

Faculty Council response to *Governance and Trust at Bucknell University*
(the report of the external governance review team)

Last year the Faculty Council charged an external Faculty Governance Review Team to examine the university faculty's role in the practice of shared governance at Bucknell. During the three day on-campus visit of team in April the team met with many members of the faculty as well as other members of the university community: they met with governance committee chairs, department and program chairs, senior administrative staff, board of trustees leadership, students, administrative staff, and small focus groups of faculty. The Faculty Council met with the team both at the beginning and conclusion of the visit. (The report was distributed to the campus last spring, and is available at [http://www.linux.bucknell.edu/~mligare/governance/.](http://www.linux.bucknell.edu/~mligare/governance/))

The Faculty Council found our discussions with the Review Team to be thought-provoking and productive, and we have heard similar positive reports from other groups that met with the team. The Faculty Council finds the report to be affirmative about the foundations of our governance system, and the recommendations within the report offer provide us with a path to the improved communication and trust that will make university governance more effective.

The University Council discussed the recommendations in a meeting in July, and agreed on the basic priorities for addressing the recommendations.

The first four recommendations in the report address issues of policies and procedures regarding promotion and tenure. The University Council that agrees that questions of promotion and tenure should be a top priority this academic year, and the recommendations in the report are entirely consistent with the charge to the Ad Hoc Committee to Review Tenure and Promotion Policies that was called for by the Faculty Council, the Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure, and the co-chairs of the URC last spring.

In item 5 of the report, the team suggested the creation of an executive committee of the senate/faculty that possesses more than convening power. The Faculty Council agrees with this recommendation, and we have both a short-term and a long-term course of action. Any long-term institutionalization of an executive committee will require a change to the Faculty Handbook, so we will request that the Personnel Committee consider changes to the Faculty Handbook that would create a new committee (or charge an existing committee)

with more explicit executive role. In the short term, the Faculty Council plans to play a more active role in facilitating more effective operation of the governance system. While many of these proposed actions are not explicitly mentioned in the Handbook charge to the Faculty Council, we believe them to be consistent with the spirit of the charge to the University Council, of which the Faculty Council is a subset, and we anticipate working more regularly with the rest of the University Council this year. We hope that the Faculty Council can help committees and individuals to bring issues forward to the faculty as a whole so that decisions will be made in timely and considered manner. We consider the actions we propose to be a half-step on the way to more formalized change in faculty governance.

Specifically the Faculty Council proposes to take a more active role in

- planning the agenda for individual faculty meetings, and coordinating the agenda with the University Council,
- bringing items to the agenda of the University Council,
- working with committee chairs to coordinate faculty governance action
- considering items that are not under the specific purview of standing committees,
- receiving questions and issues from the faculty, and helping to direct them to appropriate committees.

In taking these steps the Faculty Council does not intend to be making decisions on behalf of the faculty that go beyond our charge. We do hope to play a larger role in facilitating decision making within our existing governance structures.

The Faculty Council also expects to continue the review of the charges to the individual committees that we began last spring, and this is consistent with recommendation 8 of the review team report.

Some of the recommendations in the report involve revisions to administrative structures, and we will be discussing these with the rest of the University Council in the future.

September 4, 2007.