

2005-2006 Final Report on the Committee on Committees

Committee on Committees Functioning:

The Committee on Committees met twice during the fall semester of 2005 for the purpose of reviewing and revising the questionnaire to be distributed to members of the individual committees under review. The sample letter of introduction to committee chairs was also revised to reflect the changes made in the questionnaire. Individual committee review assignments were made as well. A sample copy of the new questionnaire and letter of introduction are available for review on the Committee on Committee's page on the Standing Committees web site.

As per the charge to the Committee on Committees, a letter following up on the recommendations contained in the 2004–2005 final report was sent to the Chancellor early in the winter semester. A copy of this letter is also available for review on the Standing Committees web-site. The specific recommendations from 2004–2005 contained in that document are as follows:

- Assign Chairs for Standing Committees by the end of April of the previous academic year.
- Appoint new members to Standing Committees by the end of the previous academic year.
- Admissions Review Committee: Discontinue due to inactivity and replace with an Ad Hoc committee when needed.
- Retiree Advisory Committee: Discontinue and allow MURA to absorb its functions.
- Campus Mediation Committee: Include the director of Campus Mediation Service as an ex-officio member and increase the number of staff positions by two.
- Student Fee Capital Review Committee: Rebalance membership between faculty, staff and students through the elimination of one faculty position.
- Traffic Appeals Committee: Increase Graduate Student membership by one.
- Campus Safety Committee: Increase ex-officio membership by one.

Finally, Committee on Committee members conducted their individual committee reviews using the revised questionnaire and submitted their findings via e-mail to the chair during the spring semester. These reports constitute the basis for the individual committee review summaries for 2005–2006. The committees reviewed were:

- Campus Health Oversight
- Missouri Unions
- Hearnes Center
- Honorary Degrees
- Campus Planning
- Persons with Disabilities
- Minority Affairs
- Parking and Transportation
- Student Publications

Summary of Individual Committee Reviews

Campus Health Oversight Committee: This Committee was not reviewed in 2004–05 because the Committee on Committees reviewing member was told that it had been disbanded. When it was later discovered that Faculty Council still had it listed as an active committee, the recommendation was made in the Committee on Committees follow-up report of 4 February 2006, to disband it due to inactivity and allow other existing committees to absorb its functions. However, since this committee was still listed as active, it was decided to review its functions for the current year. After repeated, unsuccessful attempts to make contact with them, the Committee on Committees reviewer received a single response to our questionnaire as well as a copy of the minutes for one meeting. Since more feedback seemed necessary, a telephone interview was later conducted with the chair of the committee.

Recommendations: This committee has been inactive pending the outcome of discussions between its chair and the Chancellor. As noted in the committee's minutes, the Chancellor listened to the chair's concerns and was going to respond to him but had not done so as of this writing. Given this, a review of this committee's status and charge are needed. Currently, this committee exists to advise the Chancellor on matters related to health care benefits. However, according to the chair, there are also benefits subcommittees on faculty council and staff council as well as the University Retirement committee that are involved in this process as well. If the Health Oversight committee is to continue, structural changes need to be made to ensure meaningful communication with representatives of all groups involved in this discussion. These groups need to be identified and re-configured to maximize input into health care recommendations and decisions and to eliminate confusion and redundancy. Without these changes, it is recommended that the Health Oversight Committee be discontinued and its functions absorbed by other existing committees.

Hearnes Center Committee: The charge to this committee is to advise the Director of Intercollegiate Athletics on programs, services and policies for the Hearnes Center. Most members felt that the committee was fulfilling its stated charge but expressed reservations about the effectiveness with which they were doing so. There were several reasons expressed as to why this was the case. First, the Hearnes Center is part of a much larger operation and decisions about it depend on many other factors outside of the scope of the committee. In fact, the chair of the committee for 2004–2005 approached the Committee on Committees last year and requested that we consider broadening the charge to the committee to include oversight of the new arena and the newly renovated athletic center in order to address this concern. This request resulted in the recommendation that the *committee be re-named and its functions be broadened to establish oversight of Athletic Facilities as a whole.* (See follow-up report to Chancellor of 4 February 2006, page 2) Second, many members felt that their role as advisors was limited by lack of time, knowledge and interaction. They felt that they existed to simply rubber-stamp projects presented to them by the staff and that the two meetings they had during the year were not enough to develop group cohesiveness based on information and

background history. In short, they felt that no knowledge-base among members existed, so few questions could be asked and little discussion was held.

Recommendations: As per the recommendation included in the follow-up report of 4 February 2006, this committee should be re-named and its charge broadened to include oversight of Athletic Facilities as a whole. It is also recommended that they meet more than twice a year so that the membership has time to develop greater understanding of the projects that they are asked to evaluate.

Parking and Transportation Committee: The members of this committee expressed understanding of their stated charge and feel that they have fulfilled their duties accordingly. They saw the committee as having strong and effective leadership while maintaining good representation from the entire campus community. Some concern was expressed regarding the quality of the staff support given the committee but this was seen as a temporary situation. More importantly, members felt that committee appointments needed to be made in a timely fashion the preceding year so that they can begin work at the beginning of the fall semester.

Recommendation: Maintain and continue this committee as a Standing Campus Committee.

Missouri Unions Committee: While the members of this committee expressed an understanding of their charge, they voiced a universally stated desire to meet more often and to exercise a more active role in their advisory capacity relating to the Memorial Union and Brady Commons. The fact that the committee had met only twice in a year and a half was seen as cause for concern. Several respondents praised the committee's leadership, membership and motivation but felt that more substantive tasks and responsibilities were needed. To some extent, the need to deal with upcoming issues of the Brady Expansion was seen as the corrective for this last concern.

Recommendation: Maintain and continue this committee as a Standing Campus Committee.

Persons with Disabilities Committee: The charge to this committee is to advise the Provost on programs, services and policies that affect disabled students, faculty, staff and visitors. The members of the committee reported a clear understanding of their charge but differed in their assessment of the advocacy role of the committee in meeting its charge. Some members expressed concern that meetings were informative but didn't necessarily result in recommendations for changes required on campus to the Provost. This may have been due, in part, to weak leadership from the chair. Several members noted that the lack of activity on the part of the chair had placed the responsibility for committee functions almost entirely on the staff support member. Another area of concern was the relationship between the committee and the MU Office of Disability Services and the large amount of time needed to review the policies and procedures of that office.

Recommendations: This committee is made up of an appropriate mix of faculty, staff and students who understand their charge and meet regularly to fulfill it. However, the committee seems to have suffered from weak leadership on the part of the chair whose duties were carried out, instead, by the staff support member. Several respondents noted that this was a trend of the past few years that they felt needed to be addressed. While it is recommended that this committee be maintained as an active Standing Committee, the appointment of the chair needs to be based on that individual's commitment to the committee's function.

Campus Planning Committee: The charge to this committee is to advise the Vice-Chancellor on issues of grounds, facilities and campus planning. The respondents expressed a clear understanding of their charge and were satisfied with the manner in which it was carried out. The committee is composed of an appropriately broad range of campus constituents. It met regularly and had a clearly defined and substantive agenda. One member noted that the regular attendance of the Vice-Chancellor and other administrators with direct responsibility for planning reflects the value they place on the work of the committee.

Recommendation: Maintain and continue this committee as a Standing Committee

Honorary Degrees Committee: The charge to this committee is to recommend to the Board of Curators the names of individuals to be considered for honorary degrees at commencement. The membership felt that they had actively and effectively fulfilled their responsibilities. They expressed satisfaction with the high quality of leadership the committee received from its chair and the dedication and diversity of its membership. The respondents noted that the broad range of representation from different constituencies across campus resulted in healthy discussion related to the decision making process. However, some concern was expressed that this dialogue should be opened to student and alumni membership. According to the web site on Standing Committees, these two groups are not currently represented.

Recommendation: Maintain and continue this committee as a Standing Committee but consider the possibility of expanding its membership to include representatives of student and alumni organizations.

Minority Affairs Committee: The members of this committee reported a clear understanding of their charge and felt that they had fulfilled their responsibilities accordingly. They did, however, voice several concerns that they felt needed to be addressed. First, even though the respondents mentioned that the diversity of the committee's membership was one of its principal strengths, they felt that the mix of faculty, staff, students and alumni needed to be reassessed. Even though the committee seems to be well-balanced on paper, in practice, it was noted that many staff and student members never attend meetings. Secondly, some members felt that they were "rehashing" the same issues from year to year as they waited for the administration to take action and implement diversity-related recommendations. This situation has led to what one respondent described as an "impasse". Finally, some members felt that the quality of staff

support provided this committee needed to be improved. Apparently, they were left to function with no one to take minutes of their meetings.

Recommendations: This committee should be maintained as a Standing Committee but the mix of faculty, staff and students actually able to attend meetings should be reviewed. For instance, staff and students appointed to the committee should have a demonstrated commitment to diversity issues as well as their supervisor's permission to attend meetings during working hours.

Student Publications Committee: The charge to this committee is to advise the Vice-Chancellor for Student Affairs about policies and regulations regarding the publication of the *Maneater* and *Savitar*. The members of this committee reported that they felt that their charge was no longer applicable due to a change (unspecified) in management methods governing these two publications. Without a significant re-evaluation of the charge and a clear articulation of this committee's responsibilities, the membership felt that there was no longer a sustainable reason for this committee to continue in existence. As evidence of this, the respondents were unconcerned by the fact that the committee did not meet at all during 2005–2006 because they perceived its work as irrelevant.

Recommendation: Discontinue this committee as a Standing Committee.

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