Large Governance Bodies

Motion passed by Faculty Council on 18 Mar 2008

Faculty Council endorses the recommendations of Faculty Voice Task Force #1 as regards the establishment of the three large bodies of governance as defined below.

Faculty Council refers the blueprint below for the large governance bodies, along with other motions passed by Faculty Council, as part of the package for structural change to the University Committee on Academic Governance, with instructions that a proposed package of implementing bylaws be returned to Faculty Council by October 31, 2008.

1. Identification and naming of large scale bodies

There are currently three large bodies in which faculty participate within the Michigan State University system of academic governance:

- Faculty Council: consisting of elected faculty representatives from each MSU College,
- Academic Council: whose faculty component consists of all members of Faculty Council, and
- Academic Senate: consisting of all eligible MSU faculty.

There will be three large bodies in governance in which faculty serve as well. Naming of the three large bodies will be as follows:

- Faculty Senate: consisting of elected faculty representatives from each MSU College,
- University Council: whose faculty component consists of all members of Faculty Senate, and
- Academic Assembly: consisting of all eligible MSU faculty.

2. Faculty Senate

Faculty Senate is a body composed of representatives of the Faculty who are each faculty members of MSU. Faculty Senate is structurally a collateral body to the body described below as University Council.

2.a. Membership of Faculty Senate/Selection of Members

1 Task Force 1 members felt the naming of the body made up of representative faculty and charged with deliberating issues of direct importance to faculty should be “Faculty Senate.” Naming for this body charged with faculty issues will be consistent with most other universities. To enable the representative/deliberative body to be named SENATE, the body consisting of all eligible faculty is named ASSEMBLY. (TF1 report, footnote 8/page 4 and footnote 11/page 6)

2 Currently Faculty Council is formally a standing committee of Academic Council.
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2.a.i. The first contingent of voting members of Faculty Senate is selected by direct election of faculty representatives from each MSU College. College elections of faculty representatives will be carried out by the College Advisory Committees in each MSU college. Oversight of the election processes will be a function of the Secretary for Academic Governance.

2.a.ii. Apportionment of seats under (2.a.i) is governed by the same rules in place currently for the election of representatives to Faculty Council from each MSU college.

2.a.iii. The second contingent of voting members of Faculty Senate consists of the At Large Faculty Representatives who sit on The Steering Committee.

2.a.iv. The third contingent of voting members of Faculty Senate consists of the individuals who sit as Chairpersons of the standing committee of university-level academic governance.

2.b. Chairperson of Faculty Senate

The Chairperson of Faculty Senate will be selected from a slate made up of the At Large Faculty Representatives sitting on The Steering Committee. Voting will be conducted by all voting members of Faculty Senate. The At Large members receiving the two highest vote totals will constitute a final slate. Voting will be conducted again, and the At Large member receiving the majority of the votes will be declared the Chairperson of Faculty Senate. The Vice Chairperson of Faculty Senate will be the individual receiving the lesser number of votes in the second stage of voting.

The Chairperson of Faculty Senate will preside at all meetings of the Faculty Senate. In the absence of the Chairperson, the Vice Chairperson will preside.

2.c. Quorum for Faculty Senate Meetings

A quorum for conducting the business of Faculty Senate is 50% of voting members plus 1.

2.d. Functions of Faculty Senate

3 The Chairperson of Faculty Senate also serves as the Chairperson of The Steering Committee and as the Chairperson of the Academic Assembly.

4 The Vice Chairperson of Faculty Senate also serves as the Vice Chairperson of The Steering Committee and as the Vice Chairperson of the Academic Assembly.
2.d.i. Faculty Senate is the deliberative, representative, and legislative body for MSU Faculty. As such, Faculty Senate is the major, regularly meeting body in which curricular issues, academic program issues, faculty tenure and promotion issues, and faculty salary and benefits issues are presented. While input may be sought from University Council on appropriate issues, Faculty Senate will form and communicate a consensus view of the MSU Faculty on these issues.

2.d.ii. Faculty Senate acts on issues brought to it by The Steering Committee.

2.d.iii. Faculty Senate makes recommendations, provides advice, and speaks for MSU Faculty on proposals developed in the standing committees of academic governance.

2.d.iv. Faculty Senate discusses issues brought to it by individual faculty, students, college advisory committees, and by administrators and communicates a consensus position on behalf of all MSU Faculty.

2.d.v. Faculty Senate will seek broad Faculty input on major initiatives before the university community.

2.d.vi. Faculty Senate obtains and synthesizes the opinion of the Faculty to form consensus recommendations on key issues facing the University, and communicate those recommendations to MSU Administration and (where appropriate) to the MSU Board of Trustees.

2.d.vii. Members of Faculty Senate have the responsibility to inform their constituents of major issues before Faculty Senate and to seek the input of the constituents concerning those key issues.

2.d.viii. Members of Faculty Senate have the responsibility to act as a conduit for their constituents on issues that should be considered by the governance system.

2.d.ix. Faculty Senate may refer items to the Academic Assembly for consideration by the entire MSU Faculty as a committee of the whole.

2.d.x. Faculty Senate may propose by majority vote changes in the MSU Bylaws for Academic Governance, which then must be referred for endorsement or rejection by Academic Assembly.

2.e. Standing committees Reporting to Faculty Senate
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2.e.i. University-level standing committees which deal predominately with issues of the curriculum and academic programs, and those dealing predominately with issues of faculty life (tenure and promotion, salary, benefits) report to Faculty Senate.

<There will be language added here to explicitly identify these standing committees once the decision is made by Faculty Council as to the architecture of the standing committees. Approval of the language to be added will be sought when the entire final package of structural change is considered.>

2.f. Faculty Senate Agendas

The agendas for Faculty Senate will be set by The Steering Committee. Each meeting agenda will include an item enabling new business to be introduced from the floor.

3. University Council

3.a. Membership of University Council

3.a.i. All voting members of Faculty Senate are voting members of University Council.

3.a.ii. All students serving as Chair of a standing committee of university-level academic governance are voting members of University Council.\(^5\)

3.a.iii. The Chairperson of Athletic Council is a voting member of University Council.\(^6\)

3.a.iv. All individuals serving as Chair of a College Advisory Committee are voting members of University Council.

3.a.v. Undergraduate student representatives as selected by ASMSU are voting members of University Council. The number of undergraduate student representatives is equal percentage-wise to the undergraduate student representation now in place in the current Academic Council.

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\(^5\) This clause covers students who may be serving as Chairperson of a standing committee. A faculty member who is serving as a Chairperson of a standing committee is covered in clause 3.a.i.

\(^6\) Including the Chairperson of Athletic Council as a voting member of University Council was not explicitly stated by TF1. However, this inclusion is consistent with the reporting of Athletic Council to University Council, and broadly consistent with the view taken by TF1 that Athletic Council should be a direct part of the academic governance system.
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3.a.vi. Graduate student representatives as selected by COGS are voting members of University Council. The number of graduate student representatives is equal percentage-wise to the graduate student representation now in place in the current Academic Council.

3.a.vii. Deans of MSU Colleges (Dean's Council) are voting members of University Council.

3.a.viii. Dean of the Graduate School, Dean of International Studies and Programs, Dean of the Honors College, and the Director of Libraries are voting members of University Council.

3.a.ix. A representative from the MSU General Counsel’s Office will sit ex-officio on the University Council.

3.b. Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of University Council

The Chairperson of University Council is the President of Michigan State University. The Chairperson will preside at all meetings of University Council.

The Vice Chairperson of University Council is the Provost of Michigan State University. The Vice Chairperson will preside at all meetings of the University Council for which the Chairperson is not in attendance.

3.c. Quorum for University Council Meetings

A quorum for conducting the business of University Council is 50% of voting members plus 1.

3.d. Functions of University Council

3.d.i. The University Council brings together faculty, student, and administration representatives to discuss issues that involve the entire university. While input may be sought from University Council by Faculty Senate on proposals regarding curricular issues, academic program issues, faculty tenure and promotion issues, and faculty salary and benefits issues, the primary focus of discussion in University Council is on other issues that are not the core responsibilities of Faculty Senate.

3.d.ii. The University Council acts on issues brought to it by The Steering Committee.
3.d.iii. The University Council acts to develop a campus wide consensus on key issues facing MSU, and to communicate that consensus.

3.d.iv. The University Council may refer items to the Academic Assembly for consideration by the entire MSU Faculty.

3.d.v. The University Council may propose by majority vote changes in the MSU Bylaws for Academic Governance, which then must be referred for endorsement or rejection by Academic Assembly.

3.e. Standing Committees Reporting to University Council

3.e.i. University standing committees which deal predominately with issues other than the curriculum and other than those dealing predominately with issues of faculty life (tenure and promotion, salary, benefits) report to University Council.

<There will be language added here to explicitly identify these standing committees once the decision is made by Faculty Council as to the architecture of the standing committees. Approval of the language to be added will be sought when the entire final package of structural change is considered.>

3.e.ii. The Athletic Council reports to University Council. Form and frequency of reporting will be determined by The Steering Committee, but in no case will the frequency of reporting be less than once each academic year. The Athletic Council will also respond to questions asked by University Council within a reasonable time through its seated representative in University Council, the Chairperson of Athletic Council.

3.f. University Council Agendas

The agendas for University Council will be set by The Steering Committee. Each meeting agenda will include an item enabling new business to be introduced from the floor. Agendas will be publicly available and circulated at least one week prior to a meeting.

4. Academic Assembly

Academic Assembly is a fundamentally different body than Faculty Senate and University Council. Items brought to Academic Assembly must be referred in one of the specified methods below. Action of Academic Assembly is limited to consideration of the referred items, and must result in endorsement of a referred position or rejection of the referred position.
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4.a. Methods of Calling the Academic Assembly

Academic Assembly can be called into session by majority vote of the At Large Faculty Representatives of The Steering Committee or by the MSU President.

Academic Assembly must be called into session with specified items to be referred to Academic Assembly when one of the following actions is taken:

4.a.i. by a vote of at least 50% plus 1 of Faculty Senate,

4.a.ii. by a petition of at least 20% of the voting members of Academic Assembly to call Academic Assembly including a statement of the position that is referred for consideration, or

4.a.iii. by majority vote of the University Council to call Academic Assembly including a statement of the position that is referred for consideration.

4.b. Membership of Academic Assembly

4.b.i. MSU regular faculty are voting members of Academic Assembly.

4.b.ii. Full time fixed-term faculty who have served at least three consecutive years and are engaged in the academic activities of the University on a regular basis are voting members of Academic Assembly.

4.c. Chairperson of Academic Assembly

The Chairperson of Academic Assembly is the individual who is the Chairperson of Faculty Senate. The Vice Chairperson of Academic Assembly is the individual who is the Vice Chairperson of the Faculty Senate.

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7 Current governance bylaws specify that only the current Academic Council can vote directly, by majority vote, to convene the current Academic Senate. However, current governance bylaws also specify that the current Academic Senate may be called into session by a petition of at least 40% of the voting membership of the current Faculty Council. The language above is consistent with the strong desire expressed in the TF1 proposal that the large body of the Faculty (Faculty Senate) be structured as collateral to the large body consisting of Faculty, student, and administrator representatives (University Council).

8 The regular faculty of Michigan State University shall consist of all persons appointed under the rules of tenure and holding the rank of professor, associate professor, assistant professor, or instructor, and persons appointed as librarians. In addition, the principal administrative officer of each major educational and research unit of the University shall be a member of the regular faculty.

9 The current Academic Senate rules preclude the President and Provost from voting rights in Academic Assembly. The rules for Academic Assembly membership include the President and Provost among those with voting rights for Academic Assembly.
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The Chairperson presides at all meeting of Academic Assembly. Absent the Chairperson, the Vice Chairperson presides.

4.d. Quorum

4.d.i. A quorum necessary for Academic Assembly to consider action items that are referred to Academic Assembly is 10% of the voting membership of the body plus 1.

4.d.ii. In the event a quorum is not reached, items that are referred for consideration from Faculty Senate or University Council will be returned to the respective bodies for consideration.

4.d.iii. In the event a quorum is not reached, items referred for consideration by petition will be referred to Faculty Senate for consideration.

4.d.iv. In the function of Academic Assembly to act as a forum for the interchange of ideas and information, there is not quorum required. Formal minutes of the meeting will be kept in this case just as in the case where quorum is reached.

4.e. Functions of Academic Assembly

4.e.i. Academic Assembly will act to deliberate, then endorse or reject items referred to it.

4.e.ii. Academic Assembly will act on amendments to the Bylaws referred to it by either Faculty Council or University Council.

4.e.iii. Academic Assembly will constitute a forum for the interchange of ideas and information between the Faculty and the administration.

4.f. Academic Assembly Agendas

The agendas for Academic Assembly will be set by The Steering Committee. But if the meeting of Academic Assembly was called by referral or petition, The Steering Committee will include as an action item the consideration of the referred item. Agendas will be publicly available and circulated at least one week prior to a meeting.