

Committee on Committees
2022-2023 Faculty Senate Report
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Charge: Each of our charges is listed in bold below, with our work this year detailed underneath.

1. Appoint, on behalf of the Senate, members to all committees established by the Faculty Constitution.

Staffing this year was relatively straightforward, although there are some divisional requirements that made it hard to find committee members from certain departments. It has been reported, for instance, that in some departments service on constitutional committees is not recognized or valued. Thus, some units might have faculty who are reluctant to commit to serve, particularly if they are having issues around workload and/or don't have a sense of belonging in their department/unit.

The committee decided to emphasize shared governance in the call for committee selection this year. To that end we sent out information separate from faculty senate elections with a message that reinforced the importance of committee service. Despite this outreach, the overall response rate was down, about half of the faculty responded when compared to the response numbers of last year. However, the need for faculty continuing on committees was less clear. This resulted in a need to reach out to current committee members to ask them to confirm that they were remaining on their committees.

- We recommend that next year an explicit message is included that directs faculty to indicate that they expect to continue to serve.

On several committees there are recommended term limits that are not regularly enforced and in some cases this leads to frustration for faculty who want to serve on specific committees (ex. The budget committee). We recognize that in some cases when committees are in the middle of projects, continuity is important and sometimes necessary, but perhaps there is a balance to be struck.

- We recommend that next year the CoC takes up the question of term limits and whether or not they should be enforced, or perhaps an encouragement can come from the liaison if there is a great deal of interest and no turnover for particular committees.
- One suggestion could be to ask folks to step down if they have exceeded term limits and there is a lot of interest. Let them know before the survey so they can plan accordingly.

Current Staffing Plan, beginning with Spring Term

Spring:

1. Faculty preference planner sent out for faculty to mark which committees they want to serve on
2. Committee liaisons communicate with the current committee to confirm who is remaining and who is rotating off.
3. Staff committee vacancies from the faculty preference planner, prioritizing those who have selected a specific committee.

4. Once the committee is fully staffed, change the tab of the committee form from red to yellow.
 5. CoC discusses the roster and votes to approve.
 6. Check with new committee members to confirm they are willing to serve.
 7. Upon approval, the sheet tab is changed from yellow to green and admin (currently Andreen Morris and Richard Beyler) are notified that letters should be sent.
 8. Liaison reaches out to committee to ask them to nominate a chair or at least someone who is willing to convene the first meeting
- Student members
 - CoC chair works with ASPSU to staff students where appropriate, current contact is Madeline Frisk
 - ASPSU has asked that they only staff 10 committees from the student government “so ASPSU senators next year have a more specific purpose and structure, and report back to the student senate their committee findings.” - communication from the ASPSU President.
 - Students who sit on committees are not required to be members of student government.
 - We recommend that in the future the CoC works with ASPSU to figure out how to get students involved in faculty senate committee work more broadly, perhaps through various mentor programs that exist on campus.

Fall term:

- Convene to make sure that committees are staffed and fill in vacancies that were not staffed in the spring.
- Decide liaisons for various committees if not done in the spring.
- Liaisons (role and email template for communication in shared drive) check in with committees to
 - confirm committee chairs (must be approved by CoC)
 - Open a line of communication in case the committee has questions or needs help fulfilling their charge
- CoC sends out role of committee chair (documentation in shared drive) to the chairs for all committees
- Continue to fill any vacancies that occur, voting as a group for all nominations (can be done via email).

Winter term:

- Liaisons check in with committees
- Continue to fill any vacancies that occur

2. Recommend to the President, on behalf of the Senate, names of members to serve on all committees established by administrative action.

This year we continued the practice of all members voting on all appointments, or at least having a window of opportunity to voice objections to any appointment. This year executing this task was best accomplished through email because there were many vacancies to fill and it may be that email is the best tool to ensure approval for committee appointments going forward. Overall the committee finds that this is a highly desirable practice, not just because it helps ensure that the different committees are supported by the CoC as a whole, but because it keeps the lines of communication open between committee members, important for when a synchronous meeting needs to be called.

- We recommend that the Committee on Committees continue this practice of voting as a group to approve all appointments.

3. Advise the Senate relative to the assignment of further duties to the committees listed below, and suggest the establishment of special Senate Faculty committees.

This year the Senate Steering Committee initiated a series of committee conversations around shared governance and shared priorities.

Text of invitation to committee conversations:

- “In response to desires expressed by a wide range of faculty for a collective conversation about aligning resources with mission, and recognizing the critical junction at which Portland State University is situated (e.g., Presidential search, emerging from the pandemic, etc.), the Faculty Senate Steering Committee invites you to respond to a brief survey in preparation for a conversation in the Faculty committee(s) you serve on. Our goal through this survey and these conversations is to engage a broad range of faculty voices in an exercise to identify where we are and what some of our shared priorities are as we, collectively, help guide future decisions about programs and budgets. If each committee undertakes this dialogue, we will hear from ~200 faculty members and academic staff across all schools, colleges, and divisions on campus. We anticipate sharing the ideas that emerge from this survey and these dialogues, in addition to the information that emerges from the [“Conversations on Making our Way Through”](#) process, with the new President, our current administration, the Board of Trustees, and with faculty in an effort to strengthen shared governance at PSU.”

This was a new attempt at creating space for campus conversations that could have broader impact.

- We recommend that Senate Steering continue to utilize the committee structure as a mechanism for building community and conversation across campus related to our priorities.

4. Assist committees in streamlining and delegating their tasks.

There were a few instances where committee chairs asked for direction related to process and for problem solving. The resources in the shared drive for committee chairs and liaisons are extremely helpful. We discussed getting committee chairs together at an in-person gathering and there was some interest, but more overwhelm, perhaps contextual. In other words, a few chairs indicated that it would be really helpful, but many said that even though it would be helpful - they were struggling with bandwidth and did not know how to fit it in.

- We recommend that the CoC engage in outreach with committee chairs as soon as possible and determine if an in-person gathering would be helpful.

5. Report at least once each year to the Senate and President.

This report was submitted in May 2023 in time for the June Senate meeting.