

Faculty Governance: 2007-2008
Annual Report to the Board of Trustees
Charles Walcott, Dean of the University Faculty
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Faculty governance is part of a larger system of shared governance at the university. The AAUP (The American Association of University Professors) points out in its 1967 "Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities" that "The variety and complexity of the tasks performed by institutions of higher education produce an inescapable interdependence among the governing board, administration, faculty, students and others. The relationship calls for adequate communication among these components, and full opportunity for appropriate joint planning and effort."

At Cornell, shared governance seems to be working well. For example, the University Assembly just passed a revision to the campus code of conduct largely drafted by its Codes and Judicial Committee with a great deal of input from faculty, students and staff. Jim Mingle and Tommy Bruce were very helpful in finding a formulation of the code that was acceptable both to the committee and the President. This represents the successful culmination of several years of hard work on the part of many people to produce a simpler and more effective code.

Faculty governance is also working reasonably well. So far, there have not been any major issues brought before the University Faculty Senate this year. Partly as a result of that, we have had difficulty in achieving a quorum for the routine transaction of business. One thing that we did manage to accomplish was a revision of the "Organization and Procedures of the University Faculty" a document fondly named OPUF. Over the years a number of changes have taken place in faculty committees without the official sanction of OPUF. For example, faculty elect the members of the Nominations and Elections Committee. Sometimes this results in an imbalance of representation of colleges or of faculty diversity. Consequently, the Senate voted to allow Nominations and Elections to appoint one member a year to redress any imbalance. Further, it is always difficult to achieve a quorum; faculty are busy. The proposal is that each department, in addition to electing a senator, also elect an alternate who could attend meetings if the regular senator is unable to do so. But altering OPUF is not easy: recommendations for changes from the University Faculty Committee must be approved by the Senate, then approved by a majority at a meeting of the entire university faculty and finally, if approved by all these, submitted by mail ballot to the entire faculty for approval. This has now been accomplished.

One problem that concerns the faculty is the long delay in the administration's response and implementation of Senate actions. For example, a faculty and administration committee produced a revision of the current policy on copyright. This was approved by the faculty senate in May of 2003 yet still has not found its way into the policy manual. As far as I can tell, nobody is opposed to the revisions; it is simply a case of its not rising high enough on anybody's priority list to get it done. A second example where that is substantially more controversial is the granting of emeritus status to non-

tenure track faculty members. This was approved by the senate in 2004-5 and still has not been resolved.

Academic Integrity is a continuing problem at Cornell as well as at every other school and college. I began a discussion of this issue with the University Assembly several years ago, but it seemed wise to postpone any action until after the Campus Code of Conduct had been resolved. This Spring I convened a small ad hoc committee of students, faculty and staff to discuss the issues. I met with the Graduate Student Assembly and the undergraduates have organized a student forum. One alternative under discussion is whether an honor code similar to that at the University of Virginia would be useful. My guess is that these discussions need to continue for another year before any conclusions are reached.

Honorary Degrees: The Weill Medical College has proposed that they be authorized to give honorary degrees. This proposal has been under discussion by committees of the University Faculty Senate and spearheaded by a joint committee of medical school and Ithaca faculty. We hope that a proposal can be brought to the Faculty Senate at its May 14th meeting.

University Club: As I have reported for the last several years, The University Club, which was originally proposed and approved by the University Faculty Senate back in 2003, has proved impossible to establish. The basic idea was to find a space where lunch and perhaps dinner could be served to faculty and staff, where there would be space for special events to bring together faculty and staff from various parts of the university and where distinguished visitors from out of town could be entertained. The current "Statler Club" facilities in the Hotel School are simply too cramped and not really suitable for this role. A sub-committee of the Statler Board working with Peter Stein produced a report outlining the desirable features of such a club and recommending the University establish one. Despite the use of a committee of visitors in the summer of 2004, no location has been found on campus where such an organization could be housed. This year the consulting group that is generating the long-range master plan for the university's development has been asked to come up with ideas for where such a club could be located, and based on their long range plan, has done so. But the fundamental question still remains, to what extent do faculty and staff really want such a facility and what might they be willing to pay as dues in order to belong. Thanks to the generosity of the Provost, we are carrying out a professional survey to find out.

New Dean: Finally, I am very pleased to report that out of a field of three excellent candidates, William Fry has been elected by the faculty as their new Dean. Since Brad Anton, the current Associate Dean is taking a sabbatical leave this fall, I have agreed to fill in as the Interim Associate Dean for the fall and will be able to help Bill with the transition. As the outgoing Dean, I want to thank the members of the Board of Trustees, the administration as well as the faculty and staff for all their help and support during my time as dean.