

REPORT TO THE ISU PRESIDENT
INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
August-8 September, 2010

INTRODUCTION

At the June 17, 2010 State Board of Education (SBOE) meeting, the SBOE voted to direct Idaho State University (ISU) President Arthur C. Vailas to conduct a review of institutional governance at ISU. This action was premised on the SBOE's April 22, 2010 approval of ISU's campus-wide reorganization that "also necessitate[d] a revision of the faculty governance structure." (See Appendix A for a copy of the motions from the April and June Board meetings.) More specifically, the SBOE indicated that "a review of governance will necessarily require the use of a broad advisory group (including faculty) pursuant to Board Policy III.C4" and instructed this group to "examine models which will maximize effective and efficient participation by the faculty in its governance role." It was noted this type of review would permit "consideration of additional efficiencies" and "alignment with the institution's reorganized governance structure." In response, President Vailas appointed an Institutional Governance Advisory Committee (see Appendix B for members).

Section III.C.I of the SBOE's Governing Policies and Procedures specifically addresses the President's role in institutional governance and asserts that the president is ultimately responsible and accountable for governing the University (see Appendix C for Policy 111.C.1-5):

The Chief Executive Officer is the chief program and administrative officer of the institution, with full power and responsibility within the framework of the Board's governing policies and procedures for the organization, management, and supervision of the institution. The Chief Executive Officer is held accountable by the Board for the successful functioning of the institution.

This extensive grant of authority, and concomitant accountability, encompasses the "organization, management, and supervision" of an internal advisory system to ensure the coherent and efficient operation of the University. Under Sections III.C.3. and 4., the President is authorized to establish or recognize constituent governance organizations that advise him as part of the decision-making process of the institution and to create advisory groups to make recommendations on particular issues. SBOE policy on institutional governance (Section III.C.2.) directs the faculty body of each institution to "establish written bylaws, a constitution, and necessary procedures, subject to the approval by the Chief Executive Officer and the Board, for making recommendations to the Chief Executive Officer as a part of the decision-making process of the institution."

The recent major reorganization of ISU's colleges, and the SBOE charge to review and revise institutional governance in light of it, provides an opportunity for fundamental change. Innovative and strategic restructuring of the governance system can reduce faculty service burden while increasing the breadth of faculty input on curriculum, academic standards, faculty appointments and ranks, promotion and tenure, faculty hiring and retention strategies, and workload through a streamlined communication model with reduced committee commitments. This allows the University to shed itself of the constraints of timeworn structures. Committees may provide direct input to the appropriate administrative decision-maker with little intermediation.

The recommendations discussed in this report recognize the importance of faculty input, while freeing faculty from duplicative meetings and allowing them more time to devote to student needs, professional development, creative activities, and research.

VALUES/ AND PREMISES OF THE COMMITTEE

The Institutional Governance Advisory Committee based its work on and supports the following premises:

1. All constituent groups (e.g., students, staff, faculty, administrators, alumni, community) should be given an opportunity to participate in discussions and make recommendations to the University

administration regarding issues of direct relevance to them.

2. Effective and efficient faculty and staff organizations (i.e., a Faculty Senate and a Staff Council) are important vehicles for review and discussion of issues and communication of input and recommendations to the President, Provost, and Vice Presidents.
3. Faculty, staff, and student organizations are advisory in nature and do not have the authority to approve (or not approve) University policies, procedures, and presidential decisions. However, in many areas, timely input is invaluable to maintaining a strong institution.
4. Careful, reasoned faculty advice is valued and essential to the University. However, faculty time is limited, so the process of generating faculty advice should not impede quality teaching and research and other scholarly/creative activities.
5. The Faculty is required by SBOE policy to develop a Constitution and Bylaws, which must be approved by the President and the SBOE. Changes to these documents also must be approved by the President and SBOE.
6. Senior faculty should assume primary responsibility for committee work to protect the service time commitment of junior faculty, allowing them to focus on teaching, research, and creative activities.

CONCERNS

Based on the Institutional Governance Advisory Committee's [review of University and Faculty Senate documents, personal observations, and concerns brought to our attention, we have identified with the following issues related to the](#) current University system of advisory committees ~~include~~:

1. The University, over time has developed a complex, hierarchical system of committees that, in the aggregate, function as the University advisory structure (see Figure 1). The advisory system is not as responsive, effective, efficient, or flexible as it could be in providing advice, feedback, and timely recommendations to the University administration.
 - ◆ There are more than 60 standing committees that constitute the advisory structure.
 - ◆ Approximately half of these committees report to the President, Provost, or one of the Vice Presidents. The remainder report to the Senate.
 - ◆ A number of these University committees meet "as needed" (e.g., grievance committees) or are temporary committees formed for a specific purpose and then disbanded once their charge is completed.
 - ◆ The Faculty Senate reports directly to the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs and has about 30 standing councils and committees in its hierarchical structure (see Figure 2).
 - ◆ The colleges have a number of department and college faculty committees, which are not included in the 60+ committees identified above.
2. The Faculty Senate does not have a Constitution as required by the SBOE and its current Bylaws (and the Bylaws of its councils and committees) do not align with the revised organization of the colleges and the Division of Health Sciences.
3. The size, structure, and composition of the Faculty Senate are points of concern:
 - ◆ The size of the Faculty Senate - and its associated councils and committees - may be larger than best practices would define as optimal for committee work to be accomplished.
 - ◆ Senate seats are allocated based on proportional representation and this places smaller colleges at a disadvantage when issues of primary relevance to them are being considered. The ideal Senate may not need to be proportional to represent the faculty.
 - ◆ The number of councils and their subcommittees is also large and involves a significant time commitment by the Faculty (i.e., the number of faculty required to populate these committees). Some of these councils and committees could be eliminated, reassigned, or combined to decrease the total committee workload of the Faculty. Given the hierarchical nature of the Faculty Senate and its councils and committees, the time required for review of documents (e.g., draft policies, Notices of Intent, curricular changes, action plans, committee minutes, etc.) at each level results in significant delays in submission of the Senate's final input and recommendations to the Office of Academic Affairs and/or the President. In addition, the recommendations at each level of review can be accepted or rejected. Thus, the work of one committee may be overturned at a higher level.
 - ◆ The mix of senior and junior faculty on the Senate is weighted heavily toward junior faculty;

- currently, there are few full professors on the Senate. For example, only 1/5th of the Senate and 1/6th of the Curriculum Council members are full professors.
- ◆ In conflict with SBOE policy, the Faculty Senate in recent years has asserted that it has the authority to approve or veto decisions made by the President, rather than functioning as an advisory body to the President. Recent examples of this include issues with the Senate's review, adoption and implementation of Administrative policies (MAPPS), and the University Workload policy.
 - ◆ The Faculty Senate and its advisory structure are expensive, both in terms of dollars and in terms of faculty, staff, and administrator time and productivity.
 - ◆ A number of critical strategic issues have not been dealt with well by the current Faculty Senate advisory structure. Significant curricular issues have not been addressed, including policies and procedures for program review and long-range program planning, interdisciplinary program models, and alignment of the general education program with the needs of the various colleges' programs. The Vice President for Research has identified the need to create an advisory committee, composed of some of the experienced researchers on campus. In addition, timely advice on budgetary and facilities issues is not being received.

RECOMMENDATIONS

General

The Senate, Provost, Vice Presidents, and President should examine the large number of advisory committees that report directly to them, making changes as needed to increase efficiency, effectiveness, flexibility, and responsiveness. To ensure the University has an effective, efficient, flexible, and responsive advisory system, careful consideration should be given to assessment of the number of committees required, number of committee members, frequency of meetings, and the committees' defined functions and responsibilities.

We recommend the Senate and senior administration inventory the advisory bodies reporting to them with the objective of identifying those that can be combined, reduced in size, reassigned, or eliminated. This would yield system-wide benefits by reducing faculty, staff, and student committee workload; reducing the time for constituent input to reach the appropriate officer; and improving the quality and function of the advisory system and the recommendations received.

The institutional governance advisory system should ensure that faculty, staff, and students have the opportunity to participate in discussions and to make recommendations. To make this opportunity meaningful and effective, matters presented to committees should have a due date for submission of recommendations. Committees should then make their recommendations by this date. The President, Provost, or applicable Vice President is not, nor should she or he be, required to delay action beyond a reasonable time frame because no input has been provided by a committee.

Recommendations for the Faculty Senate

We recommend that the Faculty Senate submit to the President a draft Constitution and revised Bylaws that conform to SBOE policies and procedures and align with the new college/division structure. The Constitution and revised Bylaws must be approved by the University President and the SBOE.

Recommendation for New Presidential Advisory Committees

The current system of councils and committees advising the President, Provost, and Vice Presidents does not appear to meet the needs of either the administration or the Faculty. The administration frequently does not receive advice in a timely or effective way and as a result faculty recommendations may not always receive appropriate consideration.

We recommend that the President create four university-wide committees to advise him and his designees on issues critical to the effective operation of the University. These four committees will have charters that overlap somewhat with those of the Senate's corresponding councils, and to some extent they can make recommendations in the absence of timely advice from those councils. However,

these new committees' objectives are broader and their members will focus on more strategic issues that currently are not being adequately addressed.

The four new advisory committees being proposed are:

1. University Curriculum Advisory Committee - This committee would focus on providing the Provost input and advice on inter-college issues related to curriculum, interdisciplinary educational programs, program review procedures and feedback, the 8-Year Plan updates submitted to the SBOE, Notices of Intent, and other such university-wide activities. Intra-college curricular issues and actions would be the responsibility of the colleges' curricular review bodies.
2. University Budget Advisory Committee - This committee would work with the Vice President for Finance and Administration to provide advice on issues related to long-range budget planning at the University level, as well as development of procedures to address budget holdbacks, zero-based budgeting, and the development of annual budgets submitted to the SBOE. The colleges would maintain control of their own budgets and engage in budget planning at the college level.
3. University Research Advisory Committee - This committee would report to the Vice President for Research and would provide, for example, input on strategies to advance ISU's research mission and other university-wide concerns related to faculty research and creative pursuits.
4. Master Planning Advisory Committee - Long-term planning at the university level requires advice from faculty and staff with expertise in a number of areas. This committee would report to the Vice President for Finance and Administration and the Provost and focus on long-range facilities planning and development of an integrated University master plan that supports the University's strategic plan.

These advisory committees, created by the President, should send their minutes and recommendations directly to the appropriate Vice President. The Curriculum, Budget, and Master Planning Advisory committees should have a university-wide strategic focus. The faculty representatives on the Research Advisory Committee should be experienced researchers. These committees should be integrated with and support the corresponding decision-making processes in the reorganized colleges.

Principles to which each University Advisory Committee should adhere include:

- Faculty members on these committees should be senior faculty (full-time, continuing professors and associate professors, or equivalent PTE faculty).
- These committees should ensure that appropriate deliberation and decision-making occurs at the college/division level and focus their efforts primarily on University-wide issues.

Summation

Idaho State University can significantly streamline its advisory structure in a way that will benefit the entire University community. The proposed system, we believe, will allow all constituencies an opportunity to provide advice on matters relevant to them. We urge everyone to work together in the spirit of achieving a structure that gives the President effective and timely advice on matters of importance, thereby ensuring the voice of each group having a vested interest is heard. [The Committee purposely did not specify how the concepts in its recommendations should be implemented, as we did not feel it our responsibility to micro-manage or articulate the details and definitions. We wanted to provide a general set of recommendations that would provide the colleges and the Faculty Senate an opportunity to define and develop the operational elements. For example, we suggest that the colleges determine who to include as senior faculty in making committee assignments. We encourage the Faculty of the University to participate in discussions related to the various recommendations in this report and in identification and implementation of the details.](#)