

AGENDA COMMITTEE REPORT ON FACULTY GOVERNANCE AND SERVICE FATIGUE

Background:

During the 2005-2006 academic year the Agenda Committee began conversations about how to strengthen faculty governance within the SoE. Concerns have ranged from difficulty in finding colleagues willing to serve on various committees to lack of attendance at committee meetings to questions regarding the effectiveness of the SoE's current committee structure (which has been reviewed and modified relatively recently) to the feeling among some colleagues of service overload.

For example, when asked to serve on a standing committee because of his membership on Policy Council, Bradley Levinson wrote to the Dean and the Agenda Committee that we “need to initiate a serious conversation about service overload in the SoE. Time crunch has become a very common lament here—almost a ritual form of greeting. Yet in my conversations with many faculty colleagues around campus, it has become clear to me that the SoE has by far the highest service requirements, and we have no mechanisms to provide faculty with course reduction or other compensation for heavy service loads. We may even have to think about changing the constitution so fewer positions have to be filled by Policy Council people. Because one of the things I also see happening is a rather uneven distribution of service across faculty WITHIN the SoE. The same faculty keep getting elected to Policy Council because they're popular, respected, 'good citizens,' whatever, and about half the rest of the faculty end up with rather few service requirements. Also, some of us are rather involved in campus and community service, and get no respite at the School level in spite of this.”

Because these issues of faculty governance and service are so encompassing, the Agenda Committee determined that the most productive first step in addressing them was to request that each standing committee take up faculty governance/service concerns at a meeting, paying particular attention to its own responsibilities and issues. Committees were encouraged to frame this issue in any manner most appropriate to the committee. However, the Agenda Committee suggested the following questions as a possible way to begin the discussion:

Have you had discussions like this at any of your meetings?

Have you had problems with attendance?

Is your committee's mission clear and related to obvious needs and actions that improve the functioning and/or “life” of the SoE?

Do you feel that your committee's activities and work lead to concrete results?

Common Themes from Committee Reports:

Reports addressing the question of service were received from 4 standing committees, including the Graduate Studies Committee, the International Programs Committee, the Long Range Planning Committee, and the Committee on Teacher Education. Please see Appendixes 1-4 for copies of these reports. The following common themes stand out:

1 Service overload is considered a problem.

2 A reasonable standard for service on institutional committees is lacking.

3 Such a standard should be expected, consistent, and clear across all School of Education departments.

4 Lack of fairness in the current distribution of service is considered a problem.

5 Lack of clarity regarding “fair share” of service is a problem..

Determining fair share is important but nearly impossible as there is no common standard for service across the SoE, and there is no clear mechanism for evaluating actual level of service.

Not all committee work is even. There seem to be three levels of work typically associated with committees: short term intense work; regular intense work; and regular not-so-intense work.

A standard for appropriate, fair service will be hard to determine as service beyond committee work varies widely across departments and programs—with different levels of advising and responsibilities for the accreditation of programs and the like.

To develop a standard there is a need to track distribution of service load.

Can faculty governance loads be more evenly distributed, with other forms of service (E.g. dissertation service, outside university service) as a counterbalance?
Can we study service loads? Are there invisible forms of service?

6 Committee restructuring is probably necessary.

We may need to re-evaluate whether existing committees need to be re-structured.

We may need to re-evaluate the need for standing committees to have Policy Council representatives.

7 Valuing Service

Is compensation for exceptional service a possibility—money in research accounts for example?

Can we increase ways to recognize all forms of service?

CONCLUSIONS and RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS:

Service overload, itself perceived as a problem, is aggravated by a sense among many faculty members that some/most? colleagues engage in service and others/some? do not or not to the extent that they would meet a “fair share” criterion. Put bluntly, we have X Policy Council standing committees and approximately X faculty who can be appointed to them. It takes faculty serving on X policy council committees to do the work of faculty governance. Without this level of engagement, faculty governance suffers.

1. SoE faculty intuitively have categories of service, but there is no institutional way of measuring these at the moment. The School of Education should work to establish a general expectation (by rank) of distribution of policy council committee participation.
2. In general we should expect less service of pre-tenured faculty, more of full faculty.
3. We suggest a review of how department chairs and others advise un-tenured faculty about service and “fair share.”
4. Department chairs might file letters if a faculty member is to be excused from the expectation of serving on policy council committees. This would be a benefit both to Policy Council and to faculty who will have a better understanding of just what fair share entails. The process would also facilitate evaluation of service load for annual reviews and promotions. Then, other domains of service (which are also unequal) should be counterbalanced at the department level. If a person is serving on a number of external boards, or university-level committees, this should be counter balanced with department-level responsibilities.
5. Committee Restructuring-- A next important step that should be considered is to reduce and restrict policy council committees. This year we began that process by dismantling the retreat planning committee and consolidating retreat planning with the responsibilities of the long range planning committee.

APPENDIX 1 Graduate Studies Committee, March 2006

- School of Education faculty members are overburdened by service commitments.
- Many committees overlap. Perhaps more could be done with fewer committees.
- Challenges of committee work as faculty try to balance their scholarly work, their service outside of the school of education, and their advising of students. Suggestions were made to merge some committees and to possibly decrease membership.
- Policy Council standing committees are not the only meetings faculty have to attend. They also have to attend program and department meetings. There are times that it feels like all time is spent in meetings when faculty need to be writing and advising students. Thus, the time in the meeting might not be that productive. Perhaps the necessity of meeting needs to be reconsidered so that there are fewer to attend.
- The number of doctoral committees that faculty members serve on should also be taken into account so that faculty who are serving on many dissertation committees could serve on fewer policy council committees. There is great imbalance in faculty advising: some faculty members serve on many dissertation committees and do not get any teaching release time or service release time. It was mentioned that in many other departments and in other institutions there is a formula for providing faculty release time for serving on dissertation committees.
- Someone mentioned that “there needs to be a balance between equity and democracy.” Sometimes the elections to Policy Council become a type of popularity contest. Maybe we should consider having the membership on these committees (e.g. Policy Council) rotate so that all faculty members would eventually serve.
- Is there a tracking system to note the number of service requirements that faculty members have? It was suggested to have such a system so faculty could list the committees and advising responsibilities that they have. It was noted that at IUB, each faculty member submits a report which does allow faculty to report their advising/dissertation committees and other service activities
- Some committees are more labor intensive than others. This should be taken into account.
- There are also many program and local service projects (e.g. Saturday Art Program) that are not honored in terms of service.
- The School of Education seems to have greater service requirements than other departments/schools across campus.
- We need to restructure committees.
- Some committees (e.g., GSC) would also be more effective if there were a representative from each department – fewer members would also be needed.
- The following questions could be asked of each committee: 1.) Is the committee essential? 2.) If the committee is essential, what is the minimum number of members needed to accomplish the tasks? 3.) How often does the committee need to meet to accomplish the tasks? Could the committee meet less? 4.) How do service requirements in the School of Education compare to service requirements in other departments across campus?

APPENDIX 2 Faculty Governance and Service-- CTE Concerns and Recommendations – April, 2006

At the February 28 and March 23 CTE meetings, we engaged in discussions dealing with faculty governance and service issues. Below is a summary of the concerns and recommendations made by members of the CTE:

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- The service load in the School of Education is extremely high, mainly due to the fact that the school has a large number of accredited programs requiring periodic review and continual oversight. Thus, service is a requirement for all Education faculty; however, there should be better methods for distributing the load.
 - Perhaps we should revisit the “research, teaching, service” algorithm. Allow faculty to redistribute their merit percentages based on the number of committees they are participating in, and the amount of responsibilities they have on those committees.
 - Is there a way to have “committee member evaluations” similar to teaching evaluations? CTE members noted that there is currently no accountability on faculty/staff annual reports whether members were actually active on the committee. It was suggested that percentages of meetings attended be included in annual reports. The committee chair could report the attendance of faculty members at committee meetings. Members felt this would be an appropriate starting point.
 - We need to address the issues of increased service load for minority faculty – due to the fact that we are encouraged to have diverse representation on committees.
 - Are there methods for providing additional financial compensation to faculty with high service responsibilities?
 - One suggestion was to determine if some existing committees could be combined into one body. For example, members of the elementary and secondary education councils could be appointed to serve as members of the CTE. This would be a double service load for people in those committees, but may ensure members who are more invested in the issues at hand and more informed on the items. The difficulty in this option is that CTE is an independent body which is unique in that it has representation of faculty and staff from outside the School of Education. Members then suggested that meetings of the full council be reduced for program review and UAS assessment, and allow a small representative group from the elementary and secondary education councils to represent other agenda items.
 - Another issue to consider is the distribution of faculty involved in service. Some members serve on multiple committees while others have no service commitments. There are also councils within the School of Education and the

university that are not Policy Council governed organizations (e.g. elementary education, secondary education, academic standards committee); thus policy council may not recognize these commitments and assign faculty and staff to additional service on Policy Council committees. Service on a diverse selection of committees under the university should be recognized and valued by Policy Council.

APPENDIX 3--Summary of International Programs Committee Discussion on Service, April 28, 2006

- 1) There is a general agreement that service overload is a problem and is perceived to be a problem by many.
- 2) How skewed is the distribution of service workload? Some feel that less than 10% of the faculty do 100% of the work. There is a need for a detailed analysis of service but who should do this? At the committee level? At the program level? At the department level?
- 3) One IPC member's suggestion: People who are on committees but not working should be asked to resign so they cannot claim service that is actually not being performed. This will make room for considering new members who will contribute. In other words, make sure rosters of committee membership are true to what is really happening within committees.
- 4) One factor that may dampen enthusiasm for committee work is when committees do the work that should really be done by an office. This has been seen to be true of the IPC. It attempts to resolve issues, but really has no authority. There should be an office of international studies with some budget and power.
- 5) Compensation for service is indeed a serious issue. Relying on good will can only get us so far.
- 6) There needs to be a review of how new faculty are advised to understand the place of and participate in service-related work. There is a strong sense among members of the committee that un-tenured faculty are protected from service overload and that as a general rule the rule for responding to significant service requests of un-tenured faculty should be "no." What is the chair's responsibility in this regard?

APPENDIX 4--Response to question about faculty service load in SOE from the Long Range Planning Committee

The members of the LRPC discussed the email sent by Heidi Ross requesting responses to the question about faculty service load in the SOE. Together, we decided that we want to share the following points with the Agenda Committee:

- 1) Yes, we clearly agree with the view of Brad Levinson and others that faculty service load in the SOE is entirely too heavy for some and much too light for others.
- 2) We want to pull "our fair share" of the load, but don't know what that is because there is no clear standard for what a normal load is or what is expected. We would like to see a statement like that from the leaders of the school.
- 3) When determining what a "fair share" looks like, there should be consideration and explanation of the integration of that load between department, school, university, profession, state, national and international activities.
- 4) We especially think it is important to determine what a "fair share" is for pre-tenured faculty, while recognizing this is important to know for post-tenured faculty as well because too much service leads to burn-out.
- 5) There should be a re-consideration of the current committee structure in the SOE to determine if all the existing committees are needed.
- 6) When new committees are formed, there should be some consideration and acknowledgment of the economics of forming the committee, such as how many person-hours will be used for the work of the committee and the dollar cost of those hours to the school, in order to determine if the committee is worth the return on investment.
- 7) There should be consideration of differing expectations regarding service by different departments. For example, faculty in counseling psych have a greater service load due to advising than faculty in other departments.