

A New Agreement

A pragmatic transition process that makes time an asset rather than a liability, involves little additional expense (perhaps less costly than the current organization), and is faculty driven

What do we do now? Proposed time frame: (Phase One) now, through the fall 2016 semester, (Phase Two) spring 2017 semester. There will be ongoing appraisal of the process. Function will inform process, and structure will grow out of the work. In discussions about the reorganization, it is recognized that we are not planning to bring in additional personnel. In other words, we will be working with what we have, and we anticipate having even less! Given that, let's see what we can do to make sure what we have works. Let's forge an agreement to give it a try.

The Concept: Effectively use the existing school, academic department, Faculty Senate (FS), and university committee and council structure, and streamline the decision making process in the absence of the roles the administrative structure currently filled by the Executive Dean for Academic Affairs (EDAA) and the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs (AVPAA). We also recommend that President Burrage name a three to four member Transition Team (TT) to facilitate the process.

Transition Team: Will consist of tenured faculty who will serve as a bridge between the President, the VPAA (Bryon Clark), and the faculty, ensuring clear, transparent, and publically documented communication. They will identify unnecessary tasks to eliminate, modify tasks that can be done in a better way, and perform necessary tasks that were previously covered by the EDAA and/or AVPAA. This will not include personnel decisions or evaluation of faculty (P & T, PTR, annual evaluations) which can easily be taken care of by eliminating the steps that were previously performed by the EDAA.

It is recommended that members of the TT be given half-time teaching duties in the fall and spring, and a salary supplement. While this transition will be relatively inexpensive, we don't want to "do it on the cheap." This important work must be compensated. Ideally, the TT will be appointed before the semester ends, and will work through the summer (should they agree to do so). In such case, each member will be given three-hour course equivalency compensation (albeit at the "new" rate of \$3,900). The TT is temporary, and will close at the end of the 2016-2017 academic year. Their mission, in a sense, is to work themselves out of a job.

Schools: The existing school structure would be nominal for the time being (e.g. used for apportionment purposes with committees and the FS).

Academic Departments: Academic departments, headed by a department chair will continue to function as the principal organizational unit for faculty during Phase One, with consideration and discussion about departmental reorganization by Phase Two. The exact details of any reorganization will be the responsibility of the TT, the FS, the current academic department chairs, and the VPAA, working cooperatively, as explained below. In Phase One these responsibilities will be primarily organizational and administrative (e.g. the composition of departments, the election of department chairs, relevant policy modifications, arrangements for administrative/clerical assistance), and in Phase Two the emphasis will be on streamlining the course and curricular structure (e.g. removing course and scheduling redundancies and inefficiencies).

Committee and Council Structure: The Personnel Policies Committee (PPC) and the Committee on Committees (CoC) have been working on reviewing and revising the university committee and council structure. The structure needs to be streamlined; communication and documentation improved, and a

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schedule of meeting dates must be established early in the fall semester. The FS will develop a plan for the PPC and CoC to continue this work through the summer with the goal of completing the task. The FS will post a calendar template for all committees and councils to schedule their fall semester meetings as early in the semester as possible. It is recommended that the Senate Chair and Senate Archivist maintain their three-hour course equivalency compensation that is policy (albeit at the “new” reduced rate of \$3,900).

Hopefully, this revised committee structure will include the Presidential Advisory Committee for Budget (PAC-B). With its strong contingent of faculty senators, this committee will work with the Vice President of Business Affairs (VPBA, Dennis Westman) to provide adequate faculty participation in the budgetary processes and decisions. It is recommended that the committee (those members who so choose) work with the VPBA through the summer. Additionally, it is recommended that the members of the TT participate in the meetings and work of the committee.

Weekly Meetings (A proposal for cooperative deliberation and action): Let’s make good use of the weekly time slot (Wednesday’s at 2:00) that was formerly dedicated to the chairs’ meetings. The Academic Council (AC) will meet once a month at this time, to tend to their responsibilities as defined in the APPM.

On one day a month, the TT and the academic department chairs will meet with the FS Executive Committee. The primary function of these meetings will be to hammer out the details of possible departmental reorganization. Let’s cease the unnecessary working at cross purposes that has gone on between these two groups.

Then, on two Wednesdays a month, let’s have a meeting for all faculty and administrators, led by the TT, who will solicit ideas, concerns, and proposed actions from academic departments, general faculty, and academic administrators. On the basis of these discussions (and ongoing input from faculty), the TT will prioritize needs and act with all deliberate speed to meet those needs. The TT will decide whether to recommend a specific action to the FS (when appropriate), a committee or council (when appropriate), or, directly to the VPAA or President. The primary goal will be to simplify the workings of our university, and improve systems of communication and documentation. The TT will keep faculty informed of accomplished actions. Ultimately these activities of collaborative debate and refinement, shared responsibility and decision making will create an improved professional climate and morale at our university.

APPM: Must be updated to include these proposed changes and the backlog of already approved—though pending—changes, updates, and editorial revisions. The FS will develop a plan with the VPAA for the PPC and the FS Archivist to work on this through the summer. The ongoing and timely revision of the APPM, in conjunction with changes in both Phases of the re-organization is essential.

Academic Positions Function of the PAC-B: PAC-B approval is requested for any hiring of new faculty or administrators, including committee consideration of appropriate compensation.

Sincerely and respectfully submitted,

William Fridley