

Faculty Governance at Bucknell

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Board of Trustees Meeting

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External Review of Faculty Governance

Date: April 23-25, 2007

Review Team:

- ▶ William Tierney, Professor of Higher Education, University of Southern California
- ▶ Joan Girgus, Professor of Psychology, Dean Emerita, Princeton University
- ▶ Gregory Scholtz, Professor of English, Wartburg College

External Review of Faculty Governance

Charge to Review Team:

The Faculty Council of Bucknell University, with support from the administration and Board of Trustees, charges the external review team to examine the university faculty's role in the practice of shared governance at Bucknell. While the Faculty Council welcomes comments on all aspects of shared governance at Bucknell, we offer some specific questions that might guide the investigations of the review team.

- ▶ Are the faculty, administration, student, and trustee roles in shared governance consistent with AAUP and AGB guidelines? Are they appropriate for Bucknell? Where do they fit within the range of norms of higher education? Are they reasonably well understood?

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Charge continued:

- ▶ Does Bucknell have governance structures that allow the faculty to fulfill its responsibilities in shared governance? How do our structures compare to those at peer institutions? (Do we have the right committees with the right charges and the right compositions?)
- ▶ Is the faculty fulfilling its responsibilities in the practice of shared governance at Bucknell? (Do our committees work? Are they functioning as designed?)
- ▶ Are we missing opportunities for better communication between the faculty, administration, board, and students in our practice of shared governance?

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Charge continued:

- ▶ Is there appropriate accountability built in to our governance structures?
- ▶ What are the particular strengths of the practice of shared governance at Bucknell? What are the particular weaknesses?
- ▶ Are there large-scale structural changes that the faculty might consider so that it can fulfill its governance responsibilities more effectively? Would it be appropriate to have a body that can speak for the faculty and/or provide feedback on some issues when the university is not in session?

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Opening Paragraph of the Report, *Governance and Trust at Bucknell University*

Successful shared governance is a mixture of structure and culture that enables an academic community to move forward in resolving problems and achieving excellence. There is no academic “cookbook” listing all the necessary ingredients that must be added in a particular manner to create a successful governance system. There are, however, two essential ingredients: effective communication and mutual trust. It is our assessment that the primary problems facing Bucknell are that internal communication is flawed and that the degree of trust between the president and the faculty is inadequate.

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Recommendations:

Promotion and Tenure

- ▶ Clarify and make more transparent the policies and procedures governing tenure and promotion decisions.
- ▶ Consider enabling the president and/or provost to make an independent recommendation concerning tenure and promotion (with the explicit understanding, as the AAUP recommends in its 1966 Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities, that disagreements with faculty recommendations would occur rarely and for compelling reasons that the president would share in detail with the faculty).
- ▶ Create a policy that allows professors from other institutions to be hired with tenure, at least when filling an endowed chair.
- ▶ Make promotion and tenure processes consistent across departments.

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Recommendations:

Faculty Governance

- ▶ Discuss the creation of a faculty senate that would possess representational authority and decision-making powers.
- ▶ Create an executive committee of the senate/faculty, with a faculty chair, that possesses more than convening authority. Such a committee should at a minimum be empowered to work with the administration on matters of process and should be able to speak for the faculty on matters not under the purview of a standing faculty committee.
- ▶ Provide summer stipends for the chair and/or executive committee so that faculty representatives can be available for consultation about issues of concern to the faculty when the university is not in session.

External Review of Faculty Governance

Recommendations:

Committee Structures

- ▶ Clarify and streamline the roles and functions of committees. Where overlap exists, eliminate a committee. Where no charge exists, create one or eliminate the committee. In particular, split the Planning and Budget Committee in two so that one committee concentrates on long-range planning and another deals with budgetary issues.
- ▶ Clarify the reporting authority of and path for recommendations from faculty and university committees, and include this information for each committee in the faculty handbook.
- ▶ If the charge of the "executive committee" does not include finding nominees for faculty committees, create a committee on committees that performs this function and is responsible for cross-communication among committees.

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Recommendations:

Decision-Making Positions

- ▶ Provide human resource training for department chairs based on their assessment of what assistance they need to improve their work.
- ▶ Increase the power and authority of the deans.
- ▶ Expand the power and authority of the provost, and the capacity of the provost's office, so that whoever serves in that position can function as the academic leader of the faculty and the on-campus leader of the university.

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Recommendations:

Faculty Handbook

- ▶ The faculty handbook is a conglomeration of sometimes too-specific and sometimes too-general policies about a variety of issues and topics. Clarity and consistency, moreover, seem to be virtues that the handbook honors more in the breach than in the observance. Hire an outside consultant to work with the faculty on revising the handbook after the previous recommendations have been implemented.

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Concluding Paragraph:

A sense of inertia and a mood of wariness and distrust currently pervade the governance system at Bucknell. These problems will not be overcome by instrumental activities, although such activities can improve the system. In order for Bucknell University to achieve the ambitious goals it has set for itself, an internal communication strategy must be developed that will enable the president and senior administration to build better relationships between constituencies — relationships characterized by trust and mutual respect.

Governance Issues

Establishment of Priorities:

- ▶ Post Review Team Discussions, April 2007.
Susan Crawford, Joe Ciffolillo, Ron Benjamin, Wayne Bromfield, Marty Ligare.
- ▶ Post Review Team Discussions, April 2007.
Faculty Council.
- ▶ Meeting of the University Council, July 11, 2007.
(President, Senior Administrators, Faculty Council, BSG representatives)
- ▶ Meeting of the University Council, August 2007
(Discuss charge and composition for Ad Hoc Tenure Review Committee.)
- ▶ Faculty Meeting, September 4, 2007.
Presentation of Faculty Council response to *Governance and Trust at Bucknell University*.
- ▶ Meeting of the University Council, December 12, 2007.
(Discussion of new charge to expand role of Faculty Council.)

Governance Priorities

First-level Priorities for 2007-2008:

- ▶ Critical examination of our system of evaluation for tenure and promotion.
Interim Report of Ad Hoc Committee due in March.
- ▶ More clearly defined leadership and executive role for Faculty Council.
Faculty Council announced temporary expanded role in September.
University Council discussed structure/role for such a committee.
New charge for Faculty Council to be presented to Faculty in February (or March).
- ▶ Trust and Communication.
More regular and substantive meetings of the University Council.

Governance Priorities

Second-level Priorities for 2007-2008:

- ▶ Discussion of creation of a faculty senate.
- ▶ Address substantive issues in the Faculty Handbook, including committee charges.

Expanded Role for Faculty Council

The draft charge under discussion suggests that the Faculty Council will:

- ▶ coordinate the operation of faculty governance (consulting with and advising committees, facilitating communication, providing oversight to ensure effective execution of faculty governance responsibilities);
- ▶ identify issues of importance to the faculty regarding governance and the academic mission and lead faculty consideration of these issues (agenda setting role);
- ▶ work with the administration on matters of strategic planning;
- ▶ provide advice to the President (through University Council);
- ▶ facilitate faculty/administration communication through regular meetings of the University Council;

Draft Faculty Council charge continued.

- ▶ receive matters that do not fall under the purview of existing faculty governance bodies – (the Faculty Council may assume responsibility for such matters, or direct them to the attention of an existing body or the faculty as a whole);
- ▶ receive governance matters when the faculty is unable to meet – (the FC may either speak for the faculty, consult with the appropriate faculty committee, or defer the matter until the faculty is able to meet);
- ▶ continue its role as a nominating body.