SEC Report on Organizational Effectiveness

EVALUATION OF FACULTY SENATE EFFECTIVENESS

**Prepared by the Senate Executive Committee with Input from Members
September 2003**

The SEC has completed this self-assessment, using a scale of
  1   definite priority
  2   Evident but needs strengthening
  3   Adequate for now
  4   Strong
  5   Very strong
  NR   No rating, insufficient information to evaluate.

1. Permanent Office Space: Adequate for now.

Permanent office space may have been more important in the pre-Internet days. Faculty leadership of the First and Second Senate found it more important to have reliable electronic connections with Senate members, faculty, the administration, and the SVP's office, and to have dedicated and reliable secretarial support in SVP's office. However, problems persist with information technology support. If such support for the faculty in general and for the Senate, in particular, does not markedly improve then it may be advantageous to have office space in the administration building. Having space on campus designated with a "UOG Faculty Senate" sign creates greater visibility and perception of institutionalization at a time when much appears to be in flux.

The most important physical space for the Senate is the meeting room and a secure storage space for files. The Senate has bee fortunate to have scheduled use of the faculty Development Room in the Humanities & Social Sciences Building for faculty sessions and committee meetings. This space is adequate for these purposes. It is desirable to eventually have a dedicated meeting room where photographs of each Senate, plaques listing the names of members, officers, and committee chairs, and faculty award winners, etc., could be displayed. Establishing such traditions is an important step towards institutionalizing effective faculty governance.

1. Annual Budget (Travel, Telephone, Supplies & Equipment): Adequate for now.

Each fiscal year the Faculty Senate is allocated $2,000 out of the office of the SVP for supplies (including letterhead, leis, drinks for sessions, photocopying, etc.). This is a significant demonstration of administrative support for faculty governance at UOG. The SVP is the authorizing officer and the funds are administered by SVP staff. In addition, the Office of the SVP and of the Dean, CALS (now CNAS) have also provided funding support for two consecutive years so that faculty may attend the national assessment conference. Members of the

Senate may also apply for Faculty Travel Grants to participate in relevant conferences. However, these funding supports cannot be viewed as dependable and consistent.

The next step forward would be for the SEC to start working with the SVP annually to identify budget needs based on goals for the development of university governance. Such a budget would be driven commitments to participate in national professional conferences and workshops on governance, and to sponsor local workshops, retreats, and social events to promote effective governance.

3. Secretarial Assistance, IT Support: Adequate for now, but expanded services will be needed soon.

Dedicated secretarial support is absolutely crucial. This was a problem for the First Senate but, fortunately, good secretarial support has been provided for the past year and a half. There is a need, however, for the Senate leadership and the SVP's office to define more precisely exactly what services the SVP's office is responsible for, so that there is agreement on both sides as to responsibilities and expectations. There are still many tasks being covered by faculty leaders that can and should be passed to the SVP's office, but there will need to be explicit (and preferably written) agreement as to what tasks will be taken over by the SVP's office. For example, if the Senate Handbook is to be made permanent and fully functional, it will need permanent, dedicated clerical support to keep it in place and up to date. Ultimately, it should reside on a computer with a professional secretary who is trained in desktop publishing and charged with keeping the document current, publishing each new version, and distributing copies to all of the holders. As long as it must be passed from one faculty member to another, it is almost certain to eventually perish. This is part of a broader need, however. Even the RR&P Manual has not had such support. It is imperative that the administration establish such support for all of the university's authoritative documents—and the Senate Handbook should be made part of them and get the same support as the RR&P.

The establishment of Faculty Senate archives at RFK Library and electronic archives on the UOG server and the updating and maintenance f the Faculty Senate website are definite priorities.

4. Reduced Load for Officers: Adequate for now, but needs strengthening.

Granting of 12-month status to the Senate president and load allocations to committee chairs who are nine-month faculty have been important enabling steps for effective faculty governance at UOG. There were some problems with the First and Second Faculty Senate, mostly with different interpretations or load allocations in the different colleges. Some problems were created for some members of the Third Faculty Senate due to the restructuring and the need to renegotiate workloads at the beginning of the fall semester. Many faculty, including senators, are feeling the pressure of extraordinary demands as a result of restructuring and reduced faculty in their programs due to resignations, retirements, sabbaticals, transfers and appointments of faculty to administrative roles or positions.

There needs to be an objective-based formula that will permit load allocations to be given as needed to enable faculty leaders to meet acknowledged institutional goals. We have made

progress in this direction, but there is still too little recognition of the value-added that flows to the University from the work done by effective committee chairs and other faculty leaders. The perspective still seems to be that load allocations are made at the expense of academic programs and that they cost money, rather than being seen as an investment that can produce sufficient value-added to more than compensate for the cost. Load allocations should not be regarded as just a "reward" or "incentive," but rather should be granted on the basis of the expected contribution to specific management goals and desired products. It may be time for the Senate President to renegotiate, on such a basis, the MOA with the University President that addresses the loads allocations for faculty leaders. The Faculty Senate also needs to play an advocacy role in filling vacant faculty positions and securing additional positions where needed and justified in accordance with strategic initiatives and program review recommendations.

5.   Regular Meetings with Campus President: Evident but needs strengthening, especially during this time of transition.

Important progress has been made in this area, too. An update from the SVP is a regular part of each FS agenda under "Reports". The AVP is available to attend SEC meetings or agenda planning meetings, if needed. The President's Monthly Leadership Roundtable was dormant during the summer but has been re-established. This provides an opportunity for the FS President to meet informally with the UOG President, the three Vice-Presidents and other campus leaders. Both the SVP and UOG President are responsive to requests by the Senate for special reports and are also accessible on an informal basis to the Senate leadership.

Steps need to be taken to restore consistency. While the current administration is willing to meet frequently, and responds in good faith to calls for appointments and meetings, the crush of the recent financial and other challenges (such as the reshaping) have pushed regular and unhurried meetings aside. The SEC anticipates that as the dust settles and permanent administrative leadership is in place in each of the new colleges, the President and SVP will be more accessible on a regular basis.

6.   Consulted on Creation of all Non-Senate Committees: Evident but needs strengthening.

The administration has been willing to consult but too slow to move on the creation and implementation of non-Senate committees. This has not been out of malice, but rather due to preoccupation with the externally imposed crises and attention that needed to be given to the reshaping process. The Administration created the Advisory Committees at the urging of faculty leaders last spring. It is important for the administration to now get the committees functioning and addressing academic needs (such as IT, institutional research and assessment support) before frustration sets in and the restrained support for the reshaping process turns to cynicism and the conclusion that reshaping has not led to any significant improvement. For example, the former Senate President staked some of his credibility with faculty who were reluctant to disband the Academic Committee on Information Resources & Technology on the assurance that the new Advisory Committee on Technology would be more effective at addressing the concerns of the old committee.
Another example is how the SEC took the initiative to develop a role description for the assessment coordinator during the summer to help move things along. It is the five weeks into

the fall semester and no appointment has yet been made of an assessment coordinator nor has a meeting of the University Assessment Committee been convened.

It is important (for the credibility of the faculty leadership as well as the administration) that the administration deliver on such assurances by meeting these expectations.

Role of administration and of faculty in shared governance is still being sorted out. Senate must be vigilant and seek consultation, e.g. in the creation of the college AACs, for example; otherwise, consultation may not take place. Liaison role to the various University advisory committees needs clarification and must be clearly reflected in the Senate handbook.

7. Senate President (Faculty Officer) presides at Senate meetings: Very strong.

The Senate has done an excellent job of establishing policies, procedures and practices with respect to the conduct of Senate sessions, over which the President presides. This includes ongoing training at each Senate session on parliamentary procedure.

The most important action in this regard, and one which the SEC is surprised to find missing from this list of 18 points, is ensuring succession of strong and effective presidencies and executive committees. Careful attention was given to the secession of leadership and transition of leadership responsibilities from the Second to Third Faculty Senate. The creation of the role of Parliamentarian and having an outgoing officer fill this role is a great aid to the current FS president.

We need to make sure that succession is strongly institutionalized. The key is to identify early in the year who will run and who will run with her or him for the other officer positions. In this regard, the issues of load allocations, and secretarial assistance are crucial.

8. By laws specify areas where Senate decisions are normally determinative, co-determinative, or advisory: Evident but needs strengthening.

We made important progress in this direction by codifying in the Senate Handbook (though not yet in our Bylaws) the definitions and distinctions between Senate adoption, approval, and endorsement of proposals and documents put before it. Such distinctions had never been recognized in the past. (No one really knew, for example, just what sorts of authority the old UAAC or Faculty Council Executive Committee had—and this was one of their most serious limitations.) I think enough people are beginning to grasp these distinctions, but further institutionalization of the Senate Handbook is an essential (though not sufficient) step toward getting the entire faculty and administration proficient with them. The greatest deficiency in regard to point #8 is now that we at least have established the distinctions between adoption, approval, and endorsement, we still haven't identified exactly which of these apply to which aspects of university decision-making. In other words, what decisions of the administration must be endorsed by the faculty? What decisions of the faculty committees or college academic affairs committees need Senate approval or endorsement? And can the Administration make changes to the RR&P manual without faculty (and when should be the Senate or Union who

speaks for the faculty?) endorsement (as the previous administration was wont to do)? Until we answer these questions (in writing) and make them a matter of tradition, the role of the Senate (and hence the faculty as a whole) in university decision-making will not be fully defined.

Priority needs to be given to completing handbooks and procedures for review of academic matters, e.g. request for substantive vs. non-substantive program/course requests. Also roles of faculty and administrative in shared academic governance need clarification under the new organizational arrangements. Role of administrative chairs in college AACs is still under discussion and may vary somewhat from college to college. By-laws need to be amended to reflect the university reshaping and provide for a new reapportionment formula for senate and academic committee elections.

9.   Meetings and activities are advertised in advance and records of actions are widely published: Adequate for now.

The Senate leadership has done the best it can for the resources that it has. The former Senate president made it a practice to send a personally composed email to the entire faculty summarizing each Senate meeting. This was because we were limited in our ability to post minutes on the web site in a timely manner, and there was no more expeditious way to get timely information out. This was justifiable during the formative conditions of the past three years but it is not a sustainable or reasonable expectation for future Senate presidents. The essential step in this regard is to get up-to-date technology in place, with the resources to support it. In particular, the Senate needs the services of a university web-master who can help develop and maintain a Senate web page and bulletin board. The Senate needs to know how many faculty do not have Internet access from their office. The University Information Technology Advisory Committee has not yet completed this assessment. Some faculty do not use e-mail and consequently do not access FS announcements and other information in this way. What is our responsibility for communicating to them?

10. --   Attracts both junior and senior faculty who are esteemed as academic leaders: Strong and must remain a priority.

It is the observation of both the past and current Senate leadership that it is difficult to get faculty to run for office. Senior faculty frequently say, I've already done that—it's someone else's turn." and junior faculty frequently express fear of retribution by their dean for actions that they might have to take in leadership roles. There is still a perception that, despite the changes that have been made, the academic governance process is till the same burdensome process that it was in the past. So while the Senate is described by a current member as "a welcoming body to all faculty," the core of willing and able faculty leadership remains small and these faculty are spread thin. Despite this, the membership across all three Faculty Senates thus far reflect a good mix of junior and senior faculty. But the larger number of faculty willing and able to assume leadership roles in university governance needs to be expanded.

This situation is improving as the climate of fear (of the senior administration) is long gone now, but there remains a legacy of fear and cynicism with respect to the college-level leadership and

confusion still about the roles and responsibilities of administrative chairs. As the overall quality of leadership in the administration improves we expect to see more senior and junior faculty coming forward. But there is still a "wait and see" attitude on the part of a lot those who have been approached in the recent past. At present, most of the faculty leadership positions are filled by mid-career people who have put their other career priorities on hold in order to help bring the university out of the wilderness. Attracting and keeping good leadership is a complex but very important problem that needs to be given high priority.

The Senate has been trying to streamline the faculty governance structure but the effects of the reshaping and the requirements under the new BOR-GFT Agreement with respect to unit representatives on this structure is not yet clear. How does the reshaping affect faculty participation in academic governance at the division (or school)/unit/program levels? It is too soon to tell.

11. Is regarded by the campus as dealing with crucial issues: Strong.

The Senate has played a leading and visible role in decision-making, but so far decision-making has been made mostly in response to external events. There has been no substantial move yet by the administration and faculty leadership to forge a common vision and pursue a coordinated agenda to meet it. It is not always clear to the faculty as a whole whether the Faculty Senate is leading or following? How can we lead when we are having to devote so much time and energy to crises and transitioning? What is the role of faculty in "dealing with" crucial issues versus the role of administration? Have we moved beyond the point where we have to be a 'compensatory" faculty governance structure?

Due to the myriad challenges associated with the administrative leadership and the reshaping, there are many unanswered questions about the complementary roles and responsibilities of faculty and administration in university governance. The Senate and its work needs to be made more visible to the University community as a whole. More pro-active use needs to be made of the Triton 's Call and even Talk Radio programs such as "Chalk Talk" as a venue for dissemination of information about the Senate.

12. Has effective representation on other key governance groups: Strong, but needs strengthening.

The representation is there but its effectiveness is difficult to assess. Representation on the Regent Nominating Council has been strong because the Senate representative on this council served as co-chair then chair. However, 'liaison' roles to University advisory committees still need to be clarified. The effectiveness of Senate representation on the new Advisory Committees, however, will depend first on the effectiveness of the committees themselves. What does effective 'liaisoning' to these committees look like? What happens after advice is given? As mentioned above, both the faculty leadership and administration have a stake in the effectiveness of these new committees. Getting them working and making their successes visible should be given high priority by both administrative and FS leadership.

13. Leadership plays a visible role in the ceremonial and symbolic affairs of the campus: Strong.

Ceremony and symbolic affairs took on a farcical character under the previous administration, arid the university hasn't fully recovered yet. We have made progress in reestablishing respect for faculty participation in these ceremonial and symbolic affairs. The FS leadership has assumed responsibility for planning and organizing the Fall and Spring faculty convocation and participates in a visible way in the newly established University convocation, representation at BOR meetings, Charter Day activities, Liberation Day parade, etc. But there is still a need for the faculty leadership and the new administration to institutionalize some meaningful ceremony arid traditions. This is strongly dependent, however, on having credible and respected personalities in the key leadership positions. The faculty leadership is credible in the eyes of most faculty and the senior administration still is for the most part, too. The weak spot at this time is the college deans and administrative chairs. Once we have new permanent deans and administrative chairs who can command respect, we'll be able to move to the next level in this area.

14. Initiates a major portion of its agenda items: Strong.

The Senate has established a solid record for setting its own agenda and taking on initiatives when it needs to. During the first three years, however, it was reactive to a large degree to many external events (including the former governor's attempts to interfere in the presidential search, and attempts by a certain board member to interfere in faculty affairs....). Those are behind us now, and as the administration emerges from having been preoccupied with meeting the payroll and reshaping the university, the Senate will have more opportunity to collaborate with the administration to set a deliberate long-term agenda for the university.

The practice of agenda planning meetings is very effective as a forum for sorting priorities and talking strategy in the agenda making process. The initiative taken by the current Faculty Senate leadership to delineate priorities for the academic year is a good practice that one member suggests should be institutionalized. More work is needed in clarifying roles and the interface between college AACs and curriculum committees, University academic committees, and the Faculty Senate and its standing and academic committees.

15. Defends the core values of academic freedom; determines curriculum: Strong.

Defending the university's autonomy and integrity was one the reasons for the Senate's creation, and it has played an aggressive and visible role in putting the community, the board, and the administration on notice that it can and will stand up on these issues whenever it needs to. Work remains to be done on getting the faculty's own house in order and on strengthening autonomy and integrity at the college! school! unit! program levels. We need to put some "teeth" into the Code of Faculty Ethics. Fortunately, we have the necessary institutional structures in the SCIE and SCFE, as well as the Faculty Union, and effective leaders in charge of each. Now we need to move ahead. The ACUC has done much over the past two years but the work of the ACGC

especially in terms of strengthening the program review process is lagging and needs to be supported to be brought up to date in terms of their handbook and new procedures for academic program review. The composition of the ACGC needs to also be critically examined and perhaps re-constituted.

16. Provides an effective forum for controversial issues: Strong.

Part of the legacy of the ineffective structures of the past is that some faculty became conditioned to the notion that the function of forums of governance was simply to provide a pulpit from which people could "sound off" rather than a forum for civil discussion and deliberate, decisive decision-making. The Senate has been effective at promoting or at least insisting that concerns be resolved outside of the very limited meeting time, between meetings—as the old UAAC cycle, which the Senate inherited, of distribution, presentation, action was supposed rely on. The Senate must not be allowed to lapse into a "bully pulpit" for those inclined to bully (as the old UAAC often did) or who are simply content to "sound off" without really helping the group reach a decision (other than the one they want!). Nor must it allow itself to become de-railed from effective decision-making by lapsing into long and acrimonious informal "debates." To the extent that there is a need, however, for some more informal and "seminar-like" discussion, the Senate might sponsor some additional forums outside of its own meeting time. The dilemma is how to conduct the official business of the Senate when we meet as a body only twice a month for less than two hours. The Senate has been criticized in the past for parliamentary procedures perceived as limiting discussion on certain issues.
The 'out-of-order' discussion regarding IT issues at the August 21st session indicate that other formats are needed from time to time for brainstorming and informal discussion without adherence to Robert's Rules.

17. Is seen as an agent for necessary institutional change: Strong.

The Senate is visible and its role in helping to "clean house" is recognized. Beyond that, however, there is still a lack of understanding of the division of labor between the Senate and the Union, and some justifiable uncertainty about its role in academic affairs. Most faculty have not had the opportunity to see up close and personal what the Senate does and how it operates differently from the University Academic Affairs Committee (UAAC) that we had before. The Academic Committees have been realigned but their roles, and with them the Senates corresponding roles, have yet to be fully defined. High priority must be given to developing the committee handbooks and codifying the relative roles and responsibilities of the Senate and the Academic Committees.

The Senate needs to guard against perception that its role is just one of rubber-stamping the administration's initiatives. For example, some faculty think the Senate was too quick to endorse the UOG President's Template for Change. While the Senate had endorsed the strategic initiatives, the reshaping plan lacked many important details related to implementation that were not adequately resolved before the end of the Spring 2003 semester. A mechanism for the President to report to the faculty needs to be established, perhaps not as frequent as a summary after each Senate session but more often than the faculty convocation each semester.

18. Grounds its practices in Parliamentary Procedure and in published and endorsed principles of governance: Adequate for now.

We have made remarkable progress, and there is a general commitment to good parliamentary practice in Senate sessions. There is an ongoing need (and always will be) to promote proficiency in its application. While the Senate has become acculturated and comfortable with parliamentary courtesy and practice, we need to continue to foster democratic practices in university governance. In applying "published and endorsed principles", we have much farther to go. There has been only modest individual study and no systematic collective attempt at all yet to study and apply some of the wisdom from the vast literature on good governance. There has been no tradition of participation by faculty leaders in professional conferences on governance, and other than James Postma's presentation at the Jan 2001 Faculty Development Day, no local or internal instruction or workshops on governance. Faculty leaders and administrators need to establish a program of professional development that will include education on governance for the entire faculty (and administration). The university still needs to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the deans, administrative chairs and faculty assigned essential academic leadership roles in the reshaped organization. We need to research and apply the literature on this question, along with others. We also need to document our successes and failures and make these available to the academy outside our institution and to the larger community that we serve.

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