

FACULTY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
REPORT ON FACULTY SERVICE
IN UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE

The Faculty have "legislative powers" in "all matters pertaining to the standards of admission, registration, requirements for and the granting of degrees earned in course, the curriculum, instruction, research, extracurricular activities, discipline of students, the educational policies and standards of the University and all other matters pertaining to the conduct of faculty affairs, including the discipline of their own members." Faculty Manual, p.11 (1986). The system of Faculty Governance set out in the Faculty Manual is established to carry out this legislative authority. Participation in this system at the University, college, and department levels is essential to the proper discharge of that authority. Such participation may be fairly expected of all eligible faculty members in the measure that their interest, qualifications and other duties indicate.

A typical pattern of individual participation for a new teacher during the probationary period is involvement in departmental and college governance, i.e., "pulling one's weight," while getting on with the important tasks of mastering one's teaching subjects and doing research that enhances teaching and contributes to the body of published scholarship in order to earn tenure and promotion. Advancement in rank and tenure lead to standing among University colleagues that invites service in University committees and the like, in some instances leading to chairmanship of a major committee or the direction of a significant Faculty project.

Among the "relevant data to be submitted concerning faculty members to be considered for promotion and tenure are ... activities such as work on University committees ... participation in professional societies, and relevant public service...." FM., p.26 (emphasis added). Unit criteria for tenure and promotion prescribe the weight to be given to service for decisions at that level.

The established system of Faculty Governance is constitutionally and structurally sound, well suited to the needs of the University and well able to cooperate with the administrative officers of the University. Continued proper functioning of this system requires a mix of experienced leadership and "new blood" to bring new ideas and new energies to the process.

It has been observed that a "generation gap" threatens the continued well being of the system. As established leaders complete major roles in Faculty Governance, some approaching or entering retirement, fewer persons in mid-career seem willing to assume a role in the process. Prospects are of excessive retreading of the old guard or of abandoning the process to volunteers without a sense of the tradition or mission of the University or how the governance system operates.

Reasons for the falling off of interest in Faculty Governance may be suggested: the failure of faculty members, once secure at the department or college level, to acquire a sense of University

citizenship; a lessening of participation in governance because of increased involvement in the growing academic and scholarly achievements of the University; the lack of credit given by department or college administrators to service in governance at the University level; inadequate weight given in criteria for tenure and promotion to such participation or in the calculus of "merit" for salary purposes; the low esteem to which faculty governance and its deliberations may have fallen; the relative absence of crises that call for participation and bring out leadership; cynicism about the effectiveness of Faculty governance in matters that count; proliferation of faculty committees and other projects.

Remedies may also be suggested: more attention to be given to enhancing faculty participation in governance, particularly by persons in mid-career such as newly promoted full professors or others about to reach that level; more attention given in matters of salary, tenure and promotion to the importance of significant roles in effective Faculty Governance, e.g., a separate line item for work on University committees among the "relevant data" for promotion and tenure; more active and effective leadership to make participation in governance and its deliberations an attractive enterprise.

The University is a public institution charged with public responsibilities. The Faculty are a legislative body within their very large competence. This system of Faculty Governance is part of the public function of the University, arguably the most important part. Each faculty member has an interest in and at least indirect responsibility for the way in which the Faculty exercises its legislative powers and should therefore want at sometime to share in its labors. Some participation may indeed "be fairly expected of all eligible faculty members in the measure that their interest, qualifications and other duties indicate."