

**Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Faculty
Voice**

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Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
WHY A FACULTY VOICE COMMITTEE?	5
WHY FACULTY VOICE?	7
THE MANDATE OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE ON FACULTY VOICE	10
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	11
Faculty Rights and Responsibilities	11
Who qualifies as faculty?	12
Voices for what?	14
The Structure of the Governance System	18
Establishing a Faculty Executive Committee	18
The Academic Governance Committee Structure	21
Revitalizing college level academic governance	24
Strategies for Information Dissemination	25
THE CULTURE OF PARTICIPATION	28
IMPLEMENTATION: FIRST STEPS	29

Executive Summary

The Ad Hoc Committee on Faculty Voice (Faculty Voice Committee) was commissioned by the Academic Senate in the Spring of 2004 and empanelled by the Faculty Council the following October. Its mandate was to analyze and propose alterations to the academic governance system at Michigan State designed to provide more effective and timely faculty input to university decision-making.

Relationships between the faculty and the administration at Michigan State have been in decline for at least a decade. Faculty have felt disenfranchised by administrative actions that were taken without due consultation. Discouraged, they tended to abandon the decision making process at the university level, leaving administrators without advice and guidance. Administrators, required to respond to events in a timely fashion, reacted by taking even more pre-emptive action and the response was an even greater disinclination to participate. The result has been a series of ill-considered proposals, such as the proposal to move of the College of Human Medicine and to reorganize some departments and colleges.

Currently, the faculty at Michigan State are culturally predisposed to avoid university level academic governance and to respond negatively to administrative proposals for change. The academic governance system, moreover, is poorly organized. It constrains rather than facilitates the exercise of faculty voice. The Faculty Voice Committee's proposals have been designed to increase faculty authority and participation, and the transparency of university-level decision making.

Who are the faculty who should exercise greater voice? The faculty are those who hold tenure-system or fixed-term faculty positions. There is considerable debate and disagreement concerning the appropriate roles for tenure-system and fixed-term faculty. While awaiting resolution of this disagreement by units, colleges, and appropriate university committees, the Faculty Voice Committee has taken the faculty to be all tenure-system faculty and, to the extent they perform the same functions, those in fixed-term faculty positions.

Voice for what? The faculty, as a collectivity, has the responsibility to provide advice or consent to decisions affecting the core knowledge generating and disseminating activities of the university. The administration provides essential support for the faculty in this regard. To provide feedback on the faculty's perception of the quality of administrative support, the Faculty Voice Committee recommends establishment of an on-going faculty-based review and assessment program for administrators. Academic programs carry out the core academic teaching, research, and service functions of the university. To provide feedback on the faculty's perception of the quality of these programs, the Faculty Voice Committee recommends establishment of an on-going review and assessment activity for academic programs.

How should the faculty be organized to exercise their voice? Faculty opinion on any issue, save perhaps that of the necessity of its opinions being heard, is invariably diverse. Consensus usually is not a realistic goal. Faculty, moreover, are extremely busy with their own teaching, research, and service projects. The Faculty Voice Committee therefore recommends that a six-member Faculty Executive Committee (FEC) be created to communicate with the faculty and the administration, solicit input, negotiate tradeoffs, forge agreements, and make considered judgments when rapid responses are required. Its

members would communicate frequently with administrative personnel. They would constitute the faculty liaison to the Board of Trustees. The FEC would be responsible for coordinating the activities of six standing committees. The responsibilities of these committees, different from those of the standing committees as currently constituted, are specified in the body of this report.

How should the faculty communicate with one another and with the FEC? The Faculty Voice Committee urges Faculty Council representatives and members of university standing committees to communicate frequently and in summary fashion with an identifiable group of constituents. It further proposes that these constituents be periodically surveyed to provide feedback concerning the extent to which they are being adequately informed. The Faculty Voice Committee recommends that these channels of communication be complemented by a dedicated page in each issue of the *MSU News Bulletin* devoted to faculty affairs and governance. It recommends the design and implementation of a website dedicated to informing faculty about governance issues, a site capable of implementing discussion fora and voting.

First Steps Toward Building a Culture of Participation. Establishment of new review and assessment programs, enacting a new structure and FEC, and new and technologically up-to-date communication systems can help reverse the decline in faculty-administration cooperation. All participants in university-level academic governance need to consider and value the interests of the university above their own more local concerns. And all participants must respect and work toward including all faculty members in the decision making process, especially those who are less proficient at working the informal system. The Faculty Voice Committee recommends the implementation of a governance tutorial for all new faculty members, reconsideration of university-level participation as a valued and rewarded activity.

The Faculty Voice Committee recommends that the ECAC and Faculty Council commission a task force to detail its proposal for a FEC. This Committee, initially in ad hoc form, would then execute its own formal enactment. The Faculty Voice Committee also recommends the commissioning by the ECAC and Faculty Council of task forces to detail its proposals for both administrator and program review and to design a state-of-the-art faculty governance web-based communication system. Finally, the ECAC and Faculty Council should task the University Committee on Academic Governance to recraft bylaws and other documents which, when agreed upon by all voting faculty, would enact the proposals outlined above and detailed in the main body of this report.

Why a Faculty Voice Committee?

During the past two decades at MSU, broad-based faculty involvement in University decision-making has significantly decreased. The administration and the Board of Trustees took actions that diminished opportunities for meaningful faculty participation in university governance. In response, faculty became increasingly apathetic and disengaged from the governance process. As faculty became more disengaged, administrators felt greater need to bypass faculty involvement and governance procedures in order to address problems and make necessary changes. As a result faculty increasingly felt that their views were being and would be ignored and that, therefore, there was no point in engaging actively in governance activities.

This report aims to move us forward. We have no interest in rehashing the past. Nevertheless, some review of where we are now and how we got here is pertinent. This report will call for major changes in the structure of academic governance at MSU, requiring considerable investment of resources. Such proposals cannot be justified unless we document that the problems that they address are truly serious, and are sufficiently deeply rooted within the institution so that more moderate (and perhaps less expensive and time-consuming) measures are unlikely to correct them.

In the summer of 2004, the University Intellectual Integrity Officer and Assistant Vice President for Research Ethics and Standards resigned. He addressed a letter to the President summarizing the reasons for his resignation. The letter later appeared in the press.¹ This administrator cited several recent events as having triggered his resignation:

- Naming a new Vice President of Research and Graduate Studies without a national search, despite a significant drop-off in MSU's national ranking in research funding
- Naming a new President "without doing a national search or consulting the university community"
- Central administration's proposal to eliminate the College of Arts and Letters
- Central administration's proposal to expand the College of Human Medicine to Grand Rapids

The letter continued:

"This lack of forthright discussion, candor, and respect for faculty, staff and students when making crucial decisions has become the administration's modus operandi, in my opinion I have worked in a central administration where hiding decision-making processes from the university community has become so common that it seems unremarkable to those involved. Key discussions are rarely written down or, if they are, the notes of meetings are destroyed after a decision is made to prevent them from being released under FOIA. One result of this is to deprive the public of the real history of decision-making in a public institution.

¹David E. Wright to M. Peter McPherson [no date given]. *Lansing City Pulse*, July 28, 2004, www.lansingcitypulse.com/040728/features/index.asp

Another is to mask accountability.”

Spurred on by the same events that stimulated the resignation just described, members of the MSU chapter of AAUP called for a site visit from the organization’s national office staff. Patrick B. Shaw, Associate Secretary of AAUP, spent two days at MSU interviewing faculty. In a memo to the MSU chapter, Mr. Shaw described two specific instances of administrative “arrogance and arbitrariness” in the College of Arts and Letters.² In an open session on September 8, 2004, Mr. Shaw addressed administrative actions that had discouraged faculty input, but also held the faculty responsible: “The faculty have to become engaged in the citizenship of being an academic. They need to take their own professorship aggressively into their own hands.”³

As a result of Mr. Shaw’s visit, AAUP Associate Secretary B. Robert Kreiser addressed a letter to the Chair of the Board of Trustees and to the President, which said in part, “Faculty have expressed concern that while these matters bear directly on the responsibilities and interests of faculty, decisions have been made about them without meaningful faculty consultation, or, as in the case of the appointment of President McPherson’s successor, without any consultation whatever with the faculty.” The letter expressed concern that the national AAUP office would need to “continue to monitor the situation” at MSU to assure that “the faculty’s role . . . will conform to the principles of shared governance which the institution has embraced.”⁴

One would imagine that in a university dedicated to improving its governance process—a “first-rate university,” in the language of the resignation letter—serious charges like those contained in these documents would immediately become the focus of sustained debate and discussion. So perhaps the most telling aspect of these events was the virtually complete lack of public response. The MSU community appeared to react to these documents as if they had never existed.⁵

A resignation and subsequent letters to an editor do not a crisis make. The Faculty Voice Committee, however, affirms that the belief is widespread that MSU faculty have little or no meaningful university-level input in many decisions that affect them and the quality of teaching, research, and service at MSU. Through its fact-finding, the committee has concluded that MSU faces serious dysfunctions in the relationships among key groups at the University level -- the administration, the Board of Trustees, and the faculty. These problems, moreover, are being hardened into norms and expectations that constitute our culture.

MSU is hardly alone in facing such problems at this point in its history. Faculty

²Memorandum, Patrick B. Shaw to Executive Committee, MSU Chapter, AAUP, September 15, 2004.

³Rebecca McNulty, “With Outside Help, Faculty Looks To Make Voice Louder,” *MSU State News*, September 9, 2004. www.statenews.com/print.phtml?pk=25331

⁴B. Robert Kreiser to David L. Porteous and M. Peter McPherson, September 16, 2004.

⁵Rebecca McNulty, “Committee To Ignore Criticism of ‘U’ Actions,” *MSU State News*, October 13, 2004; Editorial, “Ignore This: Decision to Disregard Letter from Professors’ Group Outlining Grievances Could Prove Costly,” *MSU State News*, October 14, 2004. Dr. Wright informed the Faculty Voice Committee that he had had useful informal discussions with several senior administrators regarding the contents of his letter.

members at many universities are feeling increasing pressure to produce more both in the classroom and in other scholarly activities and regard participation in governance as an expendable luxury. Administrators and trustees face worsening budget shortfalls and feel the need to make quick decisions to respond to the demands of an increasing number of exigent and fractious stakeholders.⁶ Society at large holds out corporate governance models as a suitable template for administering the university, with administrators as managers and faculty as (often unreliable) employees.

The challenge that the institution now faces may be summarized under the headings of **power, transparency, and participation**. The factors are interdependent. If faculty feel they have no power, and cannot get important information about how decisions are made, they will not participate. If faculty will not participate, administrators feel compelled to fill the power vacuum themselves and have little incentive to share information. The unfortunate consequence of the interdependence of the three factors is that, in MSU's recent history, the unraveling of one has speedily led to worsening of the other two. The positive side of this relationship means that if we can make the requisite changes, they will all become self-reinforcing in a positive direction. If faculty sense that they can appropriately share power with administrators in making key decisions affecting the university, they will participate more actively and productively, and will in the process become better informed about the issues and options. A better-informed faculty will then participate even more productively, and enact and support a more transparent and accountable system of governance.

MSU has underlying strengths with which to meet these challenges, strengths available to few other universities. Loyalty to the university runs deep among all major groups. The Faculty Voice Committee found a strong sense of goodwill and mutual understanding sufficient to address our current malaise. Reconciliation and rebuilding are well within our grasp.

Why Faculty Voice?

James J. Duderstadt and Farris W. Womack, in *The Future of the Public University in America: Beyond the Crossroads*, analyze university governance in an especially thoughtful and trenchant manner. If their conclusions are correct, the premise on which the Faculty Voice Committee at MSU has based its work is invalid and indeed pernicious. One could conclude from this book that if MSU wishes to function as a modern public university, the best thing the faculty could do would be to move out of the way and let the appropriate parties run it properly. In their view, demanding a role for faculty decision-making given current realities would be an exercise in anachronism.

Duderstadt and Womack believe that shared faculty decision-making in university governance works quite well at the level of the academic unit (such as a department). The faculty has a strong incentive to participate at that level and are usually fully informed as to the issues. They also tend to respect each other within their common disciplinary background, and, in effect, generally speak the same language. None of these conditions hold, however, when faculty try to become involved at the University level. They claim:

⁶James J. Duderstadt and Farris W. Womack, *The Future of the Public University in America: Beyond the Crossroads*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003: 162-68.

- Most faculty are chronically under-informed about how the university really works.
- Faculty value academic freedom and independence, while good institutional governance demands responsibility and accountability. Basic faculty values are thus at odds with the need for university level coordination.
- Faculty tend to be inherently conservative. They will usually resist visionary leadership.
- Faculty lack loyalty to the institution and its mission. Their primary loyalty is to their discipline, and they often are more interested in using the University to advance their careers, by moving to better paying jobs elsewhere, than in strengthening the University's mission across all academic disciplines.
- Tenure, intended as a protection for academic freedom, has actually morphed into a guarantee of lifetime employment security. Tenure itself thus becomes a force promoting the status quo and thwarting change.
- When given the opportunity to exercise power within the institution, faculty gravitate toward peripheral issues such as parking and athletics, rather than focusing governing energy on the core mission of the institution where their expertise is most relevant. The bulk of the faculty also show little commitment to devoting the time and energy necessary for full participation in the committee process.

Taken as a whole, this list of concerns—all of which have at least some obvious basis in fact—would seem to militate against any significant role for faculty participation in all-University governance. What could be urged in reply?

- First, we should note that the admitted success of faculty-shared decision-making at the unit level could provide us with a useful model for better faculty involvement at the university level. A vibrant system of faculty governance will delegate as many decisions as possible to the unit level, where the process has natural reasons for working well.⁷ Decisions that must be made at college and university levels ought to be made by or with input from faculty committees in which faculty members and units are represented and whose members feel accountable to their unit colleagues.
- Since admittedly some faculty will choose, no matter what, not to become involved in university-level governance, there will be a self-selection process. Those with the least institutional loyalty, and most interested in advancing their academic market value, would be the least likely to apply to serve on committees. The ones who do wish to serve are likely to have the strongest sense of loyalty to and knowledge about university-level issues

⁷ MSU, like all large universities, sadly has its share of dysfunctional departments; but that problem is not “fixed” in any meaningful way by having the administration adopt a top-down governance approach at the University level that excludes a faculty voice. Quite the contrary, significant involvement of faculty at the university level might be effectively coordinated with administrative decision making to more effectively address these sorts of problems.

- The charge that faculty want to run the parking and the athletic departments may tend to be true as a national phenomenon. At MSU, in its present state of relative faculty demoralization, the accusation would count as a rather cruel insult. The faculty did not vote at the Faculty Senate meeting last spring to create this Faculty Voice Committee because no one was consulting them about the football stadium. The issues that led to the creation of this effort to increase faculty voice are central to the institution's mission.
- Duderstadt and Womack note that the faculty's lack of information might result from benign paternalism among administrators, wishing to shield faculty from the multitude of internal political forces and institutional pressures existing in the environment outside the modern university. They fail to add that this lack of information could also result from a less benign culture of secrecy, in which a Board of Trustees and an administration seek to maintain maximum freedom to maneuver while stifling any embarrassing display of internal dissent. It has yet to be shown that MSU faculty will not take the time and trouble to become informed when information is presented to them in a useful and helpful manner and format. But, since faculty are very busy and must allocate their time judiciously, much attention must be paid to the optimal way to disseminate information and secure knowledgeable advice and consent.
- It is easy to characterize faculty as inherently conservative and opposed to visionary change when they are asked to approve radical innovations that 1) have not been reviewed or approved by standing faculty committees and 2) lack a persuasive rationale. The lack of enthusiasm among faculty in the core colleges for college reorganization and for the new residential college proposal no doubt appear, to the administrators who thought up those proposals, to be a knee-jerk rejection of visionary change. From another viewpoint, many faculty who are quite ready to admit that difficult times call for difficult measures, nevertheless feel obliged to speak out when the official rationale suggested for a change appears to be inadequate or when they believe better alternatives are available. This is especially true when rapid change is sought with no apparent justification for urgency and speed.

For these reasons, the Ad Hoc Committee on Faculty Voice (Faculty Voice Committee) at MSU believes that properly designed faculty governance, within which faculty play a shared decision making role on matters pertaining to the core educational mission of the University, can work. Duderstadt and Womack's warnings should be taken not as a set of conclusive arguments against university-level academic governance but as a set of warnings about how such an endeavor could go wrong if important details are not attended to. Specifically, they make clear that faculty committees will not work optimally unless the members are informed and accountable and committees work efficiently. The Faculty Voice Committee accepts these as important goals for proposed reforms in the MSU governance system presented later in this report.

The Mandate of the Ad Hoc Committee on Faculty Voice

At its April 22, 2004, meeting and in response to concerns concerning the process of decision making for expanding the College of Human Medicine to Grand Rapids and for college reorganization, the Academic Senate passed the following resolutions⁸:

Whereas, the faculty of Michigan State University wish to better form consensus and express the collective voice of the Faculty;

Be it resolved that the Academic Senate commissions the establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee on Faculty Voice whose purpose shall be to examine and recommend remedies as appropriate for (a) the mechanisms of academic governance which enable effective development of faculty views and the effective expression of a voice of the faculty on important issues facing the University community and (b) effective, collective input of the voice of the faculty especially on items that are very time critical; and

Be it resolved that the make up of the committee shall be five tenure stream faculty who shall be drawn from those, including at most one emeritus faculty, with broad experience in academic governance, and that the Secretary for Academic Governance shall openly solicit nominations for the committee. Ten nominations will be submitted to Faculty Council from the Secretary for Academic Governance for the selection of five; and

Be it resolved that the duly constituted Ad Hoc Committee on Faculty Voice shall report directly to the Faculty Council with specific recommendations by the beginning of Spring Semester, 2005.

What came to be called the Faculty Voice Committee was constituted in October 2004, following the prescribed election procedure. ECAC Chairperson, Jon Sticklen, convened its first meeting on October 21 to explain its mandate. At that time the committee elected Professor Maureen McDonough as its chair. Professor McDonough convened the committee's first working meeting on October 28.

In order to hear concerns and possible solutions from as diverse a set of voices as possible, Faculty Voice Committee members met with governance standing committees such as UCC and UCFA as well as ad hoc committees such as those examining college reorganization and medical school issues. The committee has also met with individuals from the university administration and the AAUP executive committee, convened a series of open faculty forums and, with the assistance of many concerned faculty, initiated inquiries into academic governance structures and processes at comparable universities. Finally, the committee developed an Angel site for posting of committee documents and calendars and to provide a channel for input from individual faculty.

As called for in the Academic Senate resolution, the Faculty Voice Committee reported to Faculty Council. Its report was given to Faculty Council on February 15 and, since the committee had been meeting for only three months, a resolution was introduced and passed extending the committee's report deadline to April 26. While continuing its fact-finding activities, the committee increasingly turned its attention to developing

⁸ A friendly amendment was added to the statement below opening committee membership to faculty members without significant experience with academic governance.

proposals and soliciting informal feedback on their ideas. On April 1, 2005, a draft report was distributed to all faculty for comment. After a two-week comment period, the draft report was revised. The report was submitted to the Academic Senate on April 26, 2005.

The Senate's mandate to the Faculty Voice Committee was very broad. Committee members differed on how general or specific Senate members would want its proposals to be. The current document provides some very general conclusions and several actionable items. Even these, however, are in strategic rather than tactical form. Their implementation will require a great deal of elaboration and articulation. We believe, however, that they constitute a core from which members of the MSU faculty can build an effective and vibrant university-level faculty and academic governance system for the 21st century. At the conclusion of this report, we offer some recommendations for first steps in what we hope will be a long but thorough and productive process.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Faculty rights and responsibilities

Two basic documents support faculty rights and responsibilities. One is the Bylaws of the Board of Trustees. The other is the Faculty Rights and Responsibilities document approved by the Board of Trustees on July 27, 1984. Both spell out the rights of faculty with respect to academic freedom and academic governance. The major deficiency in both documents is a failure to clarify what is an individual right or responsibility as opposed to a collective right or responsibility.

Academic freedom is a cherished value in the community of scholars. Academic freedom allows the challenging of ideas and permits a scholarly debate to flourish. The individual faculty member clearly has the right to academic freedom. The collective faculty has the right to oversee issues dealing with the curriculum.

The collective faculty has the responsibility to establish high standards for academic programs. Examples include reviewing individuals for tenure and/or promotion and reviewing the quality of academic programs. The Graduate Council and the Dean of the Graduate School have instituted academic program reviews. While their focus has been on the Graduate program, most (if not all) reviews were broadened by the unit to a total program review. The essential elements are an in-depth self-study and external review team. Units with accreditation standards should not be burdened by duplicative reviews but need to modify (or supplement) the accreditation review to meet MSU's expectations for an adequate review.⁹

Academic governance involves the right of individual faculty and collective faculty groups to information that allows for informed decisions. Individuals have a right to state their positions on issues and have the responsibility to respect the views of other participants (other faculty, students, administrators and other stakeholders). The official faculty position is expressed by the faculty through collective action in accordance with the Bylaws for Academic Governance. While individuals have a right to express

⁹ More detail on the faculty responsibility for program quality can be found in the implementation section of this report.

differences with the official faculty position, they have a responsibility to respect the collective view of the faculty.

Inherent in the values of academic freedom and academic governance is the responsibility of administrators, both academic and non-academic to respect and uphold these faculty rights and responsibilities. In particular, administrators need to provide all relevant information to inform governance and must defend academic freedom and academic governance even when there is political heat to restrain faculty who are espousing unpopular views.

The Faculty Faculty Voice Committee urges that the Faculty Rights and Responsibilities document and the Bylaws of the Board of Trustees be reviewed to clarify the rights and responsibilities of faculty as individuals and as a collective body.

Who qualifies as faculty?

During the last 20 years an increasing proportion of the teaching load at Michigan State has been shouldered by non-tenure-system faculty. Since 1984 the number of teaching faculty at Michigan State has declined from approximately 2073 to approximately 1897, even as undergraduate enrollment increased from 40272 to 44836. During this period the proportion of tenure-system faculty to total faculty has decreased from 81% to 69%. This shift was supported to a significant degree by a reallocation of General Fund monies. In 1994 the General Fund supported 57% of the non-tenure-system FTEs. By 2004 the percentage had moved to 71%, even as the percentage of tenure-system faculty supported by the General Fund remained relative constant, moving from 86% to 87%.

Concerned that Michigan State University was at best nearing a tipping point beyond which it could no longer reasonably meet its full mission and concerned that the decline in tenure-system faculty would further jeopardize MSU's ability to garner significant research support from external funding agencies, the University Committee on Faculty Tenure (UCFT) set about to determine the reasons for the decline. It concluded that the increase in Fixed-Term assignments was due to widely different situations in the different colleges and units whose faculty and administration were responding to declining resources in the face of increasing obligations. Accordingly, UCFT set about to address two very different issues: 1) how can the decline in tenure-system faculty be reversed, and 2) how can the new complement of fixed-term faculty, now beyond 25% of the total FTEs and often lacking the wherewithal to resist external pressures concerning course content, be integrated into the academic governance system?

Other committees besides UCFT have weighed in on these issues, and at present, deep divisions persist among the faculty on the best way to resolve them. There are at least two reasons for the persistence and apparent intransigence of those advocating different approaches. First, MSU is subject to the same pressures of declining resources as all other US colleges and universities—indeed some of them have seen a much greater replacement of tenured faculty with fixed-term faculty than has MSU.¹⁰ In times of tightening budgets it is very difficult to see how the institution can be asked to forgo the financial flexibility afforded by a higher percentage of fixed-term appointments. Second,

¹⁰ It was recently reported that fully 70% of faculty at New York University are now fixed-term.

faculty often talk past each other on this issue. With fixed-term faculty serving very different functions in different colleges, faculty base their impression of fixed-term faculty as a class on what happens close to home, not what happens across campus. The UCFT study showed that “fixed-term faculty” constitutes such a heterogeneous group at MSU that the term itself has lost a good deal of its meaning.¹¹

The Faculty Voice Committee agrees with the UCFT that the trend toward fixed-term faculty is primarily a budgetary issue. The faculty-at-large generally supports hiring more tenure-system faculty. Some units, with the support of their faculty, and the administration are committed to increasing the number of faculty members in both the tenure-system and in fixed-term and specialist categories. How this may best be accomplished is a matter for the units themselves and the UCFT, the Faculty Council, the Administrative Council, the administration and the Board of Trustees to determine. As the issue currently is being discussed and debated, The Faculty Voice Committee has decided not to take a position on the matter.¹²

The Faculty Voice Committee points out, however, that whatever plan is eventually put in place to assure the proper ratio of fixed-term to tenure-stream faculty, fixed-term faculty will remain on the MSU campus, and will be subject to two matters of great concern with regard to faculty voice: guarantees of academic freedom and participation in academic governance. Those two matters fall within the proper sphere of the Faculty Voice Committee. We, therefore, propose that whatever university bodies take up the question of fixed-term versus tenure-system faculty numbers and roles must forthrightly address these two concerns, and do so in a way that maximizes appropriate protections of academic freedom and participation in academic governance for all faculty.

As a general principle to guide the deliberations of future committees, the Faculty Voice Committee recommends that the closer the teaching and/or research roles assigned to fixed-term faculty in any given unit to roles traditionally assigned to tenure-stream faculty, the stronger the presumption that fixed-term faculty in that unit should receive academic freedom protections and rights of participation in academic governance that are equivalent to those accorded to tenure-stream faculty.¹³ This principle should function to set the burden of proof, as it were, for those who would argue for a “one-class” or “two-class” faculty system, respectively. The great challenge, then, is to develop an overall policy or set of policies that reconciles:

- The heterogeneity of needs and practices among diverse units of the University

¹¹ This heterogeneity is exacerbated by the fact that a significant but indeterminable proportion of MSU’s human resources for teaching are classified as academic specialists rather than fixed-term faculty. Unit hiring in both of these categories can be substantial when units are under stress, since the looseness of the categories means that unit administrators can potentially solve many different sorts of problems by making hires in either fixed-term or specialist categories.

¹² After considerable fact-finding and discussion, the UCFT drafted and voted unanimously to support several recommendations for how to integrate fixed-term faculty into academic governance. The UCFA currently is considering the UCFT recommendations. Interested faculty might consult the UCFT proposals and discuss them with their UCFT and UCFA representatives.

¹³ A possible exception is that even in units where the roles assigned to the two groups of faculty are virtually identical, fixed-term faculty might be allowed to serve on committees that address tenure-related issues at the unit level, but precluded from sitting on such committees at the all-University level. The Faculty Voice Committee mentions this possibility not to endorse such a policy, but merely to indicate some of the complexities that will eventually have to be addressed.

- The need for some standard policies that apply across all units and at the all-University governance level
- The need for fairness, to afford fixed-term faculty *as many* rights as can reasonably be justified by their roles within the university
- The desirability of maximizing the participation of all qualified faculty in the governance process

Voices for what?

Most of those who commented on the issue of faculty authority to the Faculty Voice Committee asserted that increased faculty authority was a prerequisite for greater faculty participation in the governance process, for an increase in the morale of the faculty vis-à-vis governance, for an improved climate of faculty-university relations, and for an improved system of governance in general. Greater authority to make meaningful decisions would prove a key to greater transparency and participation. Universities like the University of Wisconsin were held up by members of the AAUP as offering an example of a comparable sister university in which there is considerably more faculty authority than at MSU, and where the long-term results appear to improve the governance system.¹⁴ Faculty authority is primarily vested in the relationship between faculty committees and the administration. In that relation, issues concerning curriculum (and concomitantly areas of instruction, research, faculty status and appointments, degree requirements, and student performance, etc.) are primarily controlled by faculty, while appointment of administrators, budget and management of resources, relations between units, the structure of the units, administering policies, and making administrative personnel decisions are controlled by the administration.

Faculty input is defined by the Bylaws for Academic Governance as taking the following forms: consultation, advisory, shared responsibility, or delegated authority. The site for increasing faculty authority would seem to begin with those bylaws. The Faculty Voice Committee will not recommend specific bylaw changes but such changes should be explored by UCFA and UCAG with a view of changing the general pattern of allocating to faculty only the authority to advise or consult with administration to one in which there is more shared responsibility. Generally, faculty ought to have either delegated authority or shared responsibility for decisions involving curriculum, the structures and organization of the colleges, and other issues that bear directly on education and research. By contrast, decisions concerning the budget, the university's relations with the business community or government entities, and the expansion or contraction of units, ought to be made on a basis of shared responsibility or faculty advice or consultation. Both short-term and long-term planning for the direction that guides the future of the university ought to fall under the province of committees with either shared responsibility or with strong faculty advisory or consultative input.

University governance requires active involvement from both administrators and students. It may be impossible, however, for a single body to include large numbers of administrators and students and also serve as a viable forum for deliberating concerns of

¹⁴ http://www.secfac.wisc.edu/governance/FPP/Chapter_1.htm.

special importance to the faculty. Faculty authority is inappropriately diminished when proportional faculty representation in the principal governance bodies is reduced by significant representation of administrators or students. This problem currently makes the Academic Council unsuitable for addressing many issues of importance, and we recommend that the authority of the Faculty Council be expanded so as to assume much of the work of the Academic Council. It is clear faculty must work with both students and administrators, but as a general rule those presiding over governance committees and councils ought to be faculty.

There currently are too many steps involved in making academic decisions at the university level. Faculty members wishing to express their opinion must cope with the Faculty Council and its attendant committee structure, the Academic Council, the Executive Committee of the Academic Council, and the Academic Senate. Thus, faculty authority is felt to be diminished or irrelevant. To reverse this situation, faculty ought to be consulted regularly on issues that touch them. This might entail greater communication from governance bodies, a task that can be eased with the use of emails and websites. However, more direct participation is desirable. The guiding principle here should be the movement toward a less centralized authority, and toward greater accountability for faculty representatives to make their constituents feel fully and effectively involved in the governance process.

The Academic Senate presently is largely ineffective for two reasons. First, its power is almost completely hedged in by the current limitations placed on it--not being able to offer motions from the floor, the requirement that the agenda be set by the Academic or Faculty Council, and, finally, that its own votes are only advisory.¹⁵ Second, the Senate fails to take advantage of current electronic communication capabilities. Issues of concern to the entire faculty could be communicated by email; listserv/website discussions could ensue; and polling/voting electronically could ultimately be employed. All the faculty would have a chance to see, discuss, and vote on matters of concern. Regular meetings of the Academic Senate could still be scheduled, although a truly functional e-system could either supplement the live meeting or eventually take its place. Without a substantial change in the Academic Senate structure, to grant it more authority and to utilize e-communication and perhaps e-voting, there will be little incentive for faculty to participate.

Another model for faculty participation can be seen at the University of Wisconsin, which divides its faculty into “districts,” departments with ten or more members, who elect their senators. Their senate meets once a month.¹⁶ Similarly, the University of New Mexico has a senate that meets monthly, elects its own chair, and is comprised of faculty, with administrators functioning as non-voting members, whether or not they are also engaged in teaching.¹⁷ At the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill,

¹⁵ According to the University Bylaws, elements of Section 3, dealing with the Academic Senate, state: (3.1.2.2) “Actions of Academic Council may be referred to the Senate for action by a majority vote of Academic Council, by a petition of 40% of the Faculty Council or by petition of 20% of the voting membership of the Academic Senate.” Further, 3.1.3.2 states: “On any recommendation brought before the Senate, action by the Senate is restricted to approval of the recommendation or referral back to the originating council for further deliberation.”

¹⁶ http://www.secfac.wisc.edu/governance/FPP/Chapter_1.htm

¹⁷ www.unm.edu/~handbook

the faculty meet as a body once a semester in a General Faculty council consisting of those with faculty appointments, and holding responsibility for the educational and related activities of the university. A representative body, the Faculty Council, with representatives for approximately each 37 faculty members, carries out the regular business of governance, along with various committees.¹⁸

The Board of Trustees currently relies largely on the administration for information and advice while faculty have an uncertain role through the faculty liaison committee. Even at this important level of faculty involvement, it is unclear whether members of the faculty liaison committee represent the entire faculty in some capacity, or are voicing merely their own individual judgments. Whenever possible, proposals for major changes in the University ought to be presented to the Board jointly by administrators and faculty. The Faculty Executive Committee, described below, should provide an effective vehicle to accomplish this.

To stop the downward spiral in faculty power, transparency and participation at MSU, the University needs to send a clear message that things are going to be different in the future. To carry out this responsibility, faculty members need to be reassured that their voices will be heard and that they will play a larger role in University decisions. The faculty has primary responsibility for academic programs. To meet this responsibility, faculty members must be assured that their decisions will be enacted. Administrators therefore need to be held accountable for supporting faculty voice and participation in academic governance and valued and rewarded for responding to faculty decisions in academic matters. For its part, the faculty needs to hold itself accountable for the quality of its academic programs through active participation in program review and improvement.

Faculty Review of Administrators. One of the most important ways to send this message of a new era of effective power, transparency and participation is to implement a system by which faculty regularly review and evaluate administrators.^{19,19,20} While a task force should be empanelled to detail the evaluation process, the following principles might provide helpful guidelines.

- University administrators who have regular contact with faculty should be evaluated every two years.
- The evaluation forms should be relatively brief (perhaps 15-20 items), and easily completed via a dedicated website.
- Summary results of all evaluations should be posted on a dedicated faculty website.
- Items on which administrators will be evaluated would include: support and encouragement of faculty participation in governance; encouraging a climate in which all faculty can speak freely; fairness in considering diverse viewpoints

¹⁸ www.unc.edu/faculty/faccoun

¹⁹ the University of Michigan has completed a campus-wide evaluation of academic administrators.

<http://umich.edu/~aaupum/n105a.html>

¹⁹ An illustration of a faculty-administered evaluation of administration at Ohio State University can be found at <http://www.acs.ohio-state.edu/org/osuaaup/FEA.html>

²⁰ Discussion of faculty participation in evaluation of administrators at the University of Tennessee can be found at <http://web.utk.edu/~senate/EvalAdmsReport3-13-00.html>

before making decisions; creativity and imagination in addressing problems and opportunities; and keeping faculty informed about governance issues.

- Groups charged with reappointment or review of administrators would take these evaluation data explicitly into account, along with any other data that are considered.

*Faculty Review of Academic Programs.*²¹ Faculty members are in the best position to assess academic programs in terms of their contributions to MSU's three-fold mission: teaching, research, and service, and it is in their interest that the administration and the Board of Trustees receive thorough and insightful assessments. A task force therefore should be empanelled to detail and propose a review procedure for ECAC, Faculty Council, and Academic Senate consideration. Details the task force would need to specify include:

- The definition of an academic program
- How current activities articulate with younger faculty members' strengths and likely future demand
- The frequency of program review
- Procedures for coordinating faculty reviews with administrative reviews
- Procedures for choosing review panel members for specific evaluations
 - Whether some reviews would involve only faculty and administrators within the program being evaluated
 - The role administrators and students would play on evaluation panels
 - The proper balance between "insider" and "outsider" members
 - The role, if any, played by people outside the university
- How much of the review process should be generic across programs and how much should be tailored to program-specific needs and concerns
- What the appropriate steps or milestones are for different types of reviews and the time to be allocated for each
- The optimal procedures for disseminating reviews for subsequent decision making

All of the changes proposed above ought to be elaborated with the principle in mind that a coordinated governance system that takes into account faculty, student, and administration voices in the decision making process is required for an optimum governance climate. These changes should be sought so as to reconfigure the balance of authority and power in the governance system, not so as to leave out student voices or bypass the administration, but so as to rebuild the confidence of the faculty in their role in governance and in the governance system itself.

All faculty members should feel their interests and the interests of the university as a whole are optimized through the governance system. The interests of younger faculty are

²¹ The University of Colorado has developed and implemented a regular program review process that might serve as a model. Interested parties might visit [http://www.colorado.edu/faculty affairs/PRPLIST.htm](http://www.colorado.edu/faculty%20affairs/PRPLIST.htm).

particularly important, in that they represent MSU's future. Governance decisions therefore should be directed toward creating an environment in which they can grow and prosper. Program evaluation therefore should consider the extent to which programmatic responsibilities overburden junior people relative to their more established colleagues and call for redress where appropriate. Senior faculty should provide mentoring and encouragement for developing new perspectives and programs that utilize the innovative potential of younger people. Younger faculty members should not be overwhelmed by governance obligations; however, they are likely to be their own best representatives. Their involvement in governance activities, therefore, should be recognized and encouraged. To do otherwise would be to encourage a passivity that would likely carry through to the post-tenure years.

The Structure of the Governance System

Establishing a Faculty Executive Committee

The Faculty Voice Committee proposes a six-member Faculty Executive Committee (FEC) be established to increase faculty power and participation by providing a means for forging faculty consensus and making that consensus visibly apparent to both the Board and the administration. The FEC would increase transparency by communicating directly with faculty members and receiving direct input via email and web-based discussion fora. With increased power and transparency, the FEC would mobilize and channel faculty participation so as to accomplish better governance results for the university in a more timely fashion.

The FEC proposal is based upon the belief that a properly constituted and monitored small number of respected and capable faculty members would be both able and willing to shoulder the burden of managing the participation process. We envision a role for the FEC that combines and coordinates an array of tasks now delegated to a number of different committees and groups. By centralizing this set of tasks, we recognize that many decisions that affect the University must be made quickly and at times when other governance committees are not in session. The FEC would be able to meet quickly and to offer thoughtful and informed faculty input on such pressing issues. For their part, the faculty must be willing to delegate considerable responsibility to these individuals to advise the administration and the Board on issues of direct relevance to the faculty, and to inform the faculty on matters of importance within the constraints imposed by our common commitment to the overall well being of the institution.

In our view, the FEC is perhaps the Faculty Voice Committee's single most important recommendation, because the FEC will then become the leader for change that can facilitate and assist with the implementation of all the remaining recommendations that gain support of the ECAC, the Faculty Council, and the Academic Senate.

Tasks and Functions:

- The Faculty Council would elect one of the six FEC members to be its chairperson. This person would take into account the advice of students,

administrators, and the other five FEC members, set the Faculty Council agenda and preside over its meetings.²²

- Each FEC member would be assigned to one Faculty Council standing committee (except for the search committee described below) as an ex officio member and be expected to assist the committee to coordinate and integrate its activities with the work of other committees. Working with the committee chairpersons, the FEC members would provide input for agenda setting, set performance deadlines, and monitor progress.²³
- The FEC would perform the functions of the faculty liaisons to the Board of Trustees, meeting monthly with the faculty relations committee of the Board and communicating directly with Board members on an as-needed basis.
- The FEC would meet on a regular basis with the officers of the ASMSU to identify areas of mutual concern and the means for addressing them.
- The FEC would meet frequently with administrative personnel, providing real-time advice and input on matters of mutual concern.
- FEC members, working in conjunction with Faculty Representatives who also are ex-officio members of College Advisory Committees (CAC), will establish agenda items and convene meetings to discuss issues of concern with CAC Chairpersons, either individually or in-group sessions.
- The FEC would work with the task force on faculty evaluation of academic administrators to specify and propose a systematic recurring evaluation procedure. Once this procedure is in place the FEC would assume the responsibility for monitoring compliance and, with due respect for the need for privacy and confidentiality, communicate the results of the evaluations to the appropriate faculty committees and administrative personnel.²⁴
- The FEC would work with the task force on faculty evaluation of academic programs to specify and propose a systematic recurring evaluation procedure. Once this procedure is in place the FEC would assume the responsibility for monitoring compliance and, with due respect for the need for privacy and confidentiality, communicate the results of the evaluations to the appropriate faculty committees and administrative personnel.

²² The function of the FEC would be similar to those of the Steering Committee under previous MSU governance structures. It also would absorb the functions of the University Committee on Academic Governance (UCAG).

²³ Administrative personnel would continue to act as a resource for the standing committees. The regularity and frequency of their attendance at meetings, would be determined by committee members.

²⁴ As faculty evaluations are conducted within each college, the FEC would play no role in this process.

- The FEC would develop, implement, and maintain a variety of media for facilitating faculty communication. These may include a regular column in the *State News* and in the *MSU News Bulletin*, an Angel website and discussion forum, emails, and campus mailings. The FEC should oversee and assure the capability of online voting by faculty on issues of interest and concern.

Selection and Monitoring: Faculty to be chosen for the FEC must be respected, able, committed, and willing to spend the time required on behalf of the entire faculty and the University. We recommend that a standing committee of the Faculty Council be established to search for and attract the best quality candidates and then to advise and review the FEC members. The search committee would manage the process of electing new FEC members and advise and review all six throughout the year. Reviews would be made available to the Faculty Council on an annual basis.

Once the search committee develops a slate of candidates, all tenure-stream and fixed-term faculty would elect FEC members.²⁵ In order to provide time to become familiar with issues, bylaws, and policies, an essential requirement if the goal of transparency is to be met, FEC members would have 3-year terms of office with the option of being re-elected once. Initially the search committee would attract and select candidates for six FEC positions and allocate them to 1-3 year terms. For each subsequent year, the search committee would select candidates to compete for any FEC positions that would become open. The search committee should attempt to provide multiple candidates for each open position.²⁶ The search committee would target senior faculty members who would like to help facilitate faculty decision-making and greater faculty participation in governance as a capstone to their careers.

The tasks we envision for the FEC will require both release time and extensive staff support. We propose that FEC members be provided substantial release time from university rather than college or unit-level funds. The proposed structural changes in the governance system and, in particular, the creation of the Faculty Executive Committee will considerably expand the responsibilities of the Office of the Secretary for Academic Governance. To provide adequate support for the expanded and varied activities we envision for the FEC, the Office of the Secretary of Academic Governance and its staff will have to be strengthened to include both secretarial and computer support. This will require infusion of additional financial support.

Recognition and Rewards: FEC membership as we envision it would constitute a significant service to the MSU faculty. These individuals would be held in high regard and accorded significant discretion in how they represent faculty interests. This is a crucial point. Faculty cannot expect to attract first-rate candidates to the FEC if they

²⁵ There is considerable debate over how people in different academic personnel categories should participate in academic governance. This issue is addressed elsewhere in this document.

²⁶ The Faculty Voice Committee considered the possibility of recommending that FEC positions be set aside for untenured faculty and non-tenure stream faculty. It is our considered opinion that, while there is merit in having such set-asides, there is good reason for not recommending them. In practice, tenured faculty members tend to advise untenured professors to focus on establishing their research programs and avoid such assignments. In addition, not having set-asides would not preclude untenured and fixed-term faculty from being considered for FEC positions and elected to serve. All faculty members could be considered; however, they should become candidates and be elected on their own merits, not because of their particular personnel category.

restrict their role to that of an information conduit. Moreover, faculty opinion is varied and often in conflict. Relative consensus must be molded and forged, and faculty must expect to lose on some issues in order to gain on others. Compromises will have to be made, and effective decision participation will require that the FEC have discretion sufficient to make rapid choices among alternatives.

It will be essential for faculty to continue to support the FEC even when their choices fail to match up to any one faculty member's ideals. Relative consensus is a sine-qua-non of faculty power, and, as noted in an earlier section of this report, without power, transparency and participation cannot be sustained. Power will not come simply from changing bylaws. It will only come when faculty can achieve relative consensus on important issues facing the university and when this consensus is coordinated with the independent concerns and projects of both the administration and the Board. Issue-by-issue consensus must be negotiated and renegotiated with the administration and the Board on a regular basis, particularly in turbulent times.

The Academic Governance Committee Structure

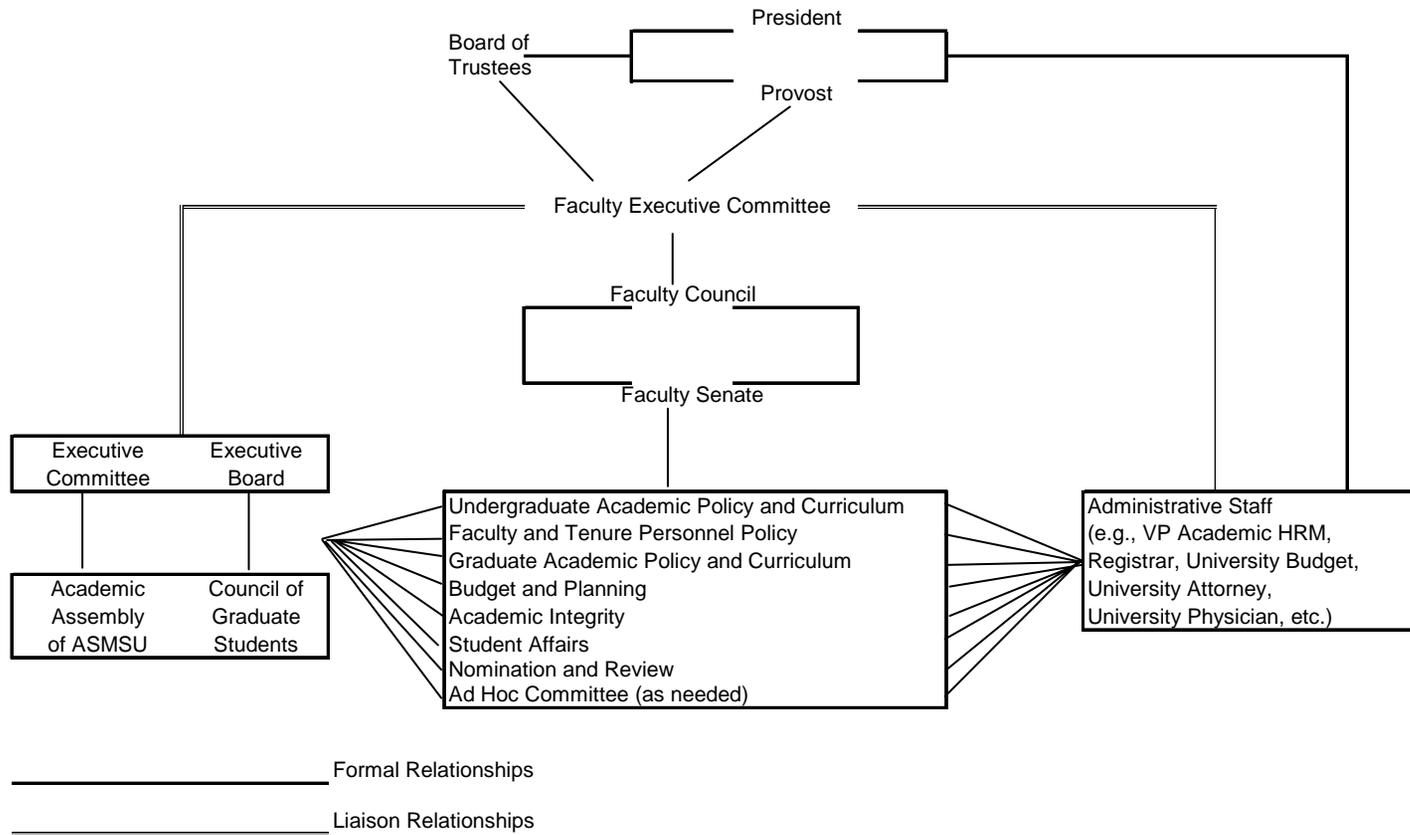
The Faculty Voice Committee received many suggestions for improving and streamlining MSU's academic governance committee structure. As there were no administrative staff on the committee and since we did not have student representatives or liaisons, we felt we could make no more than broad suggestions for changes in the Academic Council. We did not presume to recommend changes in the ASMSU structure. We limited our focus to the nature and functioning of the Faculty Council and, in determining its liaison relationships with students, restricted our concern to the Academic Assembly and the Council of Graduate Students.

The overarching intention of the following proposals is to broaden and deepen faculty involvement in making policy decisions for Michigan State University. An important but secondary concern is to streamline the process to make decision making more responsive and less time-consuming. We therefore proffer the following proposals which are depicted graphically in Figure 1:

1. Since it is difficult if not impossible to separate academic policy from curriculum matters, the University Committee on Academic Policy (UCAP) should be merged with the University Committee on Curriculum (UCC) to form the University Committee on Undergraduate Academic Policy and Curriculum (UCUAPC). This committee would assume the functions currently performed by its constituent committees, perhaps by creating two subcommittees, and, in addition, assume oversight responsibility for the academic program review function described below. As a policy committee, UCUAPC would spend the majority of its plenary time engaged in assessing and recommending changes in

academic programs, allowing greater discretion in course description approvals for subcommittee consideration.

Figure 1: UNIVERSITY-LEVEL ACADEMIC GOVERNANCE FLOW CHART



2. There is substantial overlap in the responsibilities of the Personnel Subcommittee of the University Committee on Faculty Affairs (UCFA) and the University Committee on Faculty Tenure (UCFT). These bodies, therefore, should be merged into a University Committee on Faculty Tenure and Personnel Policy (UCFTPP) that would assume their combined responsibilities. Increasing emphasis should be given to important policy issues, such as the policy for hiring fixed-term or specialist teaching faculty versus tenure-system faculty, recommending ways to support or unburden untenured faculty to increase their chances for achieving tenure, establishing programmatic post-tenure review, and evaluating policies and making recommendations concerning the tenure system.
3. The Faculty Voice Committee received no suggestions for how the University Graduate Council (UGC) might be redesigned. The UGC, in fact, received considerable praise. Academic Council is considering expanding its purview to include graduate professional programs, a responsibility that, if approved, should continue through the proposed restructuring. The only change recommended is a change in name to the University Committee on Graduate Academic Policy and Curriculum (UCGAPC). The new name would reflect the parallel functions of UCUAPC and UCGAPC.
4. The Budget Subcommittee of the current UCFA currently addresses important but limited budgetary issues. Their mandate should be expanded to include offering advice on program planning and budgetary priorities for all academic matters as they arise in the budget-generating (APP&R) process. While working with the University Budget Office, this University Committee on Budget and Planning (UCBP) should have independent access to accounting expertise. Priority should be given to recruiting faculty with such expertise to serve on this committee.
5. A University Committee on Academic Integrity (UCAI) should be established to recommend and review policies that address or confront ethical issues or issues of professional and institutional integrity. These include but are not limited to treatment of intellectual property, human subjects review, animal safety, issues of faculty plagiarism or equitable treatment of the intellectual contributions of students, and proposals for establishing and review of ongoing university relationships with external public or private entities.
6. A nominating and review committee should be established to find, screen, nominate and review candidates for election to the FEC.²⁷
7. Ad hoc faculty committees have been appointed by the Provost to study and make recommendations on a variety of issues. These appointments have tended to be

²⁷ The tasks of this committee are elaborated in the previous section on establishment of a Faculty Executive Committee.

made outside the academic governance structure, compromising their perceived legitimacy and their ability to facilitate and forge faculty consensus. To the extent possible, ad hoc faculty committees should be created through the Faculty Council. Membership on these committees should be based on recommendations from the FEC (described earlier in this document) and final membership should be voted on by Faculty Council members.

8. Undergraduate and graduate student representation on all standing committees, including the proposed UCFTPP (save when particular cases are considered), should be continued. In addition, the FEC would meet regularly with the Executive Committee of ASMSU and the Executive Board of COGS.
9. The FEC would assume the responsibilities of the University Committee on Academic Governance (UCAG).
10. To provide additional opportunities for students, administrators and faculty to communicate, the Academic Council might be maintained as a discussion forum. Consideration of this possibility, however, lies beyond the direct purview of the Voice Committee, as development of this idea requires the joint participation of students and administrative personnel, as well as faculty.

Revitalizing college level academic governance

University-level academic governance cannot function without vigorous college and unit level governance structures in place. These structures are critical to addressing unit and college level issues as well as moving broader issues up into the larger university discussion. While there is considerable variance across units, and much can be done within units to improve governance performance, unit level governance structures at MSU generally are functioning, if not always vibrant. However, college level governance structures and their links to university governance are in need of reinvigoration. College-level governance should serve among other things as an effective conduit for discussion and feedback between the academic unit level and the all-University level.

We propose the following actions for consideration

1. The current Bylaws for Academic Governance require that each college have a College Advisory Council. While each college is unique in some ways, communication would be facilitated if all colleges had the following additional governance committees that would parallel university level committees:
 - a. Budget and planning
 - b. Faculty personnel policy
 - c. Academic policy and curriculum (graduate and undergraduate)

2. Chairs of these four committees from all colleges would meet once a year with each other and with their corresponding university committee to discuss common issues and potential university-level actions.
3. Within colleges, chairs of department advisory committees would meet with each other and with their respective CAC at least once a year to discuss issues and potential actions.
4. At least one college representative to Faculty Council should be an ex officio member of the College Advisory Committee. While this is called for currently, it is observed primarily in the breach. We should do a better job following our own existing rules and regulations.

Strategies for Information Dissemination

Information dissemination strategies for academic governance at Michigan State should accomplish at least three goals:

- Provide faculty with the basic information about issues facing the university, as a necessary condition for effective faculty participation in academic governance.
- Encourage greater faculty involvement in the university and in governance by altering the climate and culture. If university-governance issues are widely talked about among faculty and at the unit and college levels, a strong message will be sent that faculty are expected and encouraged to become informed and involved.
- Facilitate greater faculty involvement in governance by creating more efficient means of participation, such as on-line voting.

The proposals that follow also address another issue. Duderstadt and Womack, in *The Future of the Public University in America*, adopt a generally negative view of the ability of faculty to involve themselves effectively and usefully in university-level governance. Yet they admit that at the unit level, faculty self-governance often works extremely well. This observation suggests a recipe for improved participation of faculty in the governance of MSU—whenever possible, move the debate and discussion downward from the university to the college level and from the college to the unit level. Such a measure, in turn, requires effective flow of information up and down the levels of university structure.

Tie effective communication to better representation. A telling exchange occurred at the February 26, 2005 meeting of the Academic Senate (an informal meeting since an official quorum was not reached). The Chair of the Executive Committee of Academic Council was challenged by a faculty member for having called this Senate meeting, when the slim agenda lacking any important action items virtually guaranteed insufficient turnout to constitute a quorum. The Chair replied with a brief defense of the decision to call the meeting, based on implied promises made to faculty at an earlier date. This led a second faculty member to say something to this effect: “Your statement just now is the

clearest explanation I have yet heard of why this meeting was called. Why did you not send us a brief e-mail saying what you just said, instead of a lot of reports, agendas, minutes, and so on?"

We believe that this exchange highlights the basic challenge of effective dissemination of information about university governance. Faculty are incredibly busy. Whoever wishes to involve faculty effectively in governance cannot stop at simply sending out meeting minutes or similar documents, or even less, simply posting such documents to a website and notifying faculty that they can read them by clicking on that website.

Elected Faculty Council Representatives and standing committee members should be responsible for informing faculty about issues of importance. Each committee member and each FC representative should be responsible for clearly communicating to a designated group of faculty members and their performance in this respect should constitute a clearly delineated part of their overall annual performance review. Faculty serving at the university level in academic governance should have a clear understanding of the constituency they inform—a group of faculty members who depend on them for concise but complete information on relevant and important issues. Faculty should be surveyed, perhaps annually, to assess the extent to which they have been kept informed by their representatives, and the results of this survey should be communicated to standing committee chairs and to the Faculty Executive Committee.

Those accepting responsibility for information dissemination must take the time and trouble to compose brief e-mails (or similar messages using other media) that in easily readable and concise fashion, tell faculty what the important issues are, why they are important, and what action options are under consideration. These messages should refer faculty to websites or other sources for more detail and elaboration. If too many messages are sent or if messages are too detailed, faculty will tune out. Too few messages, however, with too little information, also will undermine faculty members' incentive to participate. The best balance is likely to be struck by standing committee and Faculty Council members who are well informed about the issues and about their specific constituents' interests and proclivities. It will be critical for faculty serving in university-level academic governance positions to have a clear sense of their constituency and to interact with them regularly.

As the two cultural shifts—toward more effective governance committee structure with more representative roles for faculty and toward more effective and complete dissemination of information—occur, they will complement each other. As faculty become more used to seeing messages from their committee representatives that they can actually understand and act upon in the limited time they have available, they will be more likely to give timely feedback to their committee representatives. And as committee representatives receive more feedback from their constituents, they will feel a heightened sense of responsibility to take the time to compose their e-mail communications carefully and thoughtfully to stimulate the most useful feedback and input. A critical component of the evaluation of faculty representatives by their peers will be whether the representative communicates with the constituency in a timely, efficient, and effective manner.

While those elected to academic governance positions will focus their energies on communicating with their respective constituencies, it is very important that they not

restrict their function to only representing their constituencies' interests on the committees and councils on which they serve. Faculty members at MSU, not unlike those at other institutions, struggle to balance their local concerns with their own programs, units, and colleges with those of the university as a whole. Too often, considerable care is given to local interests at the expense of the collective good. Elected representatives therefore need to give greater attention on improving the overall quality of the university even as they focus their communicating efforts on their particular constituents.

Dedicated page in MSU News Bulletin. Faculty need to hear from their own representatives on the Faculty Council and on standing committees; but they also need to have access to background documents and to communicate with - and hear - a variety of viewpoints from other faculty members. In addition to individual e-mail communications from committee members backed up by a full set of documents available on the governance websites, faculty would be well served by a page in each issue of the *MSU News Bulletin* devoted specifically to faculty affairs and governance. The bottom line would be that faculty could turn immediately to that page each week in order to be sure that they were hearing the thinking of fellow faculty members. The goal would be to make that page as interesting as possible, hoping to stimulate further discussion and dialogue within academic units on matters that are currently facing the university community.

In order to assure that faculty are both fully informed and stimulated to discuss and to act on issues of importance, the administration and trustees will need to accept the inevitability of visible dissension within MSU that could lead to unfavorable press. Good academic governance is an inherently messy matter. An occasional unpleasant headline, however, will be a small price to pay for the improved decision making and implementation that will come with greater faculty participation.

Improved web presence. All that we have said about the need for better and more frequent communication between those holding academic governance positions and their target constituencies, assumes that the full set of background documents are available on the relevant governance website in a timely manner. Pithy and pertinent e-mails from one's representative can supplement but cannot substitute for such a web presence. As part of our recommendations to provide more administrative support and resources for academic governance generally, a thorough review of all governance-related websites should be undertaken and steps made to upgrade them as needed. All committees and other bodies need to be charged with the timely web publication of minutes and other documents.

Web-based participation and voting. A faculty task force should be created, with computer expertise, to explore mechanisms for expanding participation in university governance through web-based systems. Priority items could include:

- Creating web based systems for faculty to evaluate administrators and contribute to program reviews
- Allowing straw polls among faculty on critical university issues
- Allowing official votes to be taken for Academic Senate via the web
- Developing a web-based faculty discussion forum, like that utilized on the Faculty Voice Committee's Angel website, that would permit faculty to post their views

on matters of concern. This would allow for discussion and hitherto unavailable exchanges of faculty views on a campus-wide basis.

The culture of participation

Even with the ideal structure, the governance system will not function to effectively express faculty voice without a culture of participation among the faculty and the administration. Having a culture of participation means that we as a university community (faculty and administrators alike) have a shared set of values and beliefs about how university decisions should be made. We must value and respect the voices of all. We must acknowledge our participation responsibilities as citizens of the academic community.²⁸ We must understand that transparency is critical. And we must come to trust each other.

There are two issues that appear to be critical to the culture of participation at MSU. The first of these is the need for faculty to put the best interest of the university community above their own self-interest or the interest of their units when they serve in college or university level governance. Faculty must be willing to set local interests aside and make decisions for the greater good when necessary.

Second, decisions at MSU as in all large organizations are made via informal relationships as well as formal governance structures. This becomes an issue when certain faculty are consistently involved in the informal processes. The result is faculty power without concurrent transparency and is as pernicious as administration power without transparency.

Creating (or recreating) a culture of participation at MSU is an enormous undertaking. The response is multi-pronged; reforms we propose related to authority, structure and information dissemination would ideally also impact positively on culture. In this section, we add recommendations that are not covered elsewhere in the report.

Additional recommendations:

1. Implement a tutorial on governance that is required of all new faculty at MSU. This could be either as part of new faculty orientation or as a stand-alone activity. It might be modeled after the UCHRIS tutorial on research ethics and integrity that faculty must review before they receive account numbers through Contracts and Grants. This tutorial should stress the civic responsibility of faculty to participate in university governance as well as roles and responsibilities within the governance system. It must include unit, college and university governance processes.

Active involvement in academic governance should be stressed for all faculty. The alternative, currently practiced in many units, is to advise junior faculty members to avoid governance and concentrate on building their research programs. While understandable, this practice establishes a norm of non-involvement that continues into the post-tenure years. It also breeds an implicit understanding that governance is the province of established faculty members, an

²⁸ See comments from Patrick B. Shaw, AAUP, pg.4 this document.

understanding that can leave younger faculty underrepresented and even disenfranchised.

2. The university administration and College Advisory Committees must stress to faculty, deans and chairpersons that:
 - a. Faculty involvement in university and college decisions is critical to the vitality of the University
 - b. Contributions to governance must be evaluated and, if faculty have fulfilled their governance responsibilities, they should be rewarded as part of annual review, promotion, and tenure processes. Items on which faculty representatives might be evaluated include: encouragement of constituent feedback; keeping constituents effectively informed of issues; communicating effectively with college- and unit-level governance; fairness in considering diverse viewpoints before casting votes; and willingness to vote for measures that benefit the university as a whole, even against the narrow interests of some constituent groups.
 - c. Administrator reviews will include involvement in and support for faculty involvement in governance.
3. A recurring issue among faculty is the perceived threat of retaliation and retribution from both administrators and other faculty when opposition is expressed. This climate is anathema to effective faculty voice. Inclusion of governance issues in faculty reviews of administrators will hold administrators accountable for both their actions and the climate created by the actions of those under their authority.
4. An important part of a culture of participation is an atmosphere of open communication and an increased feeling of collegiality among faculty and between faculty and administrators. To that end, MSU needs a place on campus where faculty can meet and administrators and talk informally (e.g. a faculty club). The University Club does not serve this purpose. A place needs to be designated for faculty conversation. This would also be a place where regular opportunities for informal interaction/consultation between faculty and administrators could take place.

Implementation: First Steps

This report touches upon a variety of factors that affect morale and the quality of decision making at Michigan State. The current malaise will not be attenuated nor will our considerable potential be realized without significant changes in policies, procedures, structures, patterns of communication and culture. Success will come

only with the sustained and committed efforts of faculty, administrators, and students. But where should we begin the task? We offer a few suggestions:

1. The Faculty Council should commission a task force to detail the Faculty Voice Committee's proposal for a Faculty Executive Committee. A report and actionable proposals could be prepared for ECAC, Faculty Council and Academic Senate consideration in the Fall of 2005. An election for FEC members should be held by Spring, 2006, with Executive Committee members taking up their positions as soon as possible but no later than the end of the term. Since the Executive Committee would be constituted prior to the adoption of bylaws that would officially enact it, it would initially take the form of an ad hoc committee to develop and officially enact those academic governance proposals, including its own constitution, recommended by this committee and supported by the ECAC, the Faculty Council, and the Academic Senate.
2. The Faculty Council should commission a task force for detailing a program for systematic and on-going faculty review of administrators, due for ECAC, Faculty Council, and Academic Senate consideration, Spring, 2006. The members of the task force should consult faculty with expertise in performance appraisal and evaluation. The proposed program should articulate with and complement existing administrator review procedures.
3. The Faculty Council should commission a task force for detailing a program for systematic review of academic programs, due for ECAC, Faculty Council, and Academic Senate consideration Spring, 2006, Faculty with expertise in program appraisal and evaluation research should be consulted by members of the task force. The proposed program should articulate with and complement existing academic program review procedures.
4. The Faculty Council should commission a task force to assess and recommend ways to improve direct communication among faculty and faculty participation in university decision-making by voting using web-based systems. A report and specific recommendations should be available for ECAC, Faculty Council, and Academic Senate consideration, Spring, 2006
5. The ECAC and Faculty Council should task the University Committee on Academic Governance with recommending specific bylaw and other document changes sufficient to enact the Faculty Voice Committee's recommendations concerning redesign of the committee structure for academic governance. These changes should be presented to the ECAC, Faculty Council, and Academic Senate during spring semester, 2006.
6. The ECAC and Faculty Council should task the University Committee on Academic Governance with rewriting bylaw provisions sufficient to enact the Faculty Executive Committee as envisioned by the Faculty Voice Committee.

These revisions should be presented to the ECAC, Faculty Council, and Academic Senate during spring semester, 2006.