

**Ad Hoc Committee on Constitutional Change
Final Report
June 7, 2010**

Committee Members: Sy Adler, UPA, Mary Ann Barham, UASC, Virginia Butler, ANTH, Jeanne Enders, SBA, Mark Jones CS, Bob Liebman SOC (Chair), Alan MacCormack, UNST
Consultants: Sarah Andrews-Collier TA, Duncan Carter CLAS

The Ad hoc Committee on Constitutional Change was created by the Faculty Senate pursuant to a motion by the Ad hoc Committee to Assess Faculty Participation and Empowerment passed on June 8, 2009

Whereas PSU has grown significantly since the last revision of its Constitution, and whereas the 2005 Ad Hoc Committee on Shared Governance, and the 2008-09 Ad Hoc Committee to Assess Faculty Participation and Empowerment both recommended the formation of a Constitutional Amendment Committee, we move that an ad hoc committee be formed to propose changes to the constitution that bring it more in line with our current composition and circumstances.

Beginning in October 2009, the Committee considered the recommendations of the May 9, 2005 Report of the Ad hoc Committee on Shared Governance and of the June 8, 2009 report of Ad hoc Committee on Assess Faculty Participation and Empowerment. We reviewed the 2008-09 faculty governance study which included a survey, focus groups, and interviews. We discussed the report of the study's consultant, Adrianna Kezar and read some of her writings on effective governance. We had two long interviews: one with Michael Reardon on the history of governance focused on prior reforms and attempted reforms at PSU, and a second with Sarah Andrews-Collier that addressed the changing character of the Senate and processes for constitutional change.

Based on the work of prior committees and our research, we presented to the Senate Steering Committee in January 2010 a framework for change based on three key points: 1. Making a more mission-focused and smaller Senate by changing eligibility and representation; 2. Encouraging priority-setting through an annual agenda and planning of senate meetings to use the calendar effectively for discussion and deliberation of important matters; 3. Improving communication between the Senate and administration and between the Senate and the Faculty. Working from these points, we made twenty-six recommendations for constitutional and administrative changes and for earmarking resources to support them.

At the suggestion of the Presiding Officer and the Steering Committee, we presented our recommendations for possible constitutional changes at the February, March, and April Senate meetings for discussion on the floor, on the wiki, and by email. At the May meeting, we introduced a package of constitutional amendments to strengthen senate leadership, clarify language for eligibility, reorganize divisional representation, and adjust faculty representation. In response to suggestions by Senators, we made modifications and will present the revised amendments for a final vote on June 7.

Writing our final report ahead of the June 7 meeting, we do not know the outcome of the vote for these amendments. But we do know that several non-constitutional changes are needed to make the Faculty Senate more participative, more pro-active, and more effective as an advocate for PSU's future.

Most important among these non-constitutional changes are strategic agenda-setting and improving communications between the Senate and the faculty. **We recommend that OAA provide funds for a daylong Summer 2010 retreat of the Senate steering committee and key committee chairs to consider implementation of non-constitutional changes listed in Appendices A & B.**

As our committee finishes its work, **we recommend that Senate establish an ad hoc committee for implementation of these constitutional and related non-constitutional changes.** The ad hoc committee will advise the Senate steering committee on implementation and track the progress and outcomes of implementation by gathering data for annual reports to the Senate on its effectiveness. The data should address changes in electoral participation, the representativeness, turnover, and absenteeism of Senators, and in the priorities and experiences of Senators and their leadership. **We recommend that OAA allocate funds for a part-time research assistant for this purpose.**

We are grateful to the members of prior ad hoc committees whose work framed the changes we propose and to the members of the Steering Committee for their support of our process. At a time of possible restructuring of the Oregon University System, changes in the Faculty Senate will be important to strengthening the system of shared governance that is a vital part of the culture of Portland State University.

APPENDIX A Non-constitutional changes presented to the Faculty Senate

Recommendation 1 A Strategic Senate

Goal: Focus annual Senate agenda on the year's most important matters.

- The aim is for the Senate to operate in a strategic fashion to address institution-wide issues as a working partner with the administration in shared governance.
- Senate leadership and key committee chairs would hold a daylong 'retreat' in the summer to establish priorities for the coming year. This should be followed by a coordinating meeting with administration.
- The Senate should use a large portion of the first Fall Senate meeting to define and discuss its strategic agenda for the year.
- At the final Senate meeting, the outgoing Presiding Officer should report progress on the year's agenda.
- We recommend funding for the daylong retreat and for course release for the Presiding Officer.

Recommendation 2 Communication

Goal: To raise the profile of Senate and its activities:

- Senate President address new faculty at Convocation
- ALL Faculty receive Senate Handbook
- Sitting senators contact new faculty
- Regular updates to faculty via email, etc., ...
- Senate president send letter in Sept. w/ goals for year
- Orientation for new senators @ last meeting in Spring Qtr
- Improvement in the website
- Funding to support senate activities

Recommendation 3 Operations

Senators with portfolio: Encourage all senators to serve on a constitutional committee during their 3 year term. Senators have experience, expertise, and visions for change that will benefit the work of committees handling curriculum, graduate, budget, planning, student affairs, etc.

Staff support: Some key Senate committees like the Grad Council are supported. Others need staff support for scheduling, copying, mailings, etc.

Recognition: Service to the Senate or Senate committees is part of the expectation of faculty work and those who do it should be given credit toward tenure, promotion, and merit pay.

APPENDIX B Recommendations – from the January, 2010 report to the Senate Steering Committee

1. Keep the Faculty Senate but strengthen it.

To have at PSU both a Faculty Senate and University Assembly would be contrary to a 50-year tradition, unwieldy, and likely to diffuse voice and diminish power. The Faculty Constitution gives authority to the Senate for curricular matters (including the awarding of degrees) and student welfare which are the core of the University's mission. That authority makes the Senate a partner with the administration in most matters of the University.

2. Focus the annual Senate agenda on the year's most important matters.

The aim is for the Senate to operate in a strategic fashion to address institution-wide issues as a working partner with the administration and statewide partners in shared governance.

2a. After new Senate leadership is seated in June, there should be a summer "visioning" retreat to prioritize matters for the coming year and schedule them in the monthly calendar. The visioning process should include key committee chairs. Soon after the retreat, Senate leadership and chairs of EPC and other key committees should meet with the administration in a joint planning process.

2b. The Senate should use a large portion of the first Fall Senate meeting to define and discuss its strategic agenda for the year.

2c. At the final Senate meeting, the outgoing Presiding Officer should report on progress on the year's agenda.

3. Communicating the purposes and activities of the Senate

3a. We recommend an annual September letter from the Presiding Officer that describes the purposes of the Senate and its priorities for the coming year.

3b. All faculty should be provided a Senate Handbook that expands on the existing Governance Guide to include discussion of the Senate's mission, activities, and accomplishments.

3c. We recommend that the Presiding Officer/Steering Committee speak at Convocation to newly hired faculty and staff to invite their participation in the Senate and faculty governance.

3d. The Senate should encourage participation by all faculty in governance. To ensure a flow of new talent, sitting senators should personally contact the newly tenured and promoted.

3e. There should be an orientation for newly elected Senators that precedes the last Senate meeting

3f. The Faculty Senate website should be enhanced to make easier communication with officers (a blog?) and to post Senate calendars, agenda, and minutes.

4. Representation in the Senate: Need for defining eligibility

Currently, Senators represent about 1200 faculty and staff, including department heads and associate and assistant deans at a ratio of 1:10. Rules for eligibility have changed over the years as Sarah Andrews-Collier can explain. We recommend revisions to the eligibility rules so that its membership fits the mission of Senate: stewardship of curriculum and student welfare.

4a. Eligibility should be restricted to those whose function at the University (teaching, research, and service) matches the Senate's mission. Initially, eligibility was limited to those who reported to the Provost, now the Office of Academic Affairs. As the eligibility rule was interpreted to mean credentials rather than function, a large number of FADM reports became eligible, including administrative assistants, business officers, parking, safety, and others whose work is not teaching, research, and service. Our recommendation is to exclude all whose work does not fit the mission of the Senate, roughly 200 of the current eligibles. We estimate that the result will be to shrink the current number of Senators from 115 to 95. ** Not a constitutional change but a change in applying the eligibility language. We look forward to help from Steering in defining eligibility.

4b. We recommend that Associate and Assistant Deans be eligible to vote but not serve as Senators if like Deans they are not involved directly in teaching and research.

** Not a constitutional change but a change in applying the eligibility language.

4c. Current voting blocs should be rethought. The Senate should group faculty who have common interests and communicate with each other. We recommend a Constitutional Change to break CLAS into 3 units which would then be represented in the Senate and on key committees (UCC, Grad Council, Budget). We recommend a Constitutional Change to merger of XST (too small) with OI.

5. Reorganize Senate meetings

Bless the Consent Agenda for speeding curricular changes and opening time for substantive discussion

5a. Change current practice of starting each meeting with President's & Provosts reports to involve President and Provost in discussion of Senate priorities. Allow for major reports on legislative matters [Bylaws change]

5b. Presiding Officer should limit length of reports (and tell speakers in advance)

5c. Have headlines for minutes of meetings go to all faculty through Currently or other media.

5d. Give thought to revising June meeting (for the sake of new Senators) which is overwhelmed by reports and elections

6. Committees

We heard complaints about the proliferation of Ad hoc committees by those who wondered whether standing committees could do the work or worried that Ad hoc members were selected without regard to representativeness.

We recommend that the committee system be rethought with an eye to smooth functioning, by assuring secretarial support (vital!), keeping records and institutional

memory, encouraging regular attendance, and identifying successors to chair. We suggest an end of year gathering of 09-10 committee chairs to have their input.

6a. In coordination with the goal of an activist, agenda-setting Senate, encourage representation by Senators on key Senate committees such as Committee on Committees and Academic Requirements Committee.

6b. Right-size committees to balancing the number of members with the volume of work. Some committees should be shrunk, others enlarged. Not all committees need full representation of schools and blocs in Senate.

6c. Some committees might be cut (Parking).

6d. Alter Advisory Council by linking more closely to Steering Committee and by ending at large representation and having 3 year term [With 2 year term, 1/2 of 6 seats turn over each year, members need to know each other to work effectively.]

6e. Revise language for EPC to coordinate with Steering Committee for agenda-setting

7. Voting and committee preferences

Current system of paper voting and committee preferences should slowly move online

8. Operations

8a. We recommend that the University provide course release to the Presiding Officer and the Secretary to the Faculty. Vote to put on the record.

8b. Arrange succession by encouraging President Pro Tempore to become Presiding Officer.

8c. Create a nominating committee separate from the Steering Committee.

8d. Have earlier elections for Senate leadership (April rather than June). ** Not Constitutional change but rules change.

END