May 9-10, 2016

A & S Governance Committee

In attendance: Lucretia McCulley, Dixon Abreu, John Gupton, Elizabeth Baughan, Mari Lee Mifsud, Geoff Goddu

Interview with Dean Kathleen Skerrett (5/9/2016)

- Governance means faculty have robust purview over resources, to make recommendations about resources for the academic program.
- Academic Council is not ineffective but unwieldy for the work that it does, so that it takes a long time to get to important things; but unsure how to change that.
- A & S Faculty Meetings have also been ineffective. It is not necessary for the dean to run the meetings. Faculty governance requires a culture of deliberative democracy to have a fundamental regard for one another. There will always (and should) be dissent, but all should enter the space with mutual regard. In a diverse community we are seeking overlapping consensus (e.g., discussion of the BS degree is a good model for how there can be deep disagreement but respect). Reasonable positions can overlap even if reasons for supporting decisions don’t. Lights should go out after 1 hour to ensure effective use of time.
- Deliberation takes time and energy. Concern about faculty burn-out. The wealth of our institution allows the burnout—the wealth must be spent to sustain faculty work and protect faculty time.
- Faculty time is a governance issue.
- Top down governance is not effective.
- How to allow collective faculty expertise to create the kinds of educational opportunities for our students that are structured and yet not department based—that’s our challenge in governance. How do you catalyze cross department curricula that many people would like, but we don’t have the governance structure to do that. That is a challenge. Are we ready for a new way of creating knowledge that is not wholly departmentally driven?
- But what about top-down decisions that are made without faculty consultation that may impact faculty greatly—like SEIs, and Richmond Guarantee?
- “Faculty” governance is what distinguishes us from a corporate environment. “Shared” governance sets us up in corporate culture.
- A & S Deans should be faculty members.
- Do we have challenges in governance that are enhanced by having 5 schools? That we have 5 schools is not the central problem for A & S. We create impediments to contentment by for instance, insisting that A&S is de-valued in relationship to B-school.

DAC and idea of Faculty Executive Committee or Council:

- DAC as “administrative” is not a characterization she agrees with, as DAC makes decisions about faculty lines and department budgets, and faculty lines must be controlled by faculty in order to have substantive control over the academic program,
- DAC By-laws could be morphed into an Executive Council of the faculty and abandon Academic Council, then Executive Council would be responsible to faculty, this council could look at things like SEIs, or whatever faculty agenda comes forward, and would take up those, in addition to budget resources, which the Council would have to do. Executive Council could know/decide even more about salaries, etc.
- Faculty could present agenda to Executive Council.
• Current DAC membership: Planning and Priorities, Dept. Chairs from each of the tripartite, and 1 program coordinator; according to By-laws, dept. Chairs elect someone to serve, and program coordinators elect, then DAC members elects the chair.
• DAC may allocates more resources than P&P does.
• Could we people an Exec. Council more directly from the faculty?
• Question about documents: ‘Guide to Faculty Governance’ is being phased out, but this is currently the only place that describes what the Dean of A & S does. Where are the documents that define the Dean’s position?
• What is the locus of authority, the locus of legislation? Not well-established in A&S, but she has lived in well-established structures of governance. Speculates that original long term-presidents (50 years, 32 years) created a culture of top-down, where faculty leaders rebelled.
• Faculty governance is a struggle at UR, and the lack of documentation is a sign.

Models of faculty governance:

• Models of faculty governance to look at: Grinnell, Vassar, Williams. Gettysburg Gustavus Adolphus. What is going on there that is so agreeable? We could also use the ‘Great Colleges to Work For’ survey to identify institutions to look at.
• The stellar models locate governance in “faculty”—why do we call it “shared governance”? What does “shared governance” mean? On the positive side, shared governance includes and recognizes staff, which is a positive for certain. Yet shared governance leaves us vulnerable to corporate culture, of top down decision-making. The organizational chart is a sign of this: if governance operated according to this chart, we would have top-down, “shared” governance. Perhaps we could create a model of “shared” governance that is like a web, horizontal instead of vertical.

Interview with Jennifer Erkulwater and Michele Hamm (5/9/2016):

• Our University structure makes it difficult to look to liberal arts colleges for governance models, but maybe aspects of the governance structures there may be applicable?
• One of the biggest problems: we currently have no by-laws, no governance documents, nothing. If someone has a concern, there is nowhere to go. We need by-laws for how things run, how we vote. We need policies and structures that can handle concerns, over-reach, mobilization; now all we do is make ad hoc committees.
• Things are going to Senate, but need to go to A & S – there is a vacuum.
• Do we want a representative government or what we have now, where everyone can vote? We will need to talk with people about that and make a recommendation. It doesn’t have to look like the Senate.
• No clear process or set of institutions at the school level, that is very odd, but what it should look like at A & S level?
• Need to help new Dean to create new governance in A & S.
• What about governance in Business School—should we look at what the B-School is doing? They vote person by person rather than group. Look at their by-laws.
• Proposed originally as faculty governance and were told “shared” governance.
• By-Laws would define the A & S Dean and replace the Guide to Faculty Governance.
• Time is the currency of all academic institutions, but here it is squandered.
• An institutional structure that brings all into governance, not just the same small group.
DAC and idea of Faculty Executive Committee or Council:

- DAC is not transparent in terms of agreement or disagreement between Dean and DAC.
- Rare to have Dean run faculty meetings rather than a faculty member – this is something we need to question and decide. Do we need a Chair of the Faculty?
- No place to go to ask questions about problems, things that could be policy issues, but become individual, e.g. course releases for chairs and program coordinators.
- Would an alternative be an Executive Faculty Council—a permanent body?
- Would we need a steering committee akin and supplementary to DAC? Should these people be elected to represent a constituency?

Committees:

- Transparency and clear reporting: URC, FRC don’t report to any faculty committee and we don’t get information about anything. We need more transparency. More information. Also with DAC – if the dean decides against DAC’s recommendations, that should be made known somehow.
- Committees should give annual reports. For URC, e.g., we should know how many proposals reviewed, how many accepted, etc.
- Discussions are buried in the minutes of A & S committees, but gets lost over time. There is no central clearinghouse for information. New committee chairs shouldn’t have to reinvent the wheel. This loss creates an extra burden on our governance.
- Do we need a faculty development committee in A & S?
- Should we use the Univ. committees as a parallel model for A&S committees?
- Would merit review be faculty driven rather than Dean’s office? Linked to faculty development.
- Would we need a t&p committee and a full promotion committee?
- Would we need a curriculum committee? At some schools it is the most powerful committee.
- Bring people back into the fold of faculty governance – involve more people in governance. Often there are not enough committee slots to meet the demand/interest for service work.
- If our structure of governance is more efficient, more people will be involved?
- Committee reports could be submitted and available to all before faculty meetings, then only a summary given in the overall faculty meeting, with more time for Q&A

Academic Council:

- Inefficient – too many people?
- Too much repetition of information? does it need to meet every 2 weeks?
- Overload of non-academic things in academic council, AC needs to focus on curriculum and academic issues
- AC can keep chairs trained, but there is not time for that, for chairs and program coordinators. Chairs should be trained in mentoring.

Voting, representation, and procedures:

- How are the senators allocated in A & S, you can get nominated in your division or at large currently, would be better to follow the model of urban governance, the winners in the divisionals, then the next largest vote getters go to “at-large”
• Random voting that we do, people at the top of the list tend to get more votes!!! Needs to be looked at.
• Question with the Senate and others, when we have divisional voting, but do you want to have people voting only in your division?
• Some current attempts to train faculty to participate in governance, Robert’s Rules of Order, but on the whole are lacking. Might we take a look at how to ready/prepare our faculty?
• Create a governing committee? To meet with faculty to orient them to governance, to run meetings and make sure proper procedures are followed?? Committees should also be run by RRO.

Interview with Eric Yellin and Jacque Fetrow (5/10/2016):

• Where are faculty meeting minutes prior to 2010?
• Talking points to Dean candidates on problems and opportunities in A & S governance?
• What is the job description for the ad for the Dean and Provost?
• 3 big thoughts from Jacque:
  1.) Governance in school of A & S is unique, we can look at other schools but it might not be so useful; we need to recognize the differences; A&S schools are distinctive because of the wide variety of disciplines. Other schools at UR, such as Business, could provide insight, but do not have the complexity of A&S.
  2.) Philosophical thing—think of a governance structure that must provide checks and balances for faculty leaders, deans, and provosts, as sometimes we don’t have good ones; long institutional histories and futures; governance must be able to weather bad leadership.
  3.) There is a difference between governance and operations. Congress vs. Bureaucrats. We have conflated these two. Those who make the laws do the work, but this conflation means administrators get involved in governance issues, and faculty groups get involved in administrative operations. Think very carefully in design of this structure: what is the governance, who is going to think, decide, and vote, and who is going to do the work? (e.g. FYS director faculty member, administrator, operator, governance, FYS committee chair, and committee do the work. Great model for how to separate governance and operations.)
• Where does faculty governance works well? Here, Faculty Senate.

Wake Forest University could be a model: had governance of the whole, no representative group that was a governance body, and this made faculty meetings matter for the governance of the whole: Administrators had only 5 minutes to present, plus 10 minutes of questions. Administrators were required to send material ahead of time that would go into the appendix of the agenda and were, thus, part of the record of the meeting.

• Each committee had a faculty chair plus an associate dean, so communication with dean’s office always open; chairs of committees need training in RRO, need to understand that motions can be amended. Faculty Senators all got laminated sheets of RRO. Documents lay out responsibilities of faculty and the Dean. They had a committee structure; over time, though, Jacque encouraged committees to think about their charges, and they did, and took back to faculty for review and vote.
• Need buy-in—need to take, revise at each stage, need to know Robert’s Rules because you can amend the motion, discuss go back, revise, and discuss.
• Knowing Robert’s Rules is key to training faculty to participate in faculty governance.
• Do we need a parliamentarian? YES! Chair of meeting does not state an opinion according to RRO. There should be a vice chair to run meeting if the chair does need to express an opinion.

• Dean’s duties: administrative duties assigned by the Provost and Dean; governing duties should be decided by the faculty.

• Would recommend that the Dean run the faculty meetings, but not have a voting role.

• One priority from each of them:
  o Jacque: To have an A & S governance structure that functions. We don’t know how to move discussions forward and get things done with faculty centrality. Faculty must feel confident in decisions being made.
  o Eric: By-Laws. Questions they ought to answer: What are our voting procedures, what is quorum, do we vote electronically, in a meeting? Who is eligible? When do we use body as a whole or representative? Who runs meetings? Who sets the agenda for the meetings, when is it promulgated? Responsibilities need to be worked out between governance and administration; By-laws can make all clear; how does governance structure link to administrative structure; when do you meet with associate deans, the dean, the provost? Do associate deans have domain, if so, do they link up with committees? Clarity of role of Dept. Chairs, Chairs are administrative, Associate Deans are administrative, deans and provosts are administrative, say “the Dean or the Dean’s designate” can be built into by-laws. The chairs are not a governing body, only administrative; but this is not how AC is set up; clarity of committees, how do they operate in particular and in broader governance; how can committees use each other; what is the dean’s role in a&s committees? Should be a procedure; how would A&S governance work with University governance? How to use A&S senators beyond giving feedback to A&S faculty, if we decide to recognize them as a governing body for A&S?

• Crisis of faculty over-work, we over-administrate processes here, we need to streamline processes to protect time an energy; we need to think hard about a community of teacher-scholars, what does that mean and how does it get valued, conversation must happen at University level, then go into the school level, student-faculty relations need to be represented in our governance structure.

Action Steps:

• Contact friends/networks at model colleges
• Develop and circulate a questionnaire for our colleagues to see what the magic is of their governance.
• Interview someone from Leadership, Business, Law, and SPCS
• Meet with new Dean first thing in Fall semester, get on his calendar
• Ask Jen, Michelle, Eric, Jacque, what is happening to the Guide to Faculty Governance, it is described as “diminished” yet it is the only place where we see, for example, a description of the A & S Dean’s position. (did this in the meetings today, not sure we have sufficient response?).
• Seek B-School on how they do by-laws.
• Find the language on “shared” governance—why does UR insist on this instead of “faculty” governance—the statement on shared governance in faculty handbook was approved in 2004, but what did it read like before that? What is the history of shared governance and problems with this model, distinct from faculty governance? Shared governance and faculty governance are two related, but different, things. Faculty governance is the faculty governing process for the things for which the faculty have authority and responsibility. Shared
governance is the process by which faculty and administration work together, to develop a shared vision and to trust each other’s work and decisions.