From: Robert Banks [mailto:rfbanks@msu.edu]
Subject: A proposed amendment to Section 3 of the BAG

My earlier document dated July 24, 2009 had, as part, general comments regarding proposed changes to section 3, The Academic Congress. As a follow-up I propose some amendments in the Faculty Council proposals for you review and consideration. Again these are my personal proposals with an intent to be more specific about the import of my earlier general comments.

Send as separate attachments via campus mail are copies of A the Current BAG language; B The FC proposed changes which appear in the April 14, 2009 document; and C my proposed amendment to B. C has notations in yellow which show my proposed changes.

One option-not proposed- is to leave the current section of the BAG unchanged which would leave the Academic Congress with an essentially safety value function. I think this is a perfectly acceptable proposal now that fixed term faculty are members of the Academic Congress. As noted earlier I believe a safety valve function is more appropriate for the Academic Congress as it is too big to be a deliberative body and has a far too small quorum requirement to be a reasonable recommending body.

Also as noted the FC proposes a more activist role for the Congress. My proposed amendments endorse a somewhat more independent role for the Congress but one which is consistent with a safety valve function.

Some examples of this view:

3.1.2.2 permits the Congress to act to endorse, reject or refer items back.

3.1.2.3 states that if the Congress endorses a position or action, it is referred to the President for appropriate action (including no action.)

With regard to calling meetings of Congress 3.1.3.2.1 and 3.1.3.2.2 proposes to return to the original BAG language. It is curious that the FC proposal has no collective role for the Faculty Senate in referring items to Congress.

3.1.3.3 specifies that a quorate meeting of the Congress to call, by majority vote of those present, another meeting of Congress but only on items on the original meeting agenda.

3.14 Action in the event of the absence of a quorum restores the original BAG language that endorses the action on the item under review to be that endorsed by the Faculty Senate or University Council. However under 3.1.2.2, items can be brought before Congress again under the procedures specified in Section 3.1.3. This provides some chance for reconsideration but also provides closure. The proposed language makes it clear that this procedure applies to all matter taken up by the Congress and not only those referred to it. (It may be that the mechanism for calling meetings in this section include any and all items to be referred to Congress e.g can an item be added to the agenda at a Congress meeting or not?) The original language is more definite referencing any Congress action.

3.5.2 requires that Congress meeting minutes are to be sent to Congress members as well as members of the University Council. This seems sensible to ensure good communication.

Hopefully these proposals can be discussed in our upcoming meeting.