

Revisions in Faculty Governance

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The Genesis of Change

In early April of this year, after eleven months of hard work, the Faculty of Brown University approved the last details of a new system of governance designed to improve the quality of academic decisions, increase Faculty control over its own affairs, and develop a framework for Faculty and students to advise senior administrators on tasks affecting the academic community. No recommendations concerning the Medical School were made because it is undergoing an independent evaluation.

Faculty governance emerged as an issue of concern in the fall of 2001. In discussions with Faculty officers President Simmons expressed her belief that better academic decisions would be made if senior Faculty members were at the table when academic priorities were being set. At the time I was Chair of the Faculty and the Faculty Executive Committee (FEC). Her comments motivated me to engage the Faculty in a series of discussions that culminated in a proposal to FEC last spring that it create a Task Force on Faculty Governance. This it did and the Task Force went into operation on May 2.

The FEC charged the Task Force with examining “the role of the Brown University Faculty in self-governance as well as in setting the academic priorities of the University.” It asked that it “recommend changes ... designed to provide the Faculty with a role in the governance of Brown University that reflects good management principles and the central importance of the Faculty to the long-term welfare of Brown University.” It also asked the Task Force to “consult with the Administration to ensure that its recommendations are consistent, to the extent possible, with the responsibility of the Faculty and the Administration for shared governance of Brown.” The Task Force was asked to provide an interim report by October, 2002 and a final report by April, 2003.

The members of the Task Force, chosen by the FEC, were Nancy Armstrong, English (Vice Chair); Russell Church, Psychology; Anne Fausto-Sterling, Molecular, Cellular Biology, Biochemistry; Richard Fishman, Visual Art; Peter Gromet, Geological Sciences; John Savage, Computer Science (Chair); Rajiv Vohra, Economics; and Michael White, Sociology.

The Challenge

Faculty governance has undergone many changes since the last major revision in 1969. By the spring of 2002 our 44 university-level committees had 237 Faculty positions for a Faculty of about 550 campus-based voting members and about 480 hospital-based voting members. Since most positions are held by campus-based Faculty members, it is not surprising that it had become difficult to fill the available positions.

The new system of governance works through a mixture of Faculty committees and administrative advisory boards. Several Faculty committees provide for shared governance by Faculty and administrators, where before a Faculty voice was either lacking or less than effective (e.g., APC). Other committees now provide Faculty with the primary responsibility for decision making (e.g., TPA). The administrative advisory boards differ in that they are designed to advise senior administrators. Three boards have already been approved by the Faculty and another five or six are expected to be approved. As each is approved, Faculty committees that previously dealt with administrative matters are eliminated. If all proposed boards are approved (we hope by next fall), there will be approximately 15 Faculty committees and eight or nine administrative advisory boards. We expect these committees and boards to have approximately 135 Faculty positions, a dramatic reduction from the previous number. In addition, we will have a streamlined and more rational system of governance.

The New and Revised Committees

The **Academic Priorities Committee (APC)** is perhaps the most important new Faculty committee. Its membership is “six tenured Faculty members or senior lecturers of broad experience and scholarly

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distinction who are expected to serve the general interests of the University,” the Provost (Chair), the Deans of the Faculty, Medicine & Biological Sciences, College, and the Graduate School, and the Vice President for Research. APC “is responsible for making recommendations to the President concerning the general direction of academic programs.” A Faculty member is Vice Chair.

The **Tenure, Promotions and Appointments Committee (TPA)** is a revised version of the Committee on Faculty Reappointment and Tenure (ConFRaT) in which the Chair and Vice Chair are now Faculty members, the number of Faculty positions is increased from eight to 12 and the Deans of the Faculty, Medicine & Biological Sciences, College, and Graduate School now have non-voting status. This change is welcomed by the Provost who now expects the Deans of the Faculty and Medicine & Biological Sciences, who bring cases to TPA, to submit their independent assessments of these cases to him in parallel with recommendations from TPA.

The task of the new **Faculty Affairs Committee (FAC)** is to “represent the Faculty in personnel issues such as compensation, benefits, leaves, and diversity.” It has six Faculty members, the Deans of the Faculty and Medicine & Biological Sciences, and the Associate Provost & Director of Institutional Diversity (non-voting). The Chair and Vice Chair of FAC are Faculty members. FAC assumes some of the responsibilities of the Affirmative Action Committee (AAMC) to report and advise on diversity in the Faculty by rank and department. Because AAMC, which has been eliminated, had been preoccupied with the daily review of Faculty searches, it had not had time to handle this important part of its mandate. The **Subcommittee on Diversity in Hiring (SDH), a subcommittee of FAC**, absorbs the AAMC responsibilities not incorporated into FAC, namely, the review of search materials and negative decisions by TPA. Formerly, AAMC reviewed Faculty search materials whenever they were submitted; SDH will review these materials on a monthly basis. AAMC was mandated to review all negative decisions by TPA involving women and minorities; the mandate of SDH is broadened to include all negative decisions.

The new **Committee on Grievance** replaces a complex and cumbersome ad hoc set of grievance procedures. A standing committee of five Faculty members at least three of whom are full professors, with two members in reserve in the event that a conflict of interest emerges, its task is to “address matters unique to the academic community.” It reviews petitions by a person holding a teaching or research position that his/her rights have been violated by the action of one or more members of the teaching, research staff or administration. The rights in question include academic freedom and rights as members of the academic community that are generally understood or articulated in the Faculty Rules and Regulations. They also include failure to follow prescribed procedures concerning promotion and reappointment as well as violations of the *Corporation Statement on Nondiscrimination*. The committee must also review any charge contesting a finding by the President that specified actions by a faculty member warrant dismissal, during either a term appointment or tenure as well as charges by a student that his/her rights as a member of the university community have been violated by a person holding a teaching or research appointment. Access of members of the Medical School Faculty who are not Brown University employees to these procedures is limited to charges relating to their activities under the control of Brown. The committee has the power to require reconsideration of cases that involve discrimination. In such cases it will appoint a Faculty monitor to report on the reconsideration at the next level.

The **University Resources Committee (URC)** has a charge very similar to that of the Advisory Committee on University Planning (ACUP) that it replaces. A principal difference is that its meetings will normally be held in executive session. This is intended that to lead to more thorough and frank discussions of budgetary issues. Like ACUP, it has six Faculty members. The number of administrators is reduced to five: the Provost (Chair), Executive Vice President for Planning, Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration, the Dean of the Faculty, and the Dean of Medicine & Biological Sciences. The Vice Chair is a Faculty member. Two undergraduates, one graduate student and one medical student as well as one member of Staff Advisory Committee will also serve. The principal charge to the committee is “to review, to analyze, and to offer recommendations to the President on all budgetary plans, proposals, and priorities, both current and future, affecting the University.”

Non-medical curricular matters continue to be handled by the **College Curriculum Council (CCC)** at the undergraduate level and the **Graduate Council** at the graduate level. (No recommendations were made

concerning the medical curriculum.) While only small modifications were made in these two committees, the Faculty did approve the creation of the **University Curriculum Committee**, a committee with overarching responsibility for all aspects of the non-medical curriculum. Most of the work of the UCC, consisting of eight members, four from each council, is to be handled by the councils. The UCC is charged specifically with dealing with matters that have both graduate and undergraduate dimensions, an aspect of curricular management not covered by the previous system of governance.

The **Faculty Executive Committee (FEC)** was revised in a few important ways without changing its membership. FEC remains the steering committee for Faculty business. Previously, FEC was responsible for invoking our grievance procedures, a task now in the hands of the Committee on Grievance. The revised FEC is now responsible for making nominations to Faculty committees and making recommendations of Faculty members for service on administrative advisory boards. In this respect it replaces the Nominations Committee. In the case of nominations to APC and URC, FEC makes recommendations in consultation with the Provost. FEC is also assigned responsibility for making recommendations for the Susan Colver Rosenberger Medal of Honor, the highest honor awarded by the Faculty.

Because the FEC cannot nominate itself, a new **Nominations Committee for FEC (NCFEC)** has been created to make nominations for membership on FEC. The committee consists of the Faculty Chairs of TPA and FAC and the Faculty Vice Chairs of APC and URC.

A small change was made to the **Standing Committee on the Academic Code**: Its Chair and Vice Chair will now be Faculty members. Previously the Chair was appointed by the Dean of the College and was often an associate dean of the College.

Unchanged Committees

Two Faculty committees were deemed to be appropriately constituted and performing well and not requiring change: the **Honorary Degrees Committee** and the **Status of Women Committee**. For reasons stated earlier, no changes were recommended in the **Committee on Medical Faculty Appointment** and the **Medical Faculty Executive Committee**; changes to both committees are being prepared by the Division of Biology and Medicine. The **University Committee on the Arts** has been left unchanged but is expected to disband in fall, 2003 when the status of the **Creative Arts Council** is changed by the Provost.

Three other committees over which the Faculty has no jurisdiction but on which Faculty members serve are the **University Disciplinary Committee**, a Corporation committee, the **Presidential Advisory Committee on Corporate Responsibility in Investment**, and the **John Carter Brown Library Faculty Liaison Committee**.

Administrative Advisory Boards

One of the more innovative ideas to emerge from the review of Faculty governance is the administrative advisory board. The purpose of a board is "to advise a senior administrator (who is its Chair) on resources and priorities for which the senior administrator has responsibility." Each board must have at least four Faculty members, one of whom must serve as Vice Chair. The executive committee, consisting of at least the Chair and Vice Chair, sets the agenda for the board. The Vice Chair presents the annual report of the board to the Faculty. Faculty members may either be appointed by the senior administrator in consultation with the FEC or may be elected, a determination that is made at the time of creation of the board.

At the April Faculty meeting the **Library, Computing, and Campus Resources and Planning** advisory boards were approved. Other boards are being prepared to provide advice to senior administrators responsible for the Faculty, College, human resources, and diversity. As these boards come into operation, standing committees of the Faculty are being eliminated. Committees that will continue to operate until the establishment of administrative advisory boards include the following: Lectureships; Awards and Benefits; University Benefits; Academic Standing; Commencement Speakers; Admissions and Financial Aid; Faculty Resumed Undergraduate Education Policy & Admissions; Prizes and Premiums; Student Life; Athletics and Physical Education; Summer Studies; Financial Aid Awards Review Board;

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Minority Faculty Recruitment; University Research Council; Biosafety; Radiation Safety; and Laboratory Safety.

Summary

There was broad consultation within the committee and between the committee and the Faculty on the new governance structure. The Task Force met 26 times as a committee, held two meetings with the President and Provost, hosted two Faculty Forums, one each in October and November, and presented reports at two Faculty meetings before legislation was first introduced in November. Legislation to enact the governance changes was debated and voted upon at two Faculty meetings in November and one each in December, February, March and April. We communicated to the Faculty in writing at the end of July and the end of August, and our colleagues responded in writing and at Faculty meetings. One measure of the volume of work undertaken by the Task Force and of the Faculty's interest in it is that we exchanged more than 2,600 email messages.

In response to these communications many changes were made in legislation before it came to the Faculty. A few changes were made on the floor of the Faculty, including a change in the membership of APC and TPA from only full professors to "six tenured Faculty members or senior lecturers of broad experience and scholarly distinction who are expected to serve the general interests of the University" on APC and to "tenured Faculty members active in research and teaching" on TPA. One other important change made on the floor was the addition of a requirement to SDH "to review denials of promotion, tenure, and reappointment for adherence to the Corporation statement on non-discrimination and submit findings, in writing, to the TPA and the Provost."

The Task Force members worked hard and diligently over a substantial (but relatively short) period of time. President Simmons has expressed her thanks for our hard work. Personally, I was honored to serve with such wise and devoted colleagues. We extend our thanks to all of our colleagues who came forward to help us produce a superior product that reflects the wishes of the Faculty. We also express our appreciation to Russell Carey, Secretary of the University, and Beverly Ledbetter, Vice President and General Counsel, for their help in drafting legislation. We thank FEC, our parent committee, and Bill Beeman, its chair and Chair of the Faculty, who shepherded the legislation through the Faculty. Finally, we thank President Simmons, who inspired this effort, the Provost, who supported us at key junctures, and all the many senior administrators with whom we worked.

The most satisfying aspect of our project was that, in the end, the Faculty took ownership of it. Faculty enthusiasm for the end product is measured by the many colleagues who have volunteered for service on our new committees and boards. Our expectation is that our new system of governance will strengthen not only Faculty self-governance but create and reinforce a strong and healthy relationship between the Faculty and the administration.

The Task Force has a website at <http://facgov.brown.edu/taskforce.html> on which we have posted our charge, background material, the list of approved committees, motions presented to the Faculty, minutes of our meetings, letters to the Faculty, the names of Task Force members, and a set of slides used to describe our recommendations to the Faculty.