

## **2004-2005 Final Report of the Committee on Committees**

### ***Committee on Committee Functioning***

The Committee on Committee met once in each semester of the Academic Year. This was a new approach to the work of the Committee based on discussions of the previous year and the development of a new questionnaire that could be distributed to the members of committees under review, which the committee members saw as offering a means for more independence on carrying out individual committee reviews. The first meeting was held toward the end of Fall semester 2004 for the purpose of reviewing the charge of the Committee and deciding assignments of individual committees for review. The Committee met again at the end of the Winter semester 2005 to discuss the results of the individual committee reviews and the Committee on Committees itself.

Some suggestions were made for the operation of the Committee on Committees itself. There was agreement that the new questionnaire, while providing better and more complete information than previously used instruments, needed additional refining. From feedback from persons returning the questionnaire and from Committee members own analysis of the instrument once used, there is some unnecessary repetitiveness that can be removed. There was also concern that a few questions were not clearly written (e.g., Question 22). The discussion of the open-ended questions also resolved into a sense that these questions were too detailed and actually confined rather than encouraged open responses. It is recommended that the Committee on Committees revise the instrument during the Academic Year 2005-2006, while continuing to use it as it stands, with a goal of implementing the revised instrument in the Fall of 2006.

Another issue raised in the discussion of the Committee on Committee's own functioning was the need to have both student members and the Committee Chair appointed earlier than is usual. For Academic Year 2004-2005, the Committee had requested continuation of the same chair, but notification from the Faculty Council and the Chancellor's Office did not come until mid-October. This delayed the ability of the Committee to begin its work, although not to the extent that it prevented the completion of any of the individual reviews. For Academic Year 2004-2005, student members were never assigned from the undergraduate student body, which left the Committee without student input and representation, except for the continuing graduate student on the Committee.

Finally, the Committee discussed the possibility of carrying out its responsibilities without any in-person meetings at all. This was considered in light of some of the work of other committees which have gone to on-line meetings only. The Committee members did not make any final decisions on whether the variety of possible technological means of sharing information and making decisions would fully support such a move but did agree that this issue should be pursued in further discussion in the next Academic Year.

Other than these issues the Committee on Committees itself functioned well in this Academic Year.

(Note that the late submission of this report in no way represents the functioning of the Committee as a whole. It is related to illness and new administrative roles taken on by the Chair and the Staff Support Person.)

### ***General Issues Related to Campus Standing Committees***

The issues here represent some consensus among committee members about issues that affect campus committees in general and could benefit from some discussion administratively. They involve membership, meeting formats, and, charge issues.

One of the across the board issues for committees is having full membership early enough in the Academic Year that the committee can actually start on its work at the beginning of the year. Currently, committee chairs are often not appointed until mid-to-late September and student members may not be appointed until Winter semester, or not at all. Although the staggered terms of faculty and staff on campus committees allows for continuity, the goal of inclusive representation of the campus community is not always achieved. The Committee on Committees suggests these steps for addressing this issues:

- Assign Chairs for Standing Committees for each Academic Year at the end of April of the previous Academic Year. This would ensure that the chairs can immediately take up the arranging of the first meeting early in the Fall semester.
- Appoint student members to overlapping 18-month terms, with one student representative from each level serving from Fall to the end of the following Fall (e.g., Fall 2005 thru Fall 2006) and one serving from Winter to the end of the following Winter (e.g., Winter 2006 thru Winter 2007) This would ensure that at least one student member at each level would be on a committee at all times, even when there are delays in electing/appointing the other student member.
- Review term appointments to committees regularly, at the Chancellor's Office, at the Faculty Council and Staff Council level, and at the committee level to ensure that all committee members are clear about their terms.
- Appoint new members to committees at the end of the previous Academic Year so that they are ready to begin work as soon as the Academic Year commences.

Meeting formats are increasingly taking advantage of the potentials of technology supported meetings. Committees are meeting online in real time; meeting in chat rooms; meeting in email or other chaining message formats and are sometimes not meeting at all face-to-face. These newer meeting formats should be encouraged to the extent that they facilitate communication and decision-making related to the business of the committee. To address the new meeting possibilities, the Committee on Committees suggests:

- Encourage committees to review the ways in which they can meet and make decisions about the most effective/efficient meeting method(s) for the work that the committee is charged to do.
- Make IATS and ET@MO staff available to committees on request to assist in the discussion of how to use electronic communication processes most effectively to support committee work.

- Change the mandate of the Committee on Committee from “meet face-to-face with” committees under review to accommodate reviews of committees which use other meeting methods.

Although the Committee on Committees reviews whether each committee is addressing its charge, it may be time for a general review of the charges to all of the Campus Standing Committees. Technological changes, fiscal issues, academic changes, and administrative changes have happened rapidly over the past ten years, while no full review of committees and their charges has been undertaken. This means that committees may be operating under outdated and/or outmoded charges that they struggle to meet but which need greater change than can be recognized by a simple every three year review. To address this, the Committee on Committee suggests:

- That every fourth year, the Committee on Committees meet with representatives of the Chancellor’s Office and of the Faculty Council to review all of the formal charges to Standing Campus Committees.
- That the results of this review, which would be completed in the Fall semester, be summarized with suggested changes and reviewed by all Standing Committees for feedback and final revision of charge during Winter Semester by the Committee on Committees.
- That the new charge statements be reviewed by the Chancellor’s Office and the Faculty Council in May/June for implementation in the next Academic Year.

### ***Summary of Individual Committee Reviews***

**Retiree Advisory Committee:** The members of this committee felt that much of the responsibility which has formally been included in its charge has been move elsewhere, in particular to MURA. There was concern that this has led to poor attendance because there is not much of a clear agenda for the committee. More than half of the members felt this frustration and most of the committee members felt that they are little more than an awards committee, which they do not feel is consistent with the original charge for the committee. *Recommendation:* Address whether the charge of this committee has been subsumed into the activities of MURA. If so, then consideration should be given to disbanding this committee. If not, then the charge of the committee should be clarified so that its work is distinguished from the activities of MURA.

**Academic Assessment Committee:** The members of this committee perceived the committee as hard-working in their face-to-face discussion, although most of the member did not see the necessity of returning the Committee on Committee’s questionnaire. The committee has been working diligently on its charge related to external assessment efforts across campus. The members plan for increased work, including the move to implementing internal to the campus assessment efforts in the coming years. *Recommendation:* This committee understands its charge and actively pursues it; maintain this committee as a Standing Campus Committee.

**Student Fee Capital Review Committee:** This committee reported clear understanding of its charge in relation to the monies available through funding from student fees. The committee meets regularly (once a week when necessary) and has applicants for use of funds do personal presentations to the committee. There was concern that this committee, dealing principally with student requests, was top-heavy with faculty committee members. There was also concern that not all committee members attended regularly, although this was not seen as an extreme concern as there is a core of members who regularly attend. *Recommendations:* Consider re-balancing the relative membership participation between faculty, staff, and students for this committee to give greater weight to student input on the committee. Consider recommending that this committee develop some additional review strategies so that it could meet fewer times in the Academic Year without loss of control over its charge. Consider making the committee smaller overall given the consensus that there usually develops a core membership which is more active than the larger overall membership.

**Admissions Appeals Committee:** This committee understands its charge but the committee members have not seen appeals coming to them with any frequency. The committee members speculate that most admissions decisions that are challenged are resolved at a much lower level of the organization and that a Standing Committee for this purpose is unnecessary. *Recommendation:* Discontinue this committee as a Standing Campus Committee and replace it with policy/procedure for appointing Ad Hoc Admissions Appeal Committees when needed at the campus-wide organizational level.

**Campus Safety Committee:** This committee had an active membership that reported high level of involvement of membership, with the exception of the ex officio member. The committee saw its work as important but not recognized as such by the administration or by the larger campus community. They did acknowledge that they received responses from administration once they made recommendations but felt that better communication during the work of the committee would improve those recommendations. The committee requested that the committee charge be amended to emphasize review and change of policy as part of the committee work. To this end, the committee also thought that additional ex officio members should be appointed. *Recommendations:* Review the charge of this committee to decide whether the charge should be amended to give greater scope to the committee, which appears willing to take on additional work. Review committee membership, particularly with regard to ex officio members, to ensure that those members are fully involved in work that is within the purview of the committee.

**Campus Mediation Committee:** The committee clearly understands its charge and feel that they are satisfactorily carrying it out. They see that they are providing input into the management of the Campus Mediation Service through meetings with the Director of the service on the committee. There is generally good communication on the committee, which has a number of active mediators as members. However, there was not clear evidence that the committee is carrying out the second half of its charge: “overseeing the Director of the Campus Mediation Service and the CMS operations.” The committee appeared to be more of a sounding board rather than an oversight operation during the

observed meeting. This is an important function but may not fully address the charge as written. *Recommendations:* Make the Director of the Campus Mediation Service an ex officio member of the committee to ensure full, two-way communication regarding the operations of the service. Clarify the charge of the committee regarding its “oversight” role, particularly of the functions of the Director of the CMS. Meet more often than the current once per semester. Utilize the committee to develop greater new and current employee education about the existence of and nature of the Campus Mediation Service. *Note: The Staff Council requested a meeting with the Chair of the Committee on Committees to discuss our review functions. As part of that discussion, there emerged a recommendation from the Staff Council that the number of staff members for this committee be increased by two, given the fact that a majority of mediation cases involve staff.*

**Environmental Affairs Committee:** The committee has a clear view of the charge and very strong inter-member agreement on how that charge should be carried out. The committee sees itself as ensuring that the MU campus is a leader in environmentally sensitive campus management and environmental stewardship. The membership participation is particularly high, with every member responding to both the questionnaire and in attendance at the meeting that the Committee on Committee reviewer attended. All members feel free to participate in the committee discussions. The committee uses both the MU provided committee website and its own supplemental website to enhance communication with constituents on the campus. *Recommendations:* Continue this committee as is. Possibly use their work as an example of the ways that technological support can enhance the work of communicating committee work to the campus.

**Traffic Appeals Committee:** The members of this committee understand the charge of the committee and are satisfied with how they carry out that charge. There is good internal and external communication established. The committee uses individual member review of written appeals to augment the in-person aspects of the appeal process. *Recommendation:* Increase the representation of graduate students on this committee by one or two.

**Library Committee:** The committee understands its oversight charge but finds frustration in carrying it out due to the current fiscal situation which required cutting back more often than advising on the direction of new additions to the resources of the Ellis Library. The committee operations are satisfactory and committee communication, both internal and external, is commendable. *Recommendation:* Review the charge to this committee to examine whether the charge needs revision in light of current budgetary conditions for the campus.

**Campus Health Oversight Committee:** This committee was not reviewed because the response when the Committee on Committees’ reviewing member attempted to track down who the current chairperson was the response was that the committee had been disbanded. That assumption was from a person who had served earlier on the committee and felt that its functions were better served by a number of other campus communication sources. *Recommendation:* Consultation in the summer showed that the Faculty Council

still has this listed as an active committee. Review of its status and its charge are needed. If other avenues of communication are, in fact, addressing the full extent of the charge, then either dissolving the committee or creating a new charge should occur.

**Student Conduct Committee:** This committee was seen as having a very constricted committee role which operates more like a hearing body than a committee. This was seen as consistent with the charge of the committee and members felt that they were carrying out the charge as written. *Recommendation:* Review the charge to the committee for consistency with other student conduct policies.

In addition to formal reviews, the Chair of the Hearnest Committee, which was not scheduled for review, requested that there be a consideration of establishing a broader committee that would oversee the Athletic Facilities as a whole (including the new arena and the newly renovated athletic center). The Committee on Committees supports establishing such a unified oversight committee.

Respectfully submitted by:

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