

University Council Committee on Committees Report on the Functioning of Council Committees during Academic Year 2015-16

Membership:

Chair: Laura Perna

Staff: Patrick Walsh and Joseph Gasiewski

Members: Faculty: Claire Finkelstein, Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet, Karen Glanz, Reed Pyeritz, Florian Schwarz, Christophe Van den Bulte; PPSA: Kuan Evans; WPPSA: Loretta Hauber; Graduate Student: Sangya Agarwal; Undergraduate Student: Michael Roberts

Executive Summary:

This report summarizes the general functioning and procedures of University Council Committees during the 2015 – 2016 academic year. These committees are: Committee on Academic and Related Affairs (CARA), Committee on Campus and Community Life (CCL), Committee on Facilities, Committee on Personnel Benefits (CPB), and Committee on Diversity and Equity (CDE).

Suggestions for enhancing the functioning of these committees include:

(1) designating a representative from the Faculty Senate, preferably a Senate Tri-Chair or Senate Committee chair, to participate when possible in each Council committee meeting in order to provide continuity between the ongoing work of the Faculty Senate and University Council; (2) Council Committee members should commit to serve for at least two consecutive years, and committee members' terms should be staggered in order to provide continuity and institutional memory; and (3) new student and other committee representatives should be identified by the end of each spring semester so that committees may engage in optional preliminary work over the summer period.

Mechanism of evaluation:

Members of the Committee on Committees (UCCoC) collected information for this report. Information was collected via in-person, phone, and/or email interviews, using the list of questions below as a guide. UCCoC members interviewed committee members from their own constituency. For example, faculty members interviewed Committee Chairs, as well as faculty representatives as available. Although the undergraduate students on the UCCoC were asked to complete interviews with the student representatives on the UC committees, they declined to do so, and graduate student feedback was provided only in limited fashion. This report provides an overview of the general findings from the data collected and comments on the functioning and procedures of each Committee. The UC Steering Committee is encouraged to refer to the individual committee reports for more information on the functioning of each committee.

Questions posed to each Committee Chair:

1. Was the committee's specific charge for this year clear and appropriate?
2. What changes, if any, do you think need to be made in the committee's general charge? Do you feel the scope of the committee is appropriate?
3. What issues did the committee address this year? Were these issues resolved or will they likely be resolved by the end of the academic year?
4. Were there any issues in the committee's charge that are unlikely to be addressed or resolved by the end of the academic year? What do you see as issues emerging for consideration next year?
5. How many times did the full committee meet? Were any subcommittees created? If so, how many were created, how often did they meet, what were their purposes, and did they achieve their goals?

6. Which members would you recommend to serve on the committee next year? Is anyone on the current committee a logical successor as chairperson, either now or in the future?
7. Is the membership of the committee well suited to the committee's charge in terms of relevant expertise, representation of interests, etc.? Does the chair demonstrate sufficient leadership?
8. What was the role of the administration's liaison in your committee? (*The liaison is an administrative person who can provide relevant information for a committee charge or connect the committee with others on campus with relevant information.*)
9. Did someone from the administration provide explicit feedback on last year's recommendations? Was the feedback satisfactory? Were there any aspects that were not been resolved or for which a path to resolving them has not been developed?
10. What problems did the committee encounter (e.g., limitations on access to necessary resources or information)?
11. Was the committee effectively structured to accomplish its charges? Were there appropriate opportunities for the committee to provide advice, to work with its administrative liaison to resolve specific issues, and/or to generate grander recommendations?
[Each committee has been charged to operate with three approaches: 1) To perform general advisory review of their area of concern - which may not reveal any specific problems to deal with; 2) Where there are specific issues that the committee wants to address (or has been charged to address), to try and resolve them working through the administrative liaison; 3) Where the intra-committee level effort is not able to resolve issues, to generate recommendations to be addressed outside of the committee as formal proposals to be forwarded to the administration or for the University Council to consider.]
12. What recommendations about the committee's process and organization do you have?
13. Is there any question that should have been asked about process that was not included?
14. **For Staff and Students only:** Do you feel that your voice was heard as part of the committee?
15. **For Students only:** Was there a primary and an alternate student representative on each committee?

General Comments across all Committees:

Each UC committee has two major roles:

1. Performing a broad review in its area(s) of interest, as well as monitoring to determine whether there are any issues requiring deeper exploration. Sometimes no recommendations emerge from this process, but the University is well served by having a representative body tracking important institutional and community matters on a consistent basis.
2. Additionally, performing a more in-depth consideration of a small number (typically three to five) issues that arise from last year's agenda and its recommendations, or new information relating to the work of the previous year's committee. These issues, which are developed in consultation with previous committee members, Faculty Senate leadership, and University leadership, might be examined by the committee as a whole, or by subcommittees, and will likely involve multiple meetings and conversations with people around the University engaged with the issue. Most can be resolved by working directly with the administrators responsible in the focus area to clarify issues and consider policy modifications. In the absence of a resolution of a given matter, the relevant committee may request that Council Steering reexamine the issue. Committees and Council Steering should nevertheless bear in mind the importance of closure on matters addressed by the various committees.

In order to be effective in fulfilling the above two roles, the most important factors are: the clarity of the chairs in explaining the purpose of the committee; delineation of the roles of the various members of the committee; scheduling meetings so that as many as possible of the members can attend; and beginning to meet as soon as feasible in the fall semester. In the review by the UC Committee on Committees, many University Council committee members again this year asked for more orientation and a better explanation of their role in the committee, and the committee's role in the University as a whole. Some committees felt they were underprepared to participate fully in substantive discussions on the issues their committees deliberated.

In light of the foregoing, and other feedback UCCoC received, specific recommendations for next year include the following:

1. Enhance orientation and explanation of duties to new members, especially for students. Provide the prior year's committee reports to committee members and encourage them to review the charges and outcomes. This recommendation continues from the 2014-15 report.
2. Invite and encourage representatives from the Faculty Senate, especially those serving as Tri-Chairs and Senate Committee chairs, to participate in each Council committee meeting when possible to share relevant information and ensure that committees' specific charges are clear.
3. Ask Council committee members to commit to a minimum of two years of service with terms that are staggered so that committee turnover occurs in a segmented fashion and the committee benefits from continuity and institutional memory.
4. Identify student representatives no later than the end of the spring semester during the year prior to allow for committees to engage in optional preliminary work over the summer period, should it choose to do so. This modification would alleviate beginning-of-year scheduling delays that many committee members experienced in recent years.
5. Ask each committee to formally re-consider its general committee charges and report annually to the Committee on Committees.

University Council Committee on Academic and Related Affairs (CARA)

General comments:

The committee met four times in person and twice online, and considered the Penn Libraries system (including off-site storage, study spaces, and electronic browsing), the performing and visual arts at Penn, and the culture of respect and safety within Penn Athletics. CARA is positioned to resolve all three of these issues in the upcoming year. There was a suggestion that the Athletics Department did not maintain suitable data for proper comparative analysis across peer institutions; this data limitation may have inhibited some of CARA's work on that issue. Suggestions were made to clarify future specific charges so that the committee can spend its time solving problems rather than determining how to frame them. The committee also noted the need to devote more attention to the university's research policies.

The University Council Committee on Committees recommends that CARA extend its standard meeting length from 60 to 90 minutes in order to allow more time for discussion during committee sessions and follow-up on content-related action items. CARA is poised to submit recommendations on three major issues from 2015-16 charges in the upcoming year. As such, membership continuity on the committee should be maintained through 2016-17 whenever possible.

Membership:

Chair: Ani Nenkova

Liaison: Leo Charney

Staff: Nicole Tillman

Members: Faculty: Frederick Dickinson, Eric Feldman, Vera Krymskaya, Nicola Mason, Rahim Rizzi; PPSA: Laurie-Ellen Shumaker, Chris Pastore; WPPSA: Suzanne Oh, Peter Rockett; GAPSA: Thomas Brinkerhoff, Qianying Zhang; UA: Nathaniel Rome, Jyothi Vallurupalli

General Committee Charge:

The Committee on Academic and Related Affairs (CARA):

- (i) shall have cognizance over matters of recruitment, admissions, and financial aid that concern the University as a whole and that are not the specific responsibility of individual faculties, including the authority to carry out studies on existing recruitment and admissions procedures and their relationships with existing policies on admissions and financial aid and to recommend changes in policy to the Council;
- (ii) shall consider the purposes of a University bookstore and advise the Council and the management of the University bookstore on policies, development, and operations;
- (iii) shall review and monitor issues related to the international programs and other international activities of the University, including advice and policy recommendations in such areas as services for international students and scholars, foreign fellowships and studies abroad, faculty, staff and student exchange programs, and cooperative undertakings with foreign universities;
- (iv) shall advise the vice provost and director of libraries on the policies, development, and operation of the University libraries;
- (v) shall have cognizance over recreation and intramural and intercollegiate athletics and their integration with the educational program of the University, including the planning and provision of adequate facilities for various sports and recreational activities; and
- (vi) shall have cognizance of all matters of policy relating to research and the general environment for research at the University, including the assignment and distribution of indirect costs and the

assignment of those research funds distributed by the University, and shall advise the Administration on those proposals for sponsored research referred to it because of potential conflict with University policy.

2015-16 Specific Charges:

1. All Specific Charges are in addition to each committee's "General" Charge in the Council Bylaws
2. Continue discussions about the library, including off-site storage of collections, study spaces for students and electronic browsing.
3. Continue to explore ways to develop the performing and visual arts at Penn, including ideas for increasing the integration of the arts into academic programming.
4. Review recent developments in Penn athletics, especially efforts to enhance a culture of respect and safety around athletic participation.
5. Review and discuss this Committee's general charge and identify two or three issues that should be given the highest priority for the committee's work in academic year 2016-17.

The University Council Committee on Campus and Community Life (CCL)

General Comments:

CCL met six times over the year and received specific charges that were only loosely related to the previous year's final report. Issues of focus this year included inclusion of international students and student mental health concerns. It was noted that the role of CAPS was a matter too complex for CCL to appropriately handle, and it was suggested that the Committee on Personnel Benefits should undertake a comprehensive review of student benefits. Some continuity was lost due to the turnover of the administrative staffer to the committee, and students were not as involved in discussions as in years past, perhaps due to the complexity of the issues. CCL wishes to continue its study of student employment arrangements into the upcoming year.

The University Council Committee on Committees recommends that CCL continue its work on these issues in 2016-17 with an aim toward providing a set of recommendations that university leadership can use to achieve positive outcomes for the Penn community. Given the need to continue discuss this year's charges, membership continuity on the committee should be maintained for 2016-17 whenever possible.

Membership:

Chair: Rebecca Maynard

Liaison: Karu Kozuma

Staff: Cydnee Bryant

Members: Faculty: Angela Bradbury, Monica Calkins, Jonah Gelbach, Campbell Grey, Emily Hannum; PPSA: Peter Gemmellaro, Namrata Narain; WPPSA: Simcha Katsnelson, Joyce Woodward-Jones; GAPSA: Lirui Li, Jia Xue; UA: Emily Hoeven, Adam Mansell

General Committee Charge:

- (i) shall have cognizance over the University's communications and public relations activities in their various formats and media including electronic, audio (the telephone system), video and printed copy, and it shall monitor the University's internal communications, the operations of the University Communications Office, communications to alumni, and the interpretation of the University to its many constituencies;
- (ii) shall advise the Council on the relationship of the University to the surrounding community and the relevant University policies, work to ensure that the University develops and maintains a constructive relationship with the community, and monitor pending real estate activities of concern to the community;
- (iii) shall have cognizance of the conditions and rules of undergraduate and graduate student life on campus, including 1) gathering and analyzing information concerning student life and student affairs and making recommendations to the Council; and 2) responding as appropriate to requests from and reporting information and recommendations concerning student life and student affairs to the vice provost for university life and other appropriate administrative officers; and
- (iv) shall advise the president, the director of public safety, and the administrators or directors of specific buildings, offices, or projects on all matters concerning safety and security in the conduct of their operations, including consideration and assessment of means to improve safety and security on the campus.

2015-16 Specific Charges:

1. Examine challenges facing international students and identify priorities for improving the ongoing support of this community.
2. Examine student mental health benefits, with particular attention to the role of CAPS and availability of insurance for longer term care from outside providers.
3. Consult with Penn's Office of Government and Community Affairs and the Netter Center in reviewing local community and economic initiatives.
4. Consider student employment arrangements, especially study work-study policies, and ways to improve availability of adequate student employment.
5. Review and discuss this Committee's general charge and identify two or three issues that should be given the highest priority for the committee's work in academic year 2016-17.

The University Council Committee on Diversity and Equity (CDE)

General Comments:

The committee charges were large and complex; the committee focused on two: the experiences of first-generation and low-income students and the diversity of graduate students. For the latter, CDE examined the experiences of current graduate students before considering prospective students. CDE will generate recommendations on both these issues which will require follow-up in the upcoming year. The committee had trouble scheduling its meetings (six this year). It would be helpful to identify student and other committee members for 2016-17 at the end of the current academic year. Linking this committee with the Senate Committee on Faculty Development, Diversity, and Equity (SCFDDE) is important. Some members wished to further define Penn's vision for diversity as it continues its work. Some noted the dominance of faculty members during conversations and the need for greater efforts to solicit voices of students and staff members. Some also called for greater information about work accomplished during prior year.

The University Council Committee on Committees recommends CDE schedule 90-minute meetings during 2016-17 and continue its work on the issues it began working on this year. It further recommends that committee members be named no later than June 2016 so that the committee may work electronically over the summer and begin work on committee charges at its first meeting early in the academic year.

Membership:

Chair: Ezekiel Dixon-Roman

Liaison: Sam Starks

Staff: Kuan Evans

Members: Faculty: Regina Austin, Herman Beavers, Chenoa Flippen, Joe Libonati, Jonni Moore, Sharrona Pearl; PPSA: Kristin Field, Shaina Adams El-Gulabi; WPPSA: Lauren Kemp, Irene Tan; GAPSA: Justine Sefcik, Lloyd Talley; UA: Ann Okhupe, Cheyenne Rogers

General Committee Charge:

The Committee on Diversity and Equity aids Penn in fostering and taking full advantage of its diversity as well as in strengthening ties across all boundaries to enrich and enliven the campus community. The Committee shall advise the offices of the president, provost, and the executive vice presidents on ways to develop and maintain a supportive atmosphere on campus for the inclusion and appreciation of diversity among all members of the University community. The Committee will review and provide advice regarding the University's equal opportunity and affirmative action programs and policies. The areas in which the Committee shall report to the Council include diversity within the educational and work settings, integration of staff and faculty into the larger campus community, and ways to foster a campus environment that is inclusive and supportive of difference. The Committee also will advise the Administration on specific diversity issues that may arise on campus.

2015-16 Specific Charges:

1. Obtain data relating to the diversity of Penn staff and discuss of the University's efforts to recruit and retain diverse staff.
2. Continue discussion of the University's efforts to attract diverse graduate students.

3. Examine the environment and resources available to low income undergraduate students.
4. Consider gender diversity in STEM fields for undergraduate and graduate students.
5. Review and discuss this Committee's general charge and identify two or three issues that should be given the highest priority for the committee's work in academic year 2016-17.

The University Council Committee on Facilities:

General Comments:

The committee met eight times. The charge about reducing barriers to interdisciplinary teaching was unclear. The committee resolved most of its specific charges, but believes these charges should be revisited in the future at regular intervals. It held a joint meeting with CARA to discuss the future role of the Penn Libraries and this joint work should continue. The committee wishes to undertake further discussion of distribution and availability of classroom and group collaboration spaces on campus. Members asked that relevant background information on issues be shared so that members could be prepared. Some members of the committee expressed an interest in establishing a mechanism to solicit university-wide questions and comments for the committee. They also wished to identify ways to make the Penn community more aware of the committee's purpose and work.

The University Council Committee on Committees recommends that any questions about specific charges be directed to the UC Steering Committee for further clarification. Committee members should be fully briefed at the beginning of their terms of service and provided with relevant background information. The committee's staff member should work with the Chair to ensure that such information is provided.

Membership:

Chair: Ann Moyer

Liaison: David Hollenberg

Staff: Taylor Berkowitz

Members: Faculty: Tom Daniels, Jerry Jacobs, Tanja Kral, Kathryn Michel, John Puckett, Masao Sako; PPSA: Elizabeth Hartzell, Kristen McMullen; WPPSA: Leon Malloy, Irene Tan; GAPSA: Saloman Moreno-Rosa, Matthew Rappaport; UA: Elena Rohner

General Committee Charge

The Committee on Facilities shall be responsible for keeping under review the planning and operation by the University of its physical plant and all services associated therewith, including transportation and parking.

2015-16 Specific Charges

1. Consider the availability and cost of parking for members of the Penn community.
2. Continue discussion of active learning spaces on campus.
3. Explore ways to reduce barriers to interdisciplinary teaching and academic initiatives across different schools, including reducing costs for shared event spaces and audiovisual charges in different Responsibility Centers.
4. Continue to monitor and update the Penn Connects plan.
5. Follow up on Philadelphia Bike share and impact on campus and students.
6. Revisit efforts to reduce smoking on campus and consider expanding no smoking zones on campus.
7. Review and discuss this Committee's general charge and identify two or three issues that should be given the highest priority for the committee's work in academic year 2016-17.

The University Council Committee on Personnel Benefits

General comments:

The Personnel Benefits Committee met eight times and addressed most of the charges. Because the number of charges was large, the committee did not reach topics toward the end of the list. Attendance was poor among some members. Some members requested to be consulted in the development of benefits, such as revisions to healthcare plans, instead of being consulted at the end of the process. Faculty members on the committee noted that attention to benefits focused on staff, not faculty and suggested that the Faculty Senate Committee on the Economic Status of the Faculty (SCESF) is a more appropriate committee for examining faculty benefits. The Committee worked to clarify language around the retirement “Rule of 75” and wishes to continue this discussion in 2016-17. The committee also wishes to continue attention to same sex partner benefits and undertake a review of maternity and paternity benefits for Penn staff. Some also noted the need for greater communication to employees about existing benefits.

The University Council Committee on Committees appreciates the Committee’s steadfast work on a lengthy list of charges and its success in developing a strong relationship working relationship with the staff liaison. It notes that SCESF’s role is to gather and organize data on salaries and benefits and to represent the faculty in the determination of University policy on salary issues, which is accomplished by identifying a SCESF member to serve on the Personnel Benefits Committee. It further notes that SCESF by design is not positioned to negotiate on matters of University policy issues but rather serves as a resource for this information. It recommends continued attention to unresolved charges and coordination with SCESF about issues pertaining to faculty benefits.

Membership:

Chair: Reed Shuldiner

Liaisons: Jack Heuer, Susan Sproat

Staff: Sheila Hall

Members: Faculty: David Balamuth, Carolyn Cannuscio, Erika Holzbaur, Russell Localio, Jonathan Smith, Petra Todd, Rakesh Vohra; PPSA: Heather Frattone, Amy Nothelfer, Susan Russoniello; WPPSA: Joe Mellon, Jr., Peter Rockett, Joyce Woodward-Jones

General Committee Charge:

The Committee on Personnel Benefits shall have cognizance over the benefits programs for all University personnel. The Committee shall consist of eight faculty members (of whom one shall be a member of the Senate Committee on the Economic Status of the Faculty (SCESF)), three representatives of the Penn Professional Staff Assembly, and three representatives of the Weekly-Paid Professional Staff Assembly. The Vice President for Human Resources, Associate Provost, and Director of Benefits shall serve as non-voting *ex officio* members.

2015-16 Specific Charges:

1. Continue discussion of Penn Behavioral Health, with particular focus on out-of-network benefits and the administration of claims, as well as compliance with new federal regulations regarding mental health benefits.

2. Consider Penn's retirement benefits for faculty and staff. Evaluate retirement benefits, particularly retirement (qualified plan) and especially in relation to peer institutions.
3. Review same-sex partner benefits in light of the changes in laws governing same-sex marriage.
4. Monitor implementation of revised short-term disability/maternity leave policy.
5. Continue to discuss and review the requirements of Health Care Reform and consider needed changes in University benefits.
6. Continue to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of Penn's wellness initiatives, including Penn's program with Health Advocate.
7. Continue to discuss and investigate how information on benefits is disseminated and possible improvements thereto.
8. Review and discuss this Committee's general charge and identify two or three issues that should be given the highest priority for the committee's work in academic year 2016-17.