the level of institutional responsibility as laid out under Title IX since 2011.
 3. **Public Occasions:** We recommend no changes to the membership of this committee, but recommends changing its name to the **Committee on Convocations and Colloquia** to more accurately reflect its charge. A top priority for the committee should be finding strategies for increasing attendance at campus convocations, building on the success of innovations like the Faculty Convocation Award, and having students introduce convocation speakers. The Convocations and Colloquia Committee should meet at least once a year with the Curriculum Committee to discuss ways to link convocations and colloquia with the academic program, perhaps in coordination with the Freshman Studies Program.
 4. **Grievance:** We recommend that the Faculty Handbook language be modified to include other grievances besides those falling under policies on sexual harassment and sexual assault. We propose that the language on II.19 under "Grievance Committee" read as follows: "to hear cases brought to them under the University policies, including cases brought under the University policies on sexual harassment and sexual assault."
 5. **Conservatory Planning:** We recommend that Conservatory Planning act as an intermediary between Conservatory faculty and the FCUG as regards requests for exemptions from university service as noted in the attached statement on service. In addition, FCUG recommends that the charge of this committee be strengthened to include a greater focus on planning.
 6. **Assessment:** The Assessment Committee carries out ongoing work associated with the university's assessment plan. Since it reviews departmental and program assessment activities in all areas of the university, as well as reviewing the assessment of general education and senior experience elements of the curriculum, FCUG feels that divisional representation is both necessary and appropriate. However we recommend that the Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning be removed from this committee. The Director of the CTL might be consulted by the committee as needed, but we believe the Director's time is better spent in other ways. Ultimately, we hope that this committee will be dissolved and many of its administrative tasks assigned to a second Associate Dean of the faculty. Other elements of its tasks that involve substantial review of curricular assessment should be taken up by the Curriculum Committee. Until such time, we recommend that this committee continue in its present form.

Strengthening the Faculty Role in Shared Governance

1. **Faculty Committee on University Governance:** After considering the arguments for alternative structures and organizations (including divisional representation and the idea of divisional chairs), we reaffirm the value of a single elected committee of the faculty that seeks to have the problems of the university as a whole in view. Therefore, we recommend that FCUG remain in its present form. At the same time, we emphasize the central role of FCUG in the coordination of the work of faculty committees and recommend continuation of the system of liaisons developed in the 2011-2012 academic year to support implementation of the strategic plan. In addition, we recommend development of regular means of communication between FCUG and standing and ad-hoc committees.

2. **Long Range Financial Planning:** FCUG reaffirms the importance of faculty involvement in long-range financial planning and we recommend maintaining the current level of faculty representation to the LRFPC. However, we express strong concern that the current version of this committee functions poorly and has strayed from its central charge of long-range planning. This committee must renew its focus on long-range planning rather than look exclusively at short-term budgetary concerns, and must continue to be guided in both its long- and short-term financial modeling and recommendations by the values of Lawrence’s academic mission.

Changes to the Numbers of Faculty Committee Assignments

Committee	Current Faculty Assignments	Recommended Faculty Assignments	Change
Curriculum	4	5	+1
Instruction	4	0	-4
Enrollment	4	0	-4
Sustainability	3	1	-2
Wellness	2	0	-2
Teaching Development	4	0	-4
Technology Advisory	2	1	-1
Merger of Fac. Secretary & Parliamentarian/Alt.	3	2	-1
Total Change			-17

Statement on University Service

Guided by the Faculty Handbook's recommendation that service "fit within [one's] professional life" while ensuring the "broader mission of liberal education," the Committee has drafted this statement in order (1) to underscore the crucial role faculty service plays in conserving and strengthening the mission of this institution, (2) to suggest that service should connect faculty members in meaningful ways to the institution, (3) to define how a faculty member's service should evolve over a career and (4) to propose how service assignments might be more equitably distributed over the long term and among faculty at different stages in their careers. We offer the following as a "vision statement" for service at Lawrence.

Service at Lawrence allows faculty additional ways of shaping the education of our students; it contributes to the general welfare and development of our faculty as teachers, scholars, and people with real lives; it allows faculty to share in the governance of Lawrence and to help formulate university policies; and it gives us an opportunity to safeguard and strengthen the future of our institution and its mission.

Though service to the institution is clearly an expectation for all faculty members, no matter their rank, they should:

- Have the satisfaction that their time and effort will be well spent: that initiatives undertaken will be feasible and will have an impact, will have appropriate support, will have clear deadlines even when carried over beyond the term of the individual faculty member, will be communicated to the appropriate constituents, and will be archived such that future entities can use or build on that work.
- Serve in a role that corresponds to their strengths or their expressed interests.
- Have the opportunity for collegial interaction and reasonable exchange, and understand and acknowledge the difference between representing the interests of a (small) constituency of the LU community and representing those of the institution more broadly, both kinds of advocacy being important.
- (Especially for pre-tenure colleagues) have the opportunity to develop an understanding of the particularities and the purposes of this institution, to meet and work with colleagues in other areas, and to develop or realize leadership potential.

A Developmental Model for Service

FCUG 12-13 consulted the Faculty Handbook to understand service expectations for faculty members at various stages of their careers. The information gleaned in that official document is vague, no doubt appropriately so. Tenure candidates should assume "some responsibilities within the larger University community" (III.7). At the time of tenure evaluation, the faculty member should be able to describe how "community service fits within his/her professional life as well as how it serves the educational mission of Lawrence University and the broader mission of liberal education as a whole" (III.19). Candidates for promotion to full professor should, beyond giving "beneficial service to the department, to the University, and to the discipline," assume "leadership roles in one or more [of these areas]" (III.27). These statements gave rise to our thinking about a developmental model for a faculty member's service career at Lawrence. We feel that the following description is consistent with the stated expectations placed on colleagues as they advance in their Lawrence career.

Pre-tenure colleagues:

Many newly-appointed colleagues have had few if any opportunities to give community service to an academic institution. As a result, the first five years here form a steep learning curve. The Faculty Handbook is explicit that tenure-track colleagues are expected, by the time they stand for tenure, to have contributed to their home departments, to the university, and potentially to the professional community—not a small order. The expectation at tenure time is that these various forays into service should help candidates define their relationship to their discipline as well as to the institution: a faculty member

should be able to describe how “community service fits within his or her professional life as well as how it serves the educational mission of Lawrence University and the broader mission of liberal education as a whole.” It is in the context of such service that junior faculty are expected to demonstrate “integrity” and to participate in “reasoned discourse” (III.19).

From these stated expectations we assume that the pre-tenure colleague needs to develop interest and/or expertise in some service area, making the service commitment an extension or an integral part of professional life. Further, pre-tenure colleagues will need to learn about the specificity of Lawrence as a liberal arts institution and to understand how the institutional mission needs to be sustained in the face of challenges. Finally, pre-tenure faculty members need to be able to make the case in their service statements for an explicit connection between their service efforts and the university’s mission.

Pre-promotion colleagues (promotion to full professor):

In addition to the many ways one must support a home department as well as one’s chosen discipline(s), the pre-promotion colleague should be fully knowledgeable of the special position and specific needs of Lawrence among its liberal arts peers. Pre-promotion candidates should further take initiative or take on leadership in one or more areas of value to the institution (FH, III.27).

Later-career colleagues:

If there is any real distinction between pre-promotion and later career, it may be in these three ways: (1) providing institutional memory, (2) mentoring leadership by modeling the values of “integrity” and “reasoned discourse,” and (3) continuing in leadership roles. Later-career colleagues will be expected to meet some level of service to the university prior to and following the time that sabbatical is requested; said service expectations should be determined in discussion with the Provost.

Service asked of our colleagues:

FCUG’s responsibility in assigning committee work to junior colleagues is limited to giving them an opportunity to “effectively fulfill routine or special committee assignments” (III.18). In order to reach service goals as described by the handbook, pre-tenure colleagues could do very well serving in their departments, on less time-consuming Lawrence committees, in disciplinary-related organizations and events and in other mission-supporting activities that hold special interest for them. If pre-tenure colleagues perform “core” service at all, it should probably be limited to one or two years [see the next section for a lengthier discussion of “core” service].

In giving committee assignments to senior faculty, the FCUG feels it makes sense that “core” assignments fall more regularly on the shoulders of people in the two higher ranks. Nevertheless, in the interests of protecting senior colleagues in the same way we propose to protect our junior colleagues, the Committee recommends a model of service in which heavier or core assignments are followed by a period of lighter service to the institution.

Service Assignments

The Committee also looked to the Faculty Handbook to find some comparative ranking of forms of service. While the list is inclusive and the enumerated service activities various (III.18-19), there is not much guidance for junior colleagues that can help them parse the kinds of service or to understand what might be more central to the missions as described above. For the purposes of committee assignments and recommendations to the President, FCUG has put together a statement distinguishing core service assigned by FCUG, the President, or the Provost as opposed to all other service.

Core Service:

Lawrence faculty members engage in a wide variety of meaningful service activities, and it is only reasonable to expect that these activities will be noted and valued by the Lawrence community, both in order to share equally the burden of necessary tasks, as well as to recognize exceptional and non-routine contributions. This institution would be seriously diminished without the type of service that most often emerges from individual faculty members’ interests and talents, from the efforts to strengthen a department or program, or from the work to forge crucial relationships with the local community.

However, within that range of service that it is FCUG's explicit duty to mete out in the form of committee nominations, we need to acknowledge that certain of these assignments require considerable investments of time; extraordinary efforts in the form of research, consultation, writing, and communication; and, most importantly, a broad institutional perspective as distinct from the more focused perspectives required to implement, sustain, or enhance a program or project.

The heavy service roles described in the last paragraph constitute the category of core service. Ideally, core service assignments will be equitably spread among the entire faculty over long time-spans. That is, a given faculty member might spend several years on a core committee, but then be relieved of core service for a few years. In order to implement this policy in the context of our recommendations for a new committee structure, we propose that the following service activities be designated as core:

- Faculty Committee on University Governance
- Committee on Tenure, Promotion, Reappointment and Equal Employment Opportunity
- Faculty Committee on the Curriculum
- Chair of Committee on Assessment

As a general principle, FCUG proposes that service assignments compensated by either additional pay or teaching release should not count as core. Nevertheless, the Provost (in consultation with the FCUG) may designate such an assignment as core on a case-by-case basis (depending on the nature of the service and the compensation). Likewise, ad-hoc task forces will be explicitly designated as core or non-core at the time of their creation.

In order to effectively accomplish their substantial work, we recommend that all core committees explicitly adopt a model in which individual members perform tasks outside of regularly scheduled committee meetings, so that meetings may be used for discussion and evaluation of the results. This strategy of assigning "homework" to responsible point-persons currently works well for the FCUG and Tenure Committee.

Requests for Service Exemptions:

There might very well be times in an individual faculty member's career when that person's service load is so heavy as to make core service, or chairing a committee, or even serving on a regular committee not feasible. In such circumstances it is the responsibility of the faculty member to make the case to the Provost or to the Conservatory Planning Committee [see below] for a short-term exemption from service assigned or recommended by the FCUG.

Concerning service load in the conservatory, we acknowledge that applied conservatory faculty all carry "built-in" admissions- and recruitment-related service, including auditions and lessons to prospective students, as well as performances. This service, which involves substantial time and effort, is clearly vital to the institution and its mission. That said, we wish to affirm that it is crucial that conservatory faculty participate in "core" service activities in an effort to maintain a broad and inclusive institutional scope.

We therefore propose that the Conservatory Planning Committee act as an intermediary between Conservatory faculty and FCUG. Individual Conservatory faculty members should communicate their requests directly to the Conservatory Planning Committee in the early spring preceding the academic year in which they are seeking a waiver from FCUG-assigned service. In this way, the Conservatory will play a role in determining how much and what kind of service warrants an exemption from FCUG-assigned roles.

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On one hand, FCUG recognizes the impossibility of equalizing the many kinds of faculty service commitments that make Lawrence distinctive. On the other hand, we feel that, in our capacity as a committee on committees, it is within our purview to propose assignments in such a way as to be more equitable to our colleagues, to draw more widely on their powers of intellect and judgment, and to maintain collectively the vision and vitality of this liberal arts institution.