

Committee on Committees Annual Report

Date: June 15, 2017

To: Interim Chancellor and Provost Garnett Stokes,
Care of Anna Ball, Faculty Fellow for Faculty Development
Attention to: Michelle Marsden

Report submitted by: Lael Keiser, Chair

Name of Committee: Committee on Committees

Charge of Committee: The charge to the Committee on Committees is to review on an annual basis one-third of the standing committees and to make recommendations to the chancellor and Faculty Council on the continuation of the committees and the revision of charges and/or membership to improve the committees' functions. The committee also should follow-up on past recommendations for changes.

Committee Members: Lael Keiser, Michelle Froese, Paul Weirich, Rokeshia Ashley, Julie Kapp, Wendy Sims, Jennifer Barry, Jeannette Pierce, Daniel Nicewarmer.

of times committee met: The CoC met two times in person and also conducted committee business via email.

Major accomplishments or highlights: The CoC had six major accomplishments this year. The first accomplishment was the transition of the committee survey to Qualtrics from an emailed version. The second accomplishment was the revision of the survey questions. The third accomplishment was the creation of a plan to retain the survey data over time so that future committee reviews can be based on more than one year of data. The fourth accomplishment was the beginning of a discussion with Anna Ball, the Faculty Fellow for Faculty Development for how to make the committee reviews more useful. This dialogue with Dr. Ball resulted in Dr. Ball hosting Standing Committee Chair's Retreat, and the CoC using information from the reviews to make recommendations about future materials to provide to standing committee chairs. The fifth accomplishment was a plan to distribute the longer, more detailed individual committee reports to the reviewed committees, and not just the edited versions submitted to the Chancellor's office. The process now includes a way for the CoC members to review the longer individual reports and approve them so that they can be shared as official committee documents to the reviewed committee members. Sixth, we reviewed eight standing committees. In addition to the eight committees reviewed, the CoC itself was reviewed. The CoC decided to have Bonnie Gregg, a former member of the CoC, conduct that review and submit it directly to the Provost.

Recommendations for next year: Next year the CoC should work on the implementation of several initiatives we began and/or discussed this year. These initiatives need attention to make sure they are implemented. First, make sure that the survey data is available to CoC members in Qualtrics in addition to Excel. Second, make sure that CoC members are implementing the plan to send reminders to the recipients of the survey before the closing date of the survey. There were some low response rates in the survey and reminders might help increase those rates. Third, make sure that CoC members use the historical data when reviewing committees. Currently only the old reports are available but within three years, the CoC will have access to historical survey data that they can use to better inform their recommendations. Fourth, the CoC should discuss whether to centralize the administration of the

survey, e.g. have the staff person email the survey to all reviewed committee members and email reminders. We discussed this possibility but decided to keep it decentralized this year and reconsider next year. Currently this task is delegated to the CoC member doing the review. The advantage of centralizing this would be that all members of the reviewed committees would receive the survey and reminders at the same time. The downside of this is that a failure to launch the survey or send reminders by the committee staff person would create problems for all of the reviews rather than just one review. Some members also thought it was more personalized if the CoC member launched the survey. Seventh, the faculty fellow in the provost's office should meet with the chair or the entire CoC in the fall to discuss any actions implemented as a result of the prior year's report, as well as provide a reminder of the campus mission for the coming year and how each committee's charge fits that mission.

Review of Committees and Recommendations

Recommendation for Chair's Retreat:

The CoC members believed that the Chair's Retreat was very helpful and that it should be continued. Our reviews suggested three additional items to be included in the retreat. The first is how to foster healthy communication within committees. This year, a respondent from one committee indicated there was a problem with communication within her committee, noting especially that female committee members frequently were interrupted and thus felt that their input was not valued. Fortunately this person raised the issue with the chair and this reduced the problem. Last year, a similar issue came up but it was faculty who believed staff/administrators did not value their comments. This is likely to be an issue on any committee that brings together people who have different positions and backgrounds. Consequently, the CoC recommends that the Chair's Retreat include a session on how to recognize and reduce these problems. Another review this year indicated a different type of problem with communication, which was that committee members were uncertain about how information was communicated outside the committee. The retreat should cover tips on how committee chairs can help committee members understand how their efforts are communicated outside of the committee. Finally, the Chair's Retreat might provide a one-page document on best practices for chairing committees, such as reviewing the charge at the beginning of the year, identifying how the charge aligns and contributes to the campus mission, summarizing activities of the past year, and setting goals and objectives for the coming year.

The second general issue that came up during the reviews is a lack of focus in some committees. The CoC recommends that the chair orientation for all committees include a greater focus on how chairs can help ensure all members understand and agree upon key action areas where work can be completed or progress made in the coming year. It would improve committee functioning if chairs discuss the expectations the University has of the committee (advisory, generating solutions, oversight) at the first meeting each year. This may take more clarity from the campus-level in communicating the specific charge of the committee and how it fits the larger mission.

Committee Reviews

CoC reviews are based on an interview with the chair of the committee, attendance at a meeting if possible, analysis of the survey responses of committee members, and a review of past evaluations and reports. Specific information on each committee and recommendations are discussed below.

Campus Mediation Service Committee (Reviewed by Paul Weirich)

Charge:

The charge to the Campus Mediation Service Committee is to act as an independent oversight body for the Campus Mediation Service, including setting policy for the Campus Mediation Service and overseeing the director of the Campus Mediation Service and the Campus Mediation Service operations.

Review Findings:

Using interviews with the Committee's chair and the Service's director, a visit to a Committee meeting, a review of past committee reports and evaluations, and the 2017 survey of Committee members, this report concludes that the Committee should continue because of the valuable advice it gives the Service. The Committee's charge is to oversee the Service, but the Committee functions as an advisory body for the Service's director. It meets on an ad hoc basis to deal with issues that the Service faces, for example, recruitment of mediators, marketing the Service on campus, and the possibility of extending the Service to individuals involved in post-tenure review or in debates about free speech in public spaces. In spring 2017, the CMSC surveyed mediation at other universities and considered the independence and confidentiality of the Service. It will consider further how the Service may maintain independence but still be easily available to employees and how the Service may maintain confidentiality given Missouri sunshine laws.

Recommendations

- The Chancellor should revise the charge of the Committee to make the charge match the Committee's current function. If the Committee's charge is changed to make the Committee advisory, the Committee should not be a standing committee. As an advisory committee, it may continue to have members appointed by the Chancellor. Although the Committee is a neutral, non-administrative body, and its providing oversight may help maintain the neutrality of the Service, the Committee does not have a means of providing meaningful oversight. The Chancellor's office is better positioned to provide oversight, as it does now.

Environmental Affairs and Sustainability Committee (EASC) (Reviewed by Jeannette Pierce and Rokeshia Ashley).

Committee Charge:

The Environmental Affairs and Sustainability Committee (EASC) is an advisory committee for the Vice Chancellor of Operations & Chief Operating Officer on issues concerning campus environmental, social and economic sustainability as it relates to academics and engagement, operations, and planning and administration. The EASC assesses MU's campus sustainability and reviews and recommends strategies for improvement to be included in the Campus Sustainability Plan.

Review Findings:

The review is based on email correspondence with the chair, review of meeting minutes, and the committee member survey. Ten out of Eighteen members (56%) responded to the survey. Survey results from the committee members indicate that the charge is understood, though considered very

broad in scope. The response was mixed on whether the committee fulfills this charge. The membership is uncertain if and how their ideas and concerns are shared with decision-makers in upper administration. Are the annual reports read and acted upon? One member expressed concern that the campus financial situation does not allow action on large-scale sustainability initiatives, even those that would result in financial efficiencies over the long term. Some members of the committee want to address the need for an academic focus on sustainability through curriculum initiatives. A subcommittee has been formed to explore degree and certificate options. However, there is a concern that the reporting structure of the committee is intended to support operational initiatives and does not provide access to the appropriate channels for academic proposals. As with many of the standing committees, the charge is broad and the actions expected of the committee and the individual members are not clear to everyone. However, many felt the chair was able to clearly articulate the priorities of the committee.

The committee meets regularly and the minutes suggest that meetings provide an active forum for oversight of ongoing assessment of existing sustainability efforts and discussion about possible new areas of impact. Members consider the mix of representation on the committee and passion of the committee members for the committee's charge as a strength. There is general agreement that it is important to have a visible, representative group focused on sustainability issues.

Member responses to the question about the most important function or task of the committee were quite varied. One member commented that the committee is crucial to the success of the Office of Sustainability, which is understaffed. The committee's help in completing the campus STARS (Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System) assessment is of particular importance to the Office of Sustainability.

One survey respondent indicated that there are not any group strengths "because everyone understands the committee in the way best served by that individual." Several members indicated that discussions during the meeting tend to lose focus and that the committee needs to find a way to focus agendas on actual action opportunities.

Recommendation:

- More discussion at the beginning of the year about the role of this committee and action items for the current year.
- Several members suggest that a more extensive use of subcommittees to address specific action areas would provide individual members with a greater opportunity to contribute.

Library Committee (Reviewed by Michelle Froese).

Charge:

The charge to the Library Committee is to make recommendations to the provost concerning the continued improvement of the library collection and library services, and academic matters related to library policies and programs.

Review Findings:

The review is based on email correspondence with the chair, attendance at a meeting, a review of prior evaluations, and the committee member survey. Nine out of 15 responded to the survey (60%). Overall the committee is working well as can be expected given the severe budget cuts experienced by the libraries. Most committee members understand their charge and believe that it is essential to advocate for and support the library's mission. New members looked forward to learning more about the charge. The chair is well-organized.

Some members feel strongly that the decisions and recommendations of the committee were not taken seriously by higher administration. There is a general sense of frustration about the impact of the committee, given the ongoing budget cuts that impact library collections and acquisitions. One member's response encapsulates overall committee concerns: "Little can be done to improve the libraries without sufficient funding." The advisory role of the committee combined with the budget situation makes members feel that giving advice is futile. As one member stated: "The function is great, but what can the committee do when library funding is cut and cut and cut."

Members also indicated the need for undergraduate student representation since they are key stakeholders. To date no student had been assigned by the Missouri Students Association. The Graduate Professional Council does have representation on the committee and attended the observed meeting.

Finally, it was not clear that Faculty Council or the Provost ever approved the recommendation from the 2013-2014 CoC report to expand the charge to include a specific focus on developing recommendations related to fiscal issues for the library.

Recommendations

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- Encourage student government to assign a representative. Some business is done via email, which should make it easier for a student to be involved.
- Encourage greater communication between administration and the Library Committee.
- Implement the 2014 recommendation to change the charge to: The charge to the Library Committee is to make recommendations to the provost concerning the continued improvement of the library collection and library services, *financial support*, and academic matters related to library policies and programs.

Retiree, Health and other Benefits Advisory (Reviewed by Julie Kapp)

Charge:

To serve as a forum for consideration of benefits, assist in the development and communication of recommendations to the Chancellor, and advise the Chancellor when: (1) establishing liaison with campus groups and offices that deal with the determination and review of health care, retirement and other benefit plans; (2) assisting in the continuing periodic evaluation of health care, retirement and benefit plans and the dissemination of findings; and (3) establishing liaison with groups and offices which deal

with campus health and wellness activities.

Review Comments:

The review is based on an interview with the committee chair and the survey responses. There were not any meetings to attend. Eight out of fourteen committee members responded to the survey. The review found that this is a critically important committee, but it needs a strong charge, and it needs to be properly used. Full time staff / administrators who make decisions about health care or benefits need to understand how to use committees for decision making. This committee should have had representation from the hospital / health system during review of retiree health benefits.

Committee Strengths: Chair has a longstanding history with this committee, which serves this committee well for historical memory, stability, and the investment of the chair in its success and involvement.

Recommendations:

- The committee is underutilized and requires a clear charge from the Chancellor/Provost level.
- The Chancellor/Provost should investigate possible overlap with the Total Rewards Advisory Committee, the HR Council, Faculty Council and Staff Advisory Committee. However, if this committee or a different one is eliminated, care must be taken to ensure all stakeholders are still represented.
- The CoC also recommends educating administrators how best to make use of this committee.

Revision of Records Committee (reviewed by Wendy Sims)

Committee Charge:

The charge to the Revision of Student Records Standing Committee is to receive and to act upon petitions for revisions in entries concerning grades and credits entered into the official academic record.

Review Comments:

Nine out of ten committee members responded to the survey. The survey item ratings, as well as written responses, overwhelmingly indicated that the committee members understand their charge, find the work important, and believe that the committee functions well. As indicated by the 2015-2016 report, the committee began to use an online system in January 2016 which greatly facilitated their work. Members used the terms “essential” and “critical” to describe their work on this committee. Several listed as strengths the variety of backgrounds represented by committee members, their commitment to come to meetings prepared, and that deliberations are thoughtful and thorough.

Areas for improvement: None. The committee understands its work and does it well.

Recommendation: Commend the committee on their work, which is considerable, and continue this committee as it currently operates.

Student Financial Aid Committee (Reviewed by Jennifer Berry)

Committee Charge

The charge to the Student Financial Aid Committee is to make recommendations to the provost regarding the MU Student Financial Aid program, including the awarding and dispensing of gifts, loans, work aid and the operation of campus aid programs such as the scholarship and student work programs. The committee also assists in developing special programming and proposes guidelines for new scholarship programs.

Review Comments

Report data collected through email interaction with the Committee Chair, Jeanne Abbott, as well as survey from the membership. NCAA rules requires a panel of at least three faculty and two students for an appeals hearing. The Office of Corporate Compliance also holds an education session annually to go over NCAA rules and regulations for granting and adjusting scholarship assistance for athletes. Meetings/hearings are held as needed for appeals. Based on the survey of committee members it seems as though the committee is functioning fairly well and is a necessary committee for NCAA regulations.

As of the date of the e-mail two appeals have been made this year. One was resolved between the student and the athletic department prior to the panel meeting and the second was in the process of arranging a hearing date and securing a panel for such. Since September 2016 there have been 6 voluntary relinquishments of aid signed off on by the chair.

This committee must continue as a requirement of NCAA hearing regulations. Every athlete who loses scholarship assistance as the right to appeal and the procedures are clear that a panel must be convened to conduct the hearing.

Strengths of the committee included:

- Communication is thorough and timely
- Decisions are made and binding—"we actually do stuff that matters to people"
- Balance of Faculty and Students
- Committee works well together as a team.

Areas for improvement

- A number of comments were made that the committee charge is too broad for what they actually handle. NCAA regulations indicate that the committee who makes financial aid decisions for athletes be the same committee who handles any other financial aid disputes. This committee is not involved in other disputes and feels as though the charge is just there to cover the requirement but isn't in fact a reality.
- Due to the nature of the committee and the number of schedules one must align in order for a hearing to take place it is suggested that there are a broader number of members so that it is easier to get the appropriate number of individuals in attendance. A reminder to those who serve how vital their role is—it is understandable that everyone can't commit to each date

proposed—but, one faculty member was unable to commit to any date—or offer a date she was available to meet.

- MSA isn't always attentive about filling committee seats with students. Student representation is a requirement and sometimes this seems challenging.

Recommendation

Overall I would recommend this committee be continued with the suggestions for additional or interim members appointed. Also, I think it's fair to ask that the charge be reviewed and amended or that the committee be utilized in the manner that the charge suggests.

Student Organization Committee (Reviewed by Daniel Nicewarmer)

Committee Charge:

Student Organizations, Governments and Activities Committee (SOGA) makes recommendations to the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs on the recognition and activities of student clubs and organizations, student government associations, fraternities and sororities as described in academic regulations, Article XI, Section 6, dated March 7, 1977.

Committee Findings:

This committee meets approx. 6 times an academic year. This year they focused on the following agenda items: Approval of Perspective Student Organizations, Space Allocation, Budgets for MSA, GPC, ORG, and MCSF. This committee runs with no specific bylaws outside of what is outlined in the M-Book for approvals of student organizations, and currently does not have a need for subcommittees or special sessions. Members of this committee understand their role in helping to govern the landscape of student organizations on campus. This committee has a long-standing history of success, and has implemented changes since its last review on 09-10. In speaking with the chair, it is clear that this important committee is running smoothly and is concise and true to its charge.

Recommendations: no change