

University Council Committee on Committees Report on the Functioning of Council Committees during Academic Year 2016-17

Membership

Chair: Santosh S. Venkatesh

Staff: Patrick Walsh and Joseph Gasiewski

Members: Faculty: Mitchell Berman, Eileen Lake, Michael McGarvey, Laura Perna, Reed Pyeritz, Melissa Wilde; PPSA: Heather Kelley; WPPSA: Loretta Hauber; Graduate Student: Betsy Sneller; Undergraduate Student: David Scollan

Executive Summary

This report summarizes the general functioning and procedures of University Council (UC) Committees during the 2016 – 2017 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) Committee chairs should consider making meeting times as flexible as possible so as to be adaptive to groups whose attendance is limited by other obligations; (2) Council Committee members should commit to serve for at least two consecutive years with terms staggered in order to provide continuity and institutional memory; and (3) committees should consider establishing subcommittees with clear directives in order to address aspects of their charges in more detailed fashion.

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; students sought to interview the corresponding student representatives; and staff members of the UCCoC interviewed their counterparts in the committees. 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. 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?
2. What issues did the committee address this year? Will they be resolved by year's end? Were the committee's specific charges for this year clear and appropriate?
3. What issues in the committee's charges 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?
4. 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?

5. 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; if not, then who on the committee does? Which members would you recommend to serve on the committee next year?

6. 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.)

7. 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?

8. What problems did the committee encounter (e.g., limitations on access to necessary resources or information)?

9. 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?¹

10. What recommendations about the committee's process and organization do you have? Is there any question that should have been asked about process that was not included?

11. For Staff and Students: Do you feel that your voice was heard as part of the committee?

12. For Students: 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 areas of interest and monitoring the issues to determine whether there are any that require deeper exploration. While it is occasionally the case that no recommendations emerge from this process, the University is well served by having a representative body tracking important institutional and community matters on a continuing basis.
2. Performing an in-depth consideration of a small number (typically three to five) issues that arise from the previous year's agenda and its recommendations, or new information relating to the work of the previous year's committee. These issues are developed in consultation with Committee members from the previous year, Faculty Senate leadership, and University leadership. The examination of an issue charged to the committee may be undertaken by the committee as a whole, or by subcommittees, and will typically involve multiple meetings and conversations with people around the University engaged with the issue. While many issues can be resolved by working directly with administrators in the

¹ Each committee has been charged to operate keeping the following process in mind: 1) To perform general advisory review of their area of concern; 2) To try to resolve specific issues that the committee wishes to address (or has been charged to address) by working through the administrative liaison; 3) In cases 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.

focus area to clarify issues and consider policy modifications, in the absence of a resolution of a given matter, the 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.

While several factors can contribute to whether a committee functions effectively, there are a few governing principles which can help a UC committee function well: a clear explanation of the purpose of the committee by the chair; a careful delineation of the roles of the various members of the committee; the formation of appropriate subcommittees; scheduling meetings to fit the schedules of the members of the committee; and beginning meetings as soon as feasible in the fall semester to get an early start on the charges. Accordingly, as has been the practice in past years, the University Council Committee on Committees urges committee chairs to provide committee members with detailed orientation materials along with a thorough explanation of their roles and the committee's role in the University as a whole in order to facilitate substantive and efficient discussions on the committee's charges.

In light of feedback received, UCCoC makes the following specific recommendations for the 2017-2018 academic year:

1. 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. This recommendation continues from the 2015-16 report.
2. Ensure that enough deliberation time is built in to committee meeting times. While information transfer (via presentations, etc.) is important, much of it can and should be disseminated ahead of time to enable committee members to prepare adequately for the meeting. Committee meeting time should be reserved primarily for discussion and debate.
3. To complement the previous recommendation, consider the feasibility of establishing subcommittees that divide the work and address subsets of it in more detailed fashion. It is important that clear directives be given to these subcommittees.
4. Ask each committee to formally re-consider its general committee charges and report annually to the Committee on Committees. This recommendation also continues from the 2015-16 report.

University Council Committee on Academic and Related Affairs (CARA)

General comments

CARA members noted that they received thorough feedback on the previous year's recommendations from University administration along with a clarification of general process issues. The charge related to the library will continue to next year. While the committee chair maintained that the charge related to the research environment cannot be fully addressed, it was noted nonetheless that Penn maintains many resources to support creativity in research already. CARA members further noted the importance of student participation on the committee, with differing perspectives on whether student participation was sufficient.

Thanks in part to committee membership continuity and extended meeting lengths to allow for a fuller deliberation of its complex charges, CARA has made significant progress over the past year. The University Council Committee on Committees recognizes the progress made and commends CARA for the work it has done over the year. UCCoC also urges students to take an active role in CARA in future years to give direct voice to student concerns. CARA leadership should ensure that student perspectives are heard and meetings are scheduled at appropriate times to suit student participation.

Membership

Chair: Ani Nenkova

Liaison: Leo Charney

Staff: Nicole Tillman

Members: Faculty: Yuko Butler, Frederick Dickinson, Eric Feldman, Nicola Mason, Rahim Rizi; PPSA: Heather Frattone, Megan Moster; WPPSA: Marcia Dotson, Peter Rockett; GAPSA: Angela Ddamba, Bowen Lou; UA: Zixin Lee, Naomi Kadish

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;
- (iieeee) 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.

2016-17 Specific Charges

1. Study the library needs of faculty and recommend ways in which the library can better support their research.
2. Examine the general environment for research at the University and identify what changes or support can improve research productivity and creativity. This general charge of the committee has not been addressed in recent years.
3. Joint Charge with CCL-Review how sports and recreational activity opportunities for staff, graduate students and faculty is planned by the athletics department and how these can be improve the meet the needs and interests of these members of the Penn community.
4. Study the resources available to Penn students while they study abroad, particularly related to interpersonal violence and sexual assault.
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 2017-18.

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

General Comments

CCL met six times separately and in two separate joint meetings with the Committee on Facilities and with CARA. Much of the meeting time involved presentations and information transfer rather than deliberation. This was in part due to the fact that, because of turnover, most CCL members for the academic year 2016-17 were new to the committee.

CCL members commented that the general charge for CCL is too broad and should be reduced in scope, particularly regarding Penn's communications and public relations activities. The specific charge regarding student mental wellness will not be resolved by the end of the academic year.

The University Council Committee on Committees recommends that CCL members agree to serve an additional year in order to maintain continuity and so that CCL's charges can be deliberated to conclusion. It commends the membership for its commitment to understanding the issues before working on establishing recommendations. When possible, at least some overlap of committee membership should occur year-over-year so that institutional memory is maintained and deliberative processes streamlined.

Membership

Chair: Emily Hannum

Liaison: Karu Kozuma

Staff: Cydnee Bryant

Members: Faculty: Anne Barnhill, Monica Calkins, Annette Lareau, Americus Reed II; PPSA: Ashley Bush, Tessa Mansell; WPPSA: Joyce Woodward-Jones; GAPSA: Ian Deas, Ashali Jain; UA: Werner Glass, Sam Shea

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.

2016-17 Specific Charges

1. Conduct ongoing monitoring and assessment of the adequacy of mental health services, with a particular focus on issues of access to and adequacy of care available to students who need continuing care beyond that normally provided by CAPS.
2. Examine the merits of the university building on its work over the past couple of years to reduce sexual harassment and violence among students to develop parallel policies and practices to address sexual harassment and assault that involve faculty and staff as victims or as perpetrators.
3. Joint Charge with Facilities- Examine the Riverfront Development plans to identify untapped opportunities for improving housing, safety, or community engagement opportunities.
4. Joint Charge with CARA-Review how sports and recreational activity opportunities for staff, graduate students and faculty is planned by the athletics department and how these can be improve the meet the needs and interests of these members of the Penn community.
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 2017-18.

The University Council Committee on Diversity and Equity (CDE)

General Comments

As in the previous year, the committee charges were again broad and complex. The committee examined the campus climate for LGBTQ students, faculty, and staff and the resources available to them. It also continued its investigation of first-generation and low income students. CDE will also make recommendations on how Penn can best include veterans' issues amongst diversity efforts.

CDE met monthly and formed subcommittees (with CDE members self-selecting their participation on those) to accomplish their complex goals most efficiently. These subcommittees resulted in increased productivity by CDE, though some members complained that some faculty did not regularly attend meetings and those who did attend were asked to perform extra work via subcommittees. Some subcommittees struggled to identify workable meeting times. CDE did not address the issues of pilot data on graduate students or staff diversity and will recommend those charges be continued into 2017-18. There was increased membership flux this year which induced some instability in the committee's work.

The University Council Committee on Committees recommends CDE members commit to engagement in subcommittee work even if regular attendance is not possible. It further recommends that the current chair be permitted to remain a CDE member for a fifth year in order to assist in the transition of chair responsibilities to a new faculty member.

Membership

Chair: Ezekiel Dixon-Roman

Liaison: Sam Starks

Staff: Kuan Evans

Members: Faculty: Regina Austin, Gerald Campano, Nancy Hirschmann, Jonni Moore, Deborah Small, Ebony Thomas; PPSA: Kristin Field, Shaina Adams El-Gulabi; WPPSA: Lauren Kemp; GAPSA: Lloyd Talley, Sashae Sabrina Mitchell; UA: Erica Dienes, Calvary 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.

2016-17 Specific Charges

1. Obtain data relating to the diversity of Penn staff and discuss University's efforts to recruit and retain diverse staff.
2. Examine the campus climate and experiences of LGBTQ students, staff, and faculty.
3. Examine and discuss the pilot survey and data on graduate students, with a particular focus on diverse graduate students.
4. Continue to assess efforts related to the campus climate for undergraduate students for low-income and first-generation undergraduate 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 2017-18.

The University Council Committee on Facilities

General Comments

The committee met six times. Each charge assigned to the committee was discussed. The committee concluded that each of the charges was being sufficiently managed by administration and that adequate resources were being provided to the community. The committee maintained however that it is important to monitor these issues from time to time. The committee wishes to discuss gender-neutral facilities issues in the coming year. Several faculty seats remained vacant on the committee.

Attempts in the previous academic year by the Committee on Committees and the Senate leadership to recruit additional faculty for the University Council Committee on Facilities were abortive. UCCoC recommends that renewed efforts be made and appeals widely broadcast to faculty members to seek participation on the committee. It commends the members of the committee and the staff support for their good work.

Membership

Chair: Masao Sako

Liaison: David Hollenberg

Staff: Taylor Berkowitz

Members: Faculty: Tom Daniels, Kathryn Michel; PPSA: Moira Tucker; WPPSA: Leon Malloy; GAPSA: Suraj Bharadwaj, Jessie Haeun Yi; UA: Timothy Chang, Michelle Xu

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.

2016-17 Specific Charges

1. Continue to monitor bicycle plan, including its role as part of Penn's overall commuting and parking programs.
2. Continue discussion of efforts to reduce smoking on campus and expanding no smoking zones on campus.
3. Continue to follow up on the issues related to Active Learning classrooms.
4. Joint Charge with CCL-Examine the Riverfront Development plans to identify untapped opportunities for improving housing, safety, or community engagement opportunities.
5. Monitor the progress of the Climate Action Plan 2.0.
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 2016-17.

The University Council Committee on Personnel Benefits

General comments

The Personnel Benefits Committee addressed most of its charges this year, including examinations of new-parent benefits, mental health benefits, and parity for same-sex partner benefits (which is rendered moot by recent marriage equality judgments). The committee did not have time to make recommendations for changes to any existing benefits categories and may wish to consider it next year. The committee wishes to consider monitoring changes to health care plan design and pricing given potential changes in law and to carry forward the charge to review mental health benefits on a continuing basis. A suggested charge to examine dependent child tuition benefits compared to peers was noted. University administration agreed to establish a routine of informing the committee during the fall semester of whether it is considering making changes to healthcare plans so that committee members may offer feedback. Members noted that because charges often continue year over year due to the nature of the work, continuity in membership is important.

The University Council Committee on Committees commends the Committee's good work and the strong leadership displayed by the chair and is grateful to the administration for its support. It notes that SCESF continues to examine dependent child tuition benefits and collaboration between the groups is warranted as appropriate. It further notes, as it did last year, 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: Melissa Brown

Members: Faculty: Anita Allen (ex-officio), David Balamuth, Robert Boruch, Neill Epperson, Russel Localio, Jonathan Smith, Rakesh Vohra; PPSA: Adam Roth-Saks, Susan Russoniello, Amy Nothelfer; WPPSA: Abby Kalkstein, Rhonda Kirlew, Peter Rockett

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.

2016-17 Specific Charges

1. Review Penn's provision of benefits for new parents.
2. Continue discussion of mental health benefits.

3. Continue to monitor retirement benefits in coordination with the Faculty Senate Committee on the Economic Status of the Faculty.
4. Continue to discuss and investigate how information on benefits is disseminated and possible improvements thereto.
5. Continue discussion of same-sex partner benefits and the transition to parity.
6. Continue to monitor the implementation of changes to health plan design and pricing given health care reform and the current health market
7. Continue to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of Penn's wellness initiatives, including Penn's program with Health Advocate.
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 2017-18.