July 12, 2010

MEMORANDUM

To: Dean Satish Udpa
From: Robert Y. Ofole and John F. Foss
Re: Faculty Council-Academic Council (FC/AC) Report

Because of their overlapping agenda, we present only one report for both Faculty Council and Academic Council. The two committees met a total of eighteen times between them during the 2009-2010 academic year. The major topics of discussion are briefly presented below:

- University budget: this was a major issue discussed at essentially each meeting, particularly during fall semester. It constituted substantial portions of the opening remarks given by both President Simon and Provost Wilcox. Primary concerns related to the lateness of the legislative budget process, and uncertainties about the Agricultural Experiment Station and MSU Extension Service. The efforts to address these and related issues led to the creation of the “Shaping the Future” program for the university, an effort to reduce the budget and rethink what the university should be in the future.

- An Academic Year Task Force was established to recommend revisions to the Provost. The primary objectives included aligning the two semesters, looking at beginning fall semester after Labor Day, and holding commencement after final exams in the spring.

- A major revision of the Bylaws for Academic Governance was undertaken and completed. A file containing the highlights of the proposed changes is attached to this report.

- A new prescription drug policy (Generic Prescribing Program or GPP) was presented and approved by the body. The new policy gives members the incentive to choose less expensive generic medications over brand name medications.

Other noteworthy items and discussions:

- A motion was passed to allow one representative of the MSU Faculty Emeriti to be seated in Academic Council, with voice but without vote.

- The University Committee on Curriculum (UCC) presented sought and received approval for a variety of program changes across the university. The most significant of these is the discontinuation of the Music Therapy Program.

- A generic prescription program was initiated for MSU faculty and staff.

- Revisions to the Academic Freedom Report (AFR) for students were approved.

Major announcements:

- New facility at the Macomb Community College University Center for the College of Osteopathic Medicine; Osteopathic Medicine now has three sites: Detroit, Macomb and East Lansing.

- New NSF Center (Bio/computational Evolution in Action CONsortium or BEACON) to be established in the College of Engineering for the study of evolution in action.
Highlights of the Proposed Changes in MSU's Bylaws for Academic Governance (BAG)
Adopted by Faculty Council on various dates
most recently March 16, 2010

Introduction

These Faculty Council actions reflect its deliberations and actions to date on the recommendations of the Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Faculty Voice commissioned by the Academic Senate in Spring 2004, as well as a general review of the BAG. The Faculty Voice Committee's mandate was to analyze and propose alterations to the academic governance system at MSU. Some of the recommendations of the April 2005 Voice report proposed changes in the BAG, while others focused on changes supportive of academic governance but not directly concerning BAG provision changes. Academic Governance has deliberated on all the Voice Committee recommendations via task forces, study groups and within the Faculty Council since 2005. More recently, the Faculty Council has devoted its attention to specific BAG amendments concluding its deliberations on March 16, 2010.

Overview

While the document before you includes important proposals for change in the BAG, it is important to note that many of its provisions are unchanged and its basic structure remains a shared governance model within which key roles and responsibilities are played or exercised by councils of faculty, students and University administrators and a range of University level standing committees, as is the case within the current BAG. Further, it should be noted that no specific changes regarding the role of students within academic governance have been proposed, with prime attention placed on the role of the faculty. Finally, there a number of less significant changes, including those of an editorial variety, which are not addressed in this summary. It is important that members of the Academic Council review the entire Faculty Council proposal. (Note: the numbers referenced below relate to the sections of the Faculty Council proposed BAG amendments.)

Specific significant changes are summarized below:

Title Changes: Changes in title are proposed for several entities within the BAG including Faculty Council to Faculty Senate, Academic Council to University Council, Academic Senate to Academic Congress, Executive Committee to Steering Committee. In addition, proposed changes in titles of some of the University level standing committees are as follows: University Committee on Academic Policy to University Committee on Undergraduate Studies and University Graduate Council to University Committee on Graduate Studies.
Chairperson Role: Changes in the sources of body chairpersons are proposed. The chairperson of the Faculty Senate will be selected from a slate of at-large faculty representatives on the Steering Committee by vote of the members of the Faculty Senate (3.3.2). The Faculty Senate chairperson also serves in the capacity of chairperson of the Academic Congress (3.1.1.3). The President of MSU retains a role as chairperson of the University Council (3.2.2.1).

Role of the Academic Congress: Its role becomes a bit more deliberative and action-oriented (3.1). The Congress has a role of endorsing or rejecting items which come before it before referring the item back to the body originating the topic (3.1.2.2). Also, members of the Academic Congress who are present at a meeting may, by majority vote, call for an additional meeting but only on items on the original agenda of the current meeting (3.1.3.2.3).

Role of the Faculty: While most of the provisions of the Faculty Senate are the same as for the Faculty Council, a separate Bylaws section is proposed, describing the role and functions of the Faculty Senate to ensure recognition of the key role of the faculty within the academic governance system (3.3).

The Steering Committee and the Liaison Committee: Except for the name change noted above, the Steering Committee plays a similar role as the Executive Committee under the current BAG (3.4). There is a proposal to establish a Faculty Liaison Committee to the Board of Trustees with roughly the same composition as currently, but to have its role become part of the BAG rather than via a separate Board of Trustees adopted procedure. This committee includes no students but presumably the current Board of Trustees approved student liaison committee can remain in place (3.4.2.9).

University Level Committee Reporting Lines: An important change proposed in the current BAG has to do with the reporting lines to superior bodies of the various University level standing committees of academic governance. Under the current BAG, most standing committee recommendations are reviewed and acted upon in both the Faculty Council and the Academic Council. The recommendation now proposes that reporting lines vary depending on the functions of the various University level standing committees (3.2.6.1. and 3.3.5). The UCFA, UCFT and UCC which deal with the curriculum and predominately with issues of "faculty life (tenure and promotion, salary and benefits)" report to the Faculty Senate, although these committees have discretion to obtain feedback from the University Council. The other University level standing committees report to the University Council but with required reporting to the Faculty Senate on specified matters, e.g., establishment, disbandment or merger of academic programs, etc. (see complete 3.3.5 and 3.3.6). However, on recommendations concerning major academic policies the relevant University level standing committee is to provide its report or a summary to the University Council as an information item.
The Athletic Council: While retaining its status as an "Other University Committee," it is recommended that this Council be represented in the University Council by its chairperson who is to become a member of the University Council (5.2).