

COMMENTARY for the Final Draft
Revisions to Faculty Handbook Regarding Undergraduate Education

Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Committee on
Governance of Undergraduate Education and Life

At the end of the 2007-2008 academic year, the Faculty Senate, FS, created an *ad hoc* Committee on the Governance of Undergraduate Education and Life, ComGUGEL, to study the governance of undergraduate education at CWRU and suggest alternatives to the existing governance body, the University Undergraduate Faculty, UUF, and its various committees. The *ad hoc* committee, consisting of Ken Loparo (chair), Gary Chottiner, Elizabeth Click, Pat Crago, Bill Deal, Robin Dubin, Don Feke, Jill Korbin, Ken Ledford, Lynn Lotas, Roger Marchant, Glenn Nichols, Myles Nickolich and Liz Woyczynski met during the summer of 2008. A proposal was delivered to the FS, circulated to several university constituencies for comment, and then revised in December 2008 on the basis of this feedback.

The proposal centered on replacing the University Undergraduate Faculty, UUF, governance structure by a Faculty Senate Committee on Undergraduate Education, FSCUE. This change requires that 12 pages of detailed UUF by-laws be condensed to a few paragraphs in the Constitution of the University Faculty. The ComGUGEL devoted considerable time to discussions of how the proposed FSCUE might function. It is not practical or desirable to incorporate all the details of these discussions into the revised by-laws but we do wish to record and distribute some elements of our deliberations, both to aid in the discussion of the proposal by those who will vote on it, and (*if the proposal is approved*) to provide guidance to members of the FSCUE. The contents of this document do not have the force of the by-laws, so the FS and FSCUE will be free to adopt, ignore or modify them as they see fit. However, we hope that these notes will be helpful and that they will be preserved in some fashion, perhaps as part of the minutes of a FS meeting.

The reasons for replacing the UUF, and the issues we have attempted to address in this proposal, are:

1. The structure of the UUF is complex, inefficient, and understood by few faculty or other members of the university community. The six standing UUF committees have a total of 84 members. One of the committees (*the Committee on Academic Computing*) has not even met in several years.
2. It is difficult to staff the UUF committees with people who have the appropriate background and who take an active interest in the affairs of the UUF.
3. While in principle subordinate to the Faculty Senate, the UUF has largely operated independently from the FS and without oversight. The UUF and FS by-laws provide little guidance about the relationship of these two bodies. These by-laws mandate only a single report, on routine curricular actions, each semester from the UUF to the FS, and even this is sometimes overlooked.
4. The UUF is unsure of its own authority, sometimes ceding powers it should be

exercising, such as a voice in standards and goals for admission of undergraduates, and other times infringing on powers that the constituent faculties believe are theirs.

5. The UUF has not reliably been effective in its duties. One commonly cited example is its failure to provide a mandated report on the Impact of SAGES during a critical period of time.
6. In contrast to the FS, the UUF has often had little interaction or influence with the Provost and President and has no direct input into overall university priorities or budgeting.

The proposal for a FSCUE addresses the shortcomings of the UUF by:

1. Clarifying the reporting structure, responsibilities and authority of the faculty body charged with governing undergraduate education and life.
2. Giving the FS the responsibility of selecting the chair and vice chair of the committee and the oversight to insure that the committee is fulfilling its mandate.
3. Reducing the number of faculty involved in undergraduate governance while insuring that those individuals that best understand curricular and institutional issues are members of the committee.
4. Making sure that the mandate and authority of the committee is clearly defined.
5. Providing the FSCUE with access, through the FS, to university leaders and to the budgeting process.
6. Integrating faculty governance of undergraduate education into overall university governance while maintaining important elements of distinction for this aspect of the university's mission.

The following paragraphs point out some of the important issues that the ComGUGEL encountered during our deliberations, explains our decisions, and provides guidance to the FS and FSCUE about how the FSCUE might operate in practice.

Paragraph 1 of the proposed by-laws describes the composition of the FSCUE with the Chair and Vice Chair selected by the FS from the voting UPF faculty on the committee.

Voting Members – 12

Provost, *ex officio*

3 members of the University Faculty (*UF not UPF*) elected by the FS

4 members appointed by faculty committees that oversee undergraduate education in the CAS, CSE, WSOM & FPBSON

1 member to represent the Departments of Nutrition and Biochemistry

1 member from Physical Education and Athletics

2 undergraduate students

Chair and Vice Chair, chosen from one of the UPF members identified above

Nonvoting Members - 4

Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education

Dean of Undergraduate Studies

Vice President for Student Affairs

Vice President for Enrollment

Each of these nonvoting members can choose to designate a representative

There are several issues in paragraph 1 which merit discussion.

1. We strove to balance a desire to keep the number of members to a practical value against arguments to make the membership as inclusive as possible. The number now stands at 16. For comparison, the UUF committees had 81 members. A fairer comparison would be to the 19 members of the UUFXC plus the 17 members of the UUFCC, and perhaps including the 15 members of the UUF Committee on Student Life, Services, and Environment. We say this is fairer because the UUF Committees on Academic Standing and Admissions will likely be retained in some fashion as subcommittees of the FSCUE.
2. The voting committee members are not given the authority to appoint representatives to take their seats and cast their votes on the FSCUE, either for single meetings or for an entire term. (*Robert's Rules of Orders states that bylaws must explicitly provide this authority or it does not exist.*) Committee members can request that the Chair of the FSCUE allow them to identify a representative to attend meetings in their stead, but such representatives will be guests of the committee and will not have the right to cast votes.
3. The 4 non-voting members are given the authority to appoint representatives to take their seats. Some of these members regularly attend UUF meetings (and will likely attend FSCUE meetings) but others do not and we want to allow, for example, the VP of Enrollment to have the person in charge of Undergraduate Admissions attend FSCUE meetings.
4. The Deans of the constituent faculties are not represented on the FSCUE. While input from these Deans may often be critical to the business of the FSCUE, it was felt that the necessary communication should be a responsibility of the faculty members representing each of the schools. We would, however, encourage the committee to offer the Deans, or their representatives, the opportunity to attend meetings as guests of the committee and keep them in the loop for all communications that might be of interest to them.
5. The proposal does not incorporate proportional faculty representation of the schools that was typical for UUF committees (typically 3, 2, 1, 1 for the CAS, CSE, WSOM, FPBSON). We felt that there was little point in adding members just for this purpose. While there occasionally arise issues over which schools disagree, such issues generally require direct negotiation between the schools and/or intervention by the Provost; a vote of the UUF or of the FSCUE would not normally settle these matters. In any case, with 16 members on the FSCUE, it is more important to the success of a proposal that it have convincing supporting arguments rather than the vote of another member or two from the CSE and CAS.

One should also note that the FS will appoint 3 members to the committee, and may on its own authority choose to consider proportional representation as a factor in these appointments.

6. Robert's Rules of Order prohibits mail or electronic ballots unless the by-laws specifically allow for them. We have made no such allowance for meetings of the FSCUE (*although they are required for meetings of the entire Undergraduate Program Faculty*). Members of the FSCUE must attend meetings of the committee and hear any discussion before voting on matters before the committee.
7. The FS nominating committee is responsible for identifying members (*other than ex officio members*) of the FSCUE, as they are for other FS committees. This will include members from PHED and the SOM, as well as the two student members, although USG and the Offices of UG Studies and Student Life should be invited to assist in identifying student members.
8. We discussed at length whether Physical Education and the SOM should be represented on the FSCUE. The SOM does not directly grant undergraduate degrees but they do offer two important majors (*Biochemistry and Nutrition, with degrees given through the CAS*) and they have representation on the current UUFXC and the UUFCC, so it made sense to include them on the FSCUE. Physical Education does not have representatives on the UUFXC or UUFCC but this department is an important part of student life and, since student life issues will now be handled by the FSCUE, we felt this justified representation on the committee.

The ComGUGEL did not specify precisely how these representatives should be identified. We felt it was better to leave these issues to the discretion of the FS rather than dictate some particular mechanism in the bylaws. The FS may, for example, request that the members from PHED and SOM be elected by faculty in those departments. It might also set up a system to determine how the Departments of Nutrition and Biochemistry share their seat on the committee over time.

9. Continuity of membership, and particularly of leadership, is critical to effective operation of the FSCUE. This is an important reason for giving the FS the authority to appoint 3 at-large members for 3-year overlapping terms. We encourage the FS to identify no later than March the individuals who will serve on the FSCUE the following academic year. The term of appointments should be set such that the FSCUE and its subcommittees can work over the summer when necessary (perhaps starting and ending terms at commencement or in mid-August).
10. The initial draft proposal included on the FSCUE the chairs of the CAS, CSE, WSOM and FPBSON school curriculum and executive committees, 8 members.

An intermediate draft reduced this to the 4 chairs of the school executive committees. The current draft instead allows the highest ranking faculty committee within each school to determine who should represent that school. This gives schools more flexibility in determining who should represent their interests and also makes it easier for someone to serve in this capacity for more than a single year, which might otherwise be difficult, particularly for the CAS and CSE.

11. We have also provided the FS with the flexibility to appoint chairs to multiple year terms and/or to have on the FSCUE at the same time a chair, chair elect/vice chair, and chair emeritus (*although the chair emeritus would have to serve as an at-large member*). The ComGUGEL considered restricting these appointments to the UPF, but felt that it was better to elect these members from the University Faculty at-large. With that said, we recommend that the FS Leadership and Nominating Committee make these selections with care to insure that these members have deep interest in undergraduate education.
12. The ComGUGEL did not feel it necessary to write into the by-laws any expectation that the position of chair of the FSCUE rotate between the schools on a regular basis. This should be only one of several factors that the FS considers when appointing the chair. The same flexibility is allowed for the three at-large positions; we trust that the FS will allocate these fairly.
13. The ComGUGEL discussed whether having 4 members appointed by each school might mean additional work for those members. However, with this proposal there is less faculty effort overall since the chairs of the school Executive and Curriculum Committees currently serve as ex officio members of the corresponding UUF committees.
14. We have not provided a mandate for the frequency of meetings of the FSCUE. This is something that we feel should not be written into the bylaws. We expect that monthly meetings will be necessary and will suffice, assuming that curricular issues (*course and program actions*) will be handled much more efficiently as described below. Since the FS oversees the FSCUE, the FS can mandate a meeting regime if necessary.
15. We chose to identify the former UUF as the UPF. It is useful to have a simple way to refer to the faculty who the FSCUE represents but it is also important to avoid confusion with the UUF.

Paragraph 2 of the proposed bylaws describes the responsibilities and authority of the FSCUE. The ComGUGEL debated the wisdom of listing all the responsibilities of the FSCUE compared to making only a more general statement that this committee should be responsible for faculty oversight of all aspects of undergraduate education and life. A list may not be complete and could leave the impression that certain issues are not the

responsibility of this committee. A general statement may not clearly indicate the breadth of tasks that the committee should take on. We've compromised by starting with a general statement similar to one in the current UUF bylaws, followed by a specific list of responsibilities. There may arise issues not on this list but, if they involve faculty oversight of undergraduate education or life, the FSCUE should assume that it is their responsibility.

1. The language that the FSCUE **reviews** and **recommends** to the FS is taken from the current UUF bylaws. Later in this paragraph some issues are described that do not require review by the FS (*but are still reported to them*) but any substantive change in policy should be approved by the FS before it is implemented.
2. We've taken care to point out that the FSCUE has responsibility for curricula, etc. that have effects **beyond** a single constituent faculty. Courses and degree programs offered for the benefit of a constituent faculty's own students, and not used by any other schools as a requirement for a degree program, should not require approval by the FSCUE. For example, changes in humanities and social science courses, even though these courses may be taken as electives by students across the University to satisfy degree requirements, should not normally require approval beyond the CAS. Similarly, very few courses offered by the CSE, WSOM and FPBSON should require approval of other schools, although a change such as adding or dropping a course as a degree requirement, if that course is offered by a different school, should flow through the FSCUE. This does not mean that approval by the FSCUE is necessary, but the change should not be implemented until the FSCUE has had an opportunity to review the change and, if necessary, recommend further action to the FS and/or Provost. Other changes will normally be implemented immediately by the Registrar or Office of Undergraduate Studies, as appropriate, and will be reported to the FS; that is, implementation of routine course and program actions need not wait for FS approval since this would result in a process more complex and slower than the one in place now, with no offsetting benefits.
3. It is important, however, to establish an administrative procedure to determine which curricular issues are solely the responsibility of a school. This should not be left solely to the discretion of the schools themselves, which might not appreciate the impact their proposals could have on other schools. We have identified the Provost or his designee (most likely the Dean of Undergraduate Studies) to make these decisions, in consultation with the chair of the FSCUE. This is, in fact, the process put in place last year by the UUF Committee on Curriculum; the Dean of Undergraduate Studies and the Chair of the UUFCC identified actions that merited the full attention of the UUFCC.

There are two important reasons for delegating this power to the Provost. As chief academic officer of the University, the Provost is the person best positioned to handle complex interschool issues. We expect that the Provost will ask the

Dean of Undergraduate Studies to vet more routine course and program actions. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies is an authority on cross-school issues and this office is uniquely positioned to determine the effects that an action of one school might have on another school.

4. To alleviate concerns that the curricular actions of one school might inadvertently have an adverse effect on a second school that had not been notified of the change because the second school did not list the course in its formal requirements, we have included a notification (*regular reports*) clause. All undergraduate curricular and student life changes, even those that are completely within a single school, should be reported to the FSCUE and through them to the FS. It should be possible to handle most of these changes with a minimum of faculty effort as an administrative task, with the Office of Undergraduate Studies and the Registrar forwarding regular reports to the FSCUE/FS about changes in undergraduate courses and degree programs that those offices receive and implement. This reporting requirement exists in the current UUF bylaws (*routine curricular matters are reported by the UUFXC to the FS once each semester*), so it is not a new burden on the schools.
5. The FSCUE is given the charge to review *new* degree programs from any school but can review *changes* in degree programs only if these changes have a significant effect on another school. The reason for this asymmetry is that new degree programs require FS and Board of Trustees approval but the same is not true of changes in degree programs. We did not wish to remove this asymmetry at the expense of expanding the authority of the FSCUE *vis a vis* the constituent faculties.
6. We tried to carefully delineate those aspects of undergraduate issues that require the approval of the FS before implementation from those on which decisions of the FSCUE and its subcommittees are final. This is important because certain issues, such as academic standing rulings (*probation, scholarship retention, etc.*) must be handled on a short time basis and with no ambiguity in the authority of those who make the rulings (*to minimize student concerns about due process*). In brief, changes in policies will not take effect until the FS has given its approval. However implementation of existing policies (*including straight-forward curricular actions*) does not require approval of the FS, although the FSCUE will provide reports to the FS concerning these actions. It should be noted that under existing rules, changes in policies approved by the UUF Executive Committee do not take effect until approved by the full UUF. As the FS meets more often than the UUF, it should be possible to implement new policies more quickly.
7. Robert's Rules of Order specifies that a committee may form subcommittees composed of its own members. It is important to give the FSCUE broader authority to form subcommittees that include members not on FSCUE or the FS. We expect that FSCUE may wish to form such subcommittees to replace the UUF Committee on Academic Standing and the UUF Committee on Admissions. Both

committees review significant numbers of individual cases; these duties don't require the direct attention of the FSCUE and can appropriately be handled with subcommittees whose members are recommended by and whose actions are overseen by the Dean of Undergraduate Studies and the Vice President of Enrollment, respectively (*and who currently serve as ex officio chairs of these UUF committees*). These subcommittees would still report to the FSCUE and the FS, and *policy* changes related to academic standing and undergraduate admissions will remain the business of the FSCUE and FS.

8. The limited authority of the FSCUE over merit-based undergraduate financial aid is made explicit in these bylaws. It can be argued that the UUF and FS have always implicitly had this authority but it is important that this be formalized.
9. Par. 2b was added to address concerns about course and program proposals made by faculty who do not belong to the UPF. Currently the UUFCC serves as the undergraduate curriculum committee for such proposals but we propose that in the future these should first go through a UPF school or department curriculum committee. This means the CAS, CSE, WSOM, & FPBSON curriculum committees should see these proposals before they are sent to the FSCUE. Although the Departments of Nutrition, Biochemistry and PHED are part of the UPF, curricular actions by non-UPF departments should not be routed through these departments for forwarding directly to the FSCUE.

Paragraph 3 provides for the possibility of a special meeting of the UPF to discuss and vote on issues. This is similar to the existing authority of the UUFXC to call special meetings of the UUF; this has been done for issues such as SAGES and plus/minus grading. We've given this authority to the FS and FSCUE in order to preserve the power of the UUF constituent faculties to take action when circumstances warrant it. A reading of the University Constitution suggests that similar existing provisions for the University Faculty (*as opposed to the UUF*) to act in the fashion of the UUF are inadequate. For example, a quorum is 30 or 40% of all voting University Faculty members and it's unlikely this could be achieved for an issue of interest mainly to the undergraduate schools.

1. It should be noted that the twice-yearly regular meetings of the UUF are to be eliminated. Attendance at these meetings has generally been sparse, often totaling fewer than 10% of the faculty. The regular meetings of the University Faculty should suffice for most purposes.
2. We were concerned about who should have the authority to call a special meeting of the UPF and decided to grant this power to both the chair of the FS and FSCUE, as well as to the President and Provost. The UPF can also demand a special meeting by petition of 10% of the faculty. We considered adding a provision that would allow any constituent faculty to require a special meeting of the UPF but decided that 10% of the total UPF was a low enough threshold to negate this concern.

3. Robert's Rules of Order does not allow mail or electronic ballots unless the bylaws provide for this option. Since it is often difficult for faculty to attend meetings at arbitrary times and since we did not want to disenfranchise faculty because of scheduling issues, we have provided that votes on issues discussed at special meetings should be handled electronically.
4. There was some discussion about the 30-day period to schedule a meeting of the UPF after the request is made. Some thought this might be too short a timeframe while others made the observation that very important special meetings have been scheduled on two weeks' notice.