

University Council Committee on Committees Report on the Functioning of Council Committees during Academic Year 2014-15

Membership:

Chair: Reed Pyeritz

Staff: Vicki Hewitt and Joseph Gasiewski

Members: Faculty: Dwight Jaggard, Claire Finkelstein, Brendan O’Leary, Michael McGarvey, Melissa Wilde, PPSA representative: Emma Grigore, WPPSA representative: Loretta Hauber, GAPSA representative: Alounso Gilzene, and UA representative: David Scollan.

Executive Summary:

This report summarizes the general functioning and procedures of University Council Committees during the 2014 – 2015 academic year. These committees are: the Committee on Academic and Related Affairs (CARA), Committee on Campus and Community Life, Committee on Facilities, Committee on Personnel Benefits, and Committee on Diversity and Equity. Suggestions for enhancing the functioning of these committees typically covered these areas: (1) committee chairs should attempt to explain duties to new members with greater clarity, especially to student members, and to identify committee members’ roles more clearly; (2) meetings need to be scheduled more carefully to accommodate the schedules of all members; (3) charges among committees with overlapping responsibilities, including committees of the Faculty Senate, need to be identified and a way found to enhance communication among such committees; and (4) there was a general sentiment to provide for each committee meeting beverages and snacks from funds of the Central Administration.

Mechanism of evaluation:

Each faculty member on the Committee on Committees was assigned to review a Council committee. Each review consisted of in-person, phone, and/or email interviews, typically conducted with the Committee Chair, Administrative Liaison, and staff support person, using the questions below. Committee members were encouraged to speak with members of the various committees in order to explain the nature of the review in greater detail. In some cases other members of the committees were asked for responses to these questions as well. Other University constituencies were asked to provide information on committee performance via their members who serve on the committees. All committee members then reported their findings to the Committee on Committees in March for discussion. This report provides an overview of the general findings, as well as specific comments on the functioning and procedures of each committee. Steering is nevertheless encouraged to look at the individual committee reports to gain a complete view of how the committees are performing.

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 were addressed this year and were they resolved, or will they likely be resolved by the end of the academic year?
4. How many times did the full committee meet? If subcommittees were created, how many were created, how often did they meet, and what was their purpose?
5. Based on the charges for this year, and the discussions to date, was the committee able to satisfactorily resolve the issues discussed, and what do you see as issues emerging for consideration next year?

6. Which members would you recommend to serve on the committee next year? Is there anyone on the current committee who is the logical successor as chair, either now or in the future?
 7. Is the membership of the committee well suited to the committee's charge? (*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 appropriate 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 remaining aspects that were have not been resolved or a path developed?
 10. What problems did the committee encounter, e.g., access to necessary resources?
 11. Did the committee structure work involving opportunities for oversight, opportunities to work with your Administrative Liaison to resolve specific issues, and opportunities to generate larger recommendations?
- Each committee has been charged to operate with three approaches: 1) Perform general oversight reviews of their area of concern which may not turn up any specific problems to deal with; 2) where there are specific issues that they want to address (o they have been charged to address) to try and resolve them working through their Administrative Liaison; 3) where the intra-committee level effort is not able to resolve issues to move towards generating fully elaborated recommendations to be addressed outside of the committee (as formal proposals to be forwarded to the Administration, or for the Council to consider.) Was this how the committee worked? Was it an effective structure of tasks for accomplishing the committees' charges]*
12. What recommendations about the committee's process and organization would you make going forward?
 13. Is there any question that should have been asked about process that was not included?
 14. **Students only:** Do the student members feel their voices are heard? Were there a primary and an alternate student representative on each committee?

General Comments:

Each UC committee has two major roles:

1. 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. Additionally, each committee performs 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 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.
2. 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 UC Committee on Committees' review, many University Council committee members, especially students, 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. They also asked for more opportunities to interact informally with other committee members. Some committees felt they did not get enough information in order to formulate recommendations and follow-up about whether their recommendations were implemented and what the outcomes were.

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

1. Enhance orientation and explanation of duties to new members, especially for students. Provide all of last year's committee reports to committee members and encourage them to review the charges and outcomes.
2. Invite the members of the previous year's committee to attend the first half of the first meeting of the new academic year, in order to facilitate continuity from one year to the next.
3. Continue the Administration's practice of giving verbal feedback at the first meeting of the year to the full Committee regarding recommendations from the previous year.
4. Consider incorporating an informal lunch or reception at the first committee meeting that would give committee members time for informal interaction. Request funding from Central Administration for beverages and snacks at each meeting of full committees.
5. Work to insure as much continuity of the membership year-to-year. Admittedly, this is difficult for the student representatives, who typically serve one-year terms.
6. Each committee should 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, and considered the topics of the arts, academic integrity and the library. The committee provided oversight and found no issues to resolve regarding any of those topics. There was a suggestion to encourage some informal interactions among committee members and extend the potential time of each meeting to 1.5 hours. Some thought the General Charge for this committee was too broad, for example the bookstore focus was superfluous.

The University Council Committee on Committees suggested the possibility of changing the Undergraduate Assembly election process to allow undergraduate members to serve longer terms on the committees, providing more continuity for student members of the committees. The UA representative will bring this to the attention of the UA. Additionally, the Committee on Committees recognizes that the general charges of CARA are quite broad, but at this time, recommended retaining a consolidated committee structure.

Membership:

Chair: Steve Kimbrough

Liaison: Leo Charney

Staff: Susan White

Members: Faculty: Frederick Dickinson, David Hsu, Nicola Mason, Ani Nenkova, Therese Richmond, Rahim Rizzi, Paul Saint-Amour, PPSA representatives: Laurie-Ellen Shumaker, David Valentine, WPPSA representatives: Suzanne Oh, Peter Rockett, GAPSA representatives: Thomas Brinkerhoff, George Maliha, and UA representatives: Jordan Dannenberg, Eric Tepper.

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.

2014-15 Specific Charges:

1. Examine Penn's programming relating to the performing and visual arts as it intersects with programming for Penn students.
2. Review procedures and standards on academic integrity for graduate students.
3. Explore proposed changes to Van Pelt Library and resulting impact on the library system generally.
4. 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 2015-16.

5. The University Council Committee on Campus and Community Life

General Comments:

Reports suggested the Committee functioned well and that the charges were clear and appropriate. A subcommittee on student housing met in addition to the regular meetings of the Committee. Attendance was good but some members, especially the GAPSA representatives had difficulty arranging their schedules to attend. The relationship between the Chair and the Staff representative, while productive, could be defined better in advance. Some of the student representatives expressed a desire to be more involved in discussions and formulation of recommendations.

The University Council Committee on Committees recognizes how efficiently CCL functioned this academic year. Still, the general comments on initial orientation, scheduling of meeting, and focus on more profound issues pertain to CCL.

Membership:

Chair: Rebecca Maynard

Liaison: Karu Kozuma

Staff: Amelia Carter

Members: Faculty: Jonah Gelbach, Campbell Grey, Amy Hillier, Daeyeon Lee, Serena Mayeri, Matt McHugh, PPSA representatives: James Allen, Peter Gemmellaro, WPPSA representatives: Simcha Katsnelson, Joyce Woodward-Jones, GAPSA representatives: Jingwen Jiao, Demetri Morgan, and UA representatives: Daniel Kahan, Alex Zimmermann.

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.

2014-15 Specific Charges:

1. Consider trends in university responses to allegations of sexual assault and Penn's response to these trends.

2. Follow up on the recommendations of the Commission on Student Safety, Alcohol and Student Life.
3. Consider enhanced advising and support structures for international students.
4. 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 2015-16.

The University Council Committee on Diversity and Equity

General Comments:

This committee broadened the diversity of its membership, to good effect. A suggestion was made to improve continuity by requesting a three-year commitment of the faculty and staff representatives, with only one representative in each group rotating off each year. Additionally, the requirement that the current chair serve as past-chair for at least one year was suggested. The Committee met monthly. Much effort was devoted to fact-finding and gathering. Access to data was sometimes difficult, especially regarding diversity among the staff.

The University Council Committee on Committees recommends holding a joint meeting with the Senate Committee on the Economic Status of the Faculty in the fall; the purpose is to compare notes on gender equity. Otherwise, the general comments on continuity of membership pertain.

Membership:

Chair: Joe Libonati

Liaison: Sam Starks

Staff: Kuan Evans

Members: Faculty: Regina Austin, Herman Beavers, Kendra Bence, Ezekiel Dixon-Roman, Chenoa Flippen, Jonni Moore, PPSA representatives Kristin Field, Gail Oberton, WPPSA representatives: Ashley Gripper, Irene Tan, GAPSAs representatives: Lloyd Talley, Shereen Chang, and UA representatives: Abel McDaniels, Oyinkan Muraina.

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.

2014-15 Specific Charges:

1. Examine the University's efforts relating to staff diversity.
2. Examine the University's efforts around the recruitment and retention of diverse faculty and graduate students.
3. 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 2015-16.

The University Council Committee on Facilities:

General Comments:

The committee focused on Penn Connects, bicycling safety, classroom utilization, conference space, recycling and energy utilization. A report on Penn Connects is forthcoming. All other issues require on-going study and deliberation. The student representatives felt marginalized, both because of a lack of input on scheduling and a sense that the committee lacked organization.

The University Council Committee on Committees suggests that the issues surrounding public safety have been adequately addressed for now and that other specific charges be considered for the coming academic year. The general comments on scheduling meetings so all (especially students) can attend pertain.

Membership:

Chair: Eric Marsh

Liaison: David Hollenberg

Staff: Taylor Berkowitz

Members: Faculty: Zahra Fakhraai, Tanja Kral, Kathryn Michel, Ann Moyer, Masao Sako, Rom Schrift, PPSA representatives: Elizabeth Hartzell, Kristen McMullen, WPPSA representatives: Loretta Hauber, Linda Satchell, GAPSA representatives: Sibi Vijaykumar, Andrew Wang, and UA representatives: Kat KcKay, Darren Tomasso.

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.

2014-15 Specific Charges

1. Monitor the progress of the Penn Connects Plan, especially with respect to implications for traffic and transportation at the South Bank.
2. Examine new developments relating to campus safety, with particular attention to impact on classroom security and possible changes to the physical plant.
3. Continue to investigate the adequacy of instructional space on campus, with particular attention to classroom size and meeting technological needs.
4. Explore possibilities for a more collaborative approach to conference and event spaces on campus.
5. Monitor the progress of the Bike Plan developed by the Bike Planning Committee as it enters its implementation phase.
6. 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 2015-16.

The University Council Committee on Personnel Benefits

General comments:

The Personnel Benefits Committee met monthly and addressed most of their specific charges. In particular, the Committee worked with Human Resources to address the short term disability/maternity leave policy and to put a new plan in place. The plan will be implemented over the course of two years, and the Committee recommends that it be charged with monitoring the implementation of the revised short term disability plan. The Committee addressed mental health benefits and expressed concern about the implementation of Penn Behavioral Health administration of out-of-network claims. The Committee recommends that it be charged with addressing the administration of out-of-network mental health benefits. The Committee felt there was a productive working relationship between the Committee and the Administrative Liaisons, Jack Heuer and Sue Sproat.

The University Council Committee on Committees applauds the success of CPB in addressing the issues of Committee leadership and interaction with the Administrative Liaisons this academic year. The members of the Committee were all engaged and valued members. The Committee felt the composition of the Committee was appropriate given their charges, and the Committee was able to address its charges effectively and collaboratively.

Membership:

Chair: Reed Shuldiner

Liaison: Jack Heuer and Susan Sproat

Staff: Sheila Hall

Members: Faculty: David Balamuth, Anthea Butler, Carolyn Cannuscio, Lorraine Tulman, PPSA representatives: Heather Frattone, Amy Nothelfer, Claudia Quinton, and WPPSA representatives: 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.

2014-15 Specific Charges:

1. Discuss and review the University's short-term and long-term disability policies, with a particular attention to impact on maternity leave.
2. Continue discussion of mental health benefits and compliance with federal regulations.
3. Continue to discuss and investigate how information on health insurance and retirement alternatives is disseminated and possible improvements thereto.
4. Continue to discuss and review the requirements of Health Care Reform and consider needed changes in University benefits.

5. Continue to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of Penn's wellness initiatives, including Penn's program with Health Advocate.
6. 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 2014-15.