

Elected Faculty Council

Minutes – Meeting of December 1, 2003, 11:30 AM to 1:10 PM

Members Present: Gary Russell, John Spitzer, Rick Tubbs, Chuck Whiteman (chair, secretary of the day);
absent: Jay Christensen-Szalanski, Tim Lowe

Also attending the meeting: Associate Dean Robert Forsythe.

The purpose of the meeting was continued discussion of faculty governance issues, although the issue of the School of Management's recommended grade distribution was also discussed, and a motion was subsequently made, voted upon, and passed by email. .

For Dean Forsythe's benefit, the discussion from the previous meeting (which he had not been able to attend) with Associate Provost Lee Anna Clark was reviewed. The gist of that discussion was that there are few, if any, examples of decisions at The University of Iowa about which the faculty (as opposed to Deans, higher-level administrators, or the regents) has final authority. Some Deans delegate some decision-making power over matters such as degree or general education requirements to faculty committees, but committee recommendation may be overridden at the Dean's discretion. Associate Provost Clark emphasized that the recent history in the Provost's office was that the previous Provost consulted regularly with faculty leaders and committees, and recognized was reluctant, as a matter of policy, to make decisions contrary to faculty advice.

Dean Forsythe indicated that he and Dean Fethke have reviewed the two skeletal draft faculty governance documents, and favor the proposal known as the "Alternative". He added that one issue to consider in drafting the document is whether the EFC or some other faculty committee or body should play a role in Collegiate budget review (say by attending budget meetings.)

This led to a discussion of other issues for consideration in designing a governance document:

- How should the advisory committee be structured? Should terms of members be staggered?
- What constitutes a "major change" that could be proposed by a standing or ad-hoc committee that require review by the EFC or the faculty?
- How should authority be delegated to the committees? How can they be structured to "run themselves", so that effective communication and broad faculty input are accommodated without burdensome procedures or monitoring by the EFC or the faculty?
- Is the role of the EFC as a representative of the faculty, meaning that it could turn down proposed "major changes" brought by committees (in addition to passing such changes or putting them to faculty votes)? Or, should the authority of the EFC be limited to passing changes or putting them to faculty votes?
- In either case, what constitutes a "passing" vote? 4-2? 5-1?

The issue of the School of Management grade distribution recommendation was revisited and discussed briefly. Because of the low turnout, a motion was subsequently made by email. The motion, "The EFC agrees that the MBA Committee recommendation to establish grading recommendations has been handled appropriately by the MBA Committee, and that the recommended grade distributions may be announced and publicized", passed by a vote of 6-0.

The next EFC meeting is set for January 13, 2004 from 11:30 AM to 1 PM in W326. DEOs have been invited to that meeting to offer their perspective on faculty governance.