

Ad-Hoc Committee to Consider Definitions of Faculty, Department, and Program in the Faculty Constitution

REPORT ON COMMITTEE FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS November 2021

Committee Members, designated by Committee on Committees:

Birol Yesilada (Chair, HSOG, CUPA)
 Mark Berrettini (FLM, COTA)
 Jill Emery (LIB), replacing Kimberly Pendell (LIB)
 Rachael Godlove (SPH)
 Andrés Holz (GGR, CLAS)
 Harry York (HON, OI)

Consultants:

Tim Anderson (MCECS, designated by EPC)
 Brenda Glascott (HON, designated by OAA)
 Barbara Heilmair (CUPA, designated by OAA)
 Carolina Montoya-Gomez (WLL/CLAS-AL, designated by PSU-FA)
 Vicki Reitenauer (WGSS/CLAS-SS/PO, designated by Steering)
 Brian Sandlin (Accreditation and Compliance, designated by OAA)
 Hunter Shobe (GGR/CLAS-SS, designated by PSU-AAUP)
 David Weber (PHL/CLAS-AL, designated by PSU-AAUP)

Committee Charge

Faculty Senate created this ad-hoc Committee in November 2020 with the following charge:

- Clarify priorities and principles regarding criteria for inclusion
- Research how other institutions define "faculty," "department," "program," and other key terms
- Organize a survey and/or listening sessions with PSU faculty and administrators of various ranks
- Consider implications of different definitions on participation in Faculty Senate and the Senate's constitutional committees
- Consider implications of different definitions on participation in departmental governance
- Research and present options, with a discussion of advantages and disadvantages associated with each, regarding possible revisions to terms of participation arrangements
- Present their findings to the Steering Committee by May 1, 2021, for presentation to the Senate in June 2021. This deadline was extended to December 2021 to allow the Committee to complete its task.
- Address the request of the Adjunct Faculty for direct voting representation in the Faculty Senate.

Committee Findings & Recommendations

The Committee reviewed the multiple questions raised in the charge and identified a number of key issues that we would recommend the Faculty Senate address when it takes up these matters.

Committee members researched how 23 other comparable institutions of higher education addressed the definition of faculty, representation in the faculty senate, and organization of departments, programs, and colleges.¹ We found that the definition of faculty is available on official documents such as faculty bylaws and senate bylaws. It is much more difficult to obtain information on how universities define programs and departments. We believe that the terms are used in a traditional disciplinary sense and that programs cut across departments.

We examined representation in the Faculty Senate as outlined in the [Faculty Constitution](#) - a critical point for faculty governance at PSU. First and foremost, the Committee members agree that the definition of faculty is pertinent to Senate representation and shared governance. We discussed extensively how to define faculty for representation in terms of governance. We came up with the concept that faculty are people whose jobs constitute at least two out of the three responsibilities: teaching (including curricular matters), research, and service. We also discussed that another way to distinguish who is faculty is to look at processes for job evaluation – what materials are evaluated and who does the evaluation.

The question of Academic Professionals (AP) also puzzles us. APs are not always voting members in their respective Departments but are represented in the Senate. There are inconsistencies which the Faculty Senate should clarify. "Academic Professional" doesn't have a meaning for Faculty governance purposes; the term doesn't appear in the Faculty Constitution. It begs the question: what is "academic"? The constitutionally relevant terms are "ranked" vs. "unranked" appointees. The former are by definition always part of the Faculty; the latter *may* be, depending on several further criteria. We also discussed how Academic Professionals get assigned as such across colleges and their representation in the Senate. Who makes those designations? Provost, the Deans? For a list of APs, HR has those descriptions and the names. Someone at the Dean's office in each College should keep track of this for the purpose of individuals' inclusion in Senate elections. However, this begs another question. There are many PSU employees who are not academically ranked (everyone is not a "professor" or "instructor" of some variety), and they have a variety of job titles and job descriptions. What we want to know is, which among all of these hundreds of positions, with dozens of different job titles, have functions that fall into the category of Faculty work, as this is defined in the Constitution? And who makes that judgment? In other terms, who decides? Faculty Senate, Dean, HR? It ought to be the Senate.

We also ask the Senate to consider how PSU decides faculty representation by Colleges and Schools. For example, the Honors College is not designated as a college but as an "Other Academic Unit." In 2012, it became a College, but the Senate has not caught up with it yet, and it remains the only college without direct representation. Under the current system, the Honors

¹ Boise State University, Cleveland State University, Cleveland State University, DePaul University, Illinois State University, Loyola University, Northern Illinois University, Northern Arizona University, Oakland University, Oregon State University, Villanova University, University of Colorado in Denver, University of Colorado Colorado Springs, University of Maryland Eastern Shore, University of Missouri Kansas City, University of Montana, University of North Carolina-Greensboro, University of Puerto Rico-Rio Piedras, University of Toledo, Western Michigan University, and Wichita State University.

College has little chance of representation in the Faculty Senate due to being outnumbered by University Studies and other faculty designated for representation under the class of "Other Academic Unit." Given that the Honors College is a distinct college in PSU, the Senate should consider its representation similar to other colleges and schools.

Concerning the proposal of the Adjunct Faculty for representation in the Faculty Senate as full voting members, this Committee does not recommend expanding Senate eligibility. Furthermore, existing rules require that PSU pay Adjunct Faculty for duties beyond their teaching obligations. However, we recommend the Senate consider granting the current Adjunct Faculty Ex Officio member full voting rights. If Adjunct Faculty wishes to have a broader representation, they need to consider establishing another forum, a representation unit, at the University.

Another issue that came up pertains to how PSU defines schools. There are a variety of different ways PSU structures colleges? How do we account for the varying organizational structures? The committee further points out these points of concern:

- We use "unit" as a generic name, and this has been a historical practice because there is inconsistency in referring to programs and departments. Part of the confusion for programs is that it conflates "Degree Programs" vs. Programs that operate like small departments. There is inconsistency about the meaning of "program." UNST is a program and is larger than a number of departments.
- There are inconsistencies in how we define Schools across PSU. Social Work and Business Administration are schools with their respective Deans. However, The Hatfield School of Government and the Toulan School of Urban Studies and Planning are within the College of Urban and Public Affairs and are led by Directors. Furthermore, the Toulan School has no departments, whereas the Hatfield School has three departments with respective department chairs.
- Are there differences in the program versus department? Vice Provost Shelly Chabon told us that she contacted many places for clarification: HR, HECC, Faculty Senate. She could not find a firm definition. The perception of each of these is different, however. The Conflict Resolution Program wanted to become a department. She found very little to guide for the change. Other programs moved on to becoming departments (i.e., Engineering and Technology Management and International Studies).
- The perception is that programs are less "secure" than departments. Historically, programs have been eliminated by the university, which might add to some anxiety during this time of financial concern at PSU. However, the current constitution does not distinguish between departments and programs concerning program elimination.

Finally, we see these definitional inconsistencies at PSU to be a significant challenge and problematic issue. Over the years, the patched-together nature of PSU has resulted in a confusing description of how units get decided to be schools or colleges.