

Draft Report of Strategic Planning Working Group on Faculty (in) Governance

The role of faculty in governance issues is a critical factor in university planning. A strong, meaningful role for faculty in governance enhances recruiting and retention of quality instructors. A faculty with well defined and executed governance is attractive to new Ph.D.s as well as desirable for experienced faculty members. Faculty members actively engaged in governance are more likely to exhibit a higher level of commitment to the mission and goals of the university.

The working group examined the faculty handbook to determine existing areas of responsibility for faculty. The following specific issues were identified by the working group:

1. The handbook does not define any role for faculty in determining the academic structure and restructuring of the university.
2. Although the handbook has a very clear and precise protocol for hiring faculty, it lacks a clear process or defined role for faculty in filling academic administrative vacancies.
3. The handbook defines only an informal advisory role for the Faculty Association. This contributes to a sense among faculty that they do not have a sufficiently independent role in university governance issues, since the academic assemblies include administrators as well as faculty.
4. Faculty workload renders faculty less than optimally effective in fulfilling service roles described in the handbook.

Recommendations:

1. Proposal of language to add to the Faculty Handbook that would specify a clear role for faculty in the structuring and/or restructuring academic units of the university.
2. Proposal of language to add to the Faculty Handbook that would specify a clear and explicit role for faculty in filling academic administrative vacancies.
3. Find and implement ways to strengthen and improve the Faculty Association as a useful, effective, and meaningful forum for independent faculty input into university governance issues.

The working group believes that adoption of these recommendations as strategic goals would enhance the role of faculty in governance.