TO: University Faculty Council Members
FROM: UFC Reform Task Force: Simon Atkinson (IUPUI), Markus Pomper (IUE) and Herb Terry (IUB)
SUBJ: Recommendations
DATE: November 30, 2010

The Task Force was given a broad mandate to, initially, determine whether or not it believed there was continuing need for any system-wide faculty governance organization (such as the UFC) and, if it concluded that there was such a need, to make recommendations pertaining to any such group.

Our recommendations are based on a review of the history of the UFC, and of recent concerns about its operation and effectiveness and a review of faculty governance at Big-10 institutions and at a few non-Big-10 institutions comparable in some ways to Indiana University.

This report should be viewed as starting point for UFC deliberation over these matters. We have not proposed the specific revisions in the faculty Constitution and Bylaws that would be necessary to implement our recommendations. That is a step necessary only once the UFC agrees that these, or other steps, are the appropriate ones to take.

(1) Need for a system-wide governance body.

Despite respect for the generally decentralized nature of Indiana University and the autonomy and different missions of the campuses, we believe that a common faculty governance unit is still needed. We are all under the authority of a common body – the Trustees of Indiana University. Despite the fact that there are multiple campuses and multiple budgets, the General Assembly thinks largely in terms of a single University. In some ways, IU has always been centralized (for example, fringe benefits policies for faculty are common across the system). In other ways, in light of current budgetary difficulties, it is becoming more centralized (e.g., centralization of purchasing, concerns of the state about promoting easy of transfer from one campus to another). The system is, generally, a strong-President / weak Chancellor model and under the overall administrative direction of a single President. System-wide issues will continue to develop and the faculty of the University, as a whole, needs a governance body reflective of them capable of being heard, and being effective, on these matters. We recommend that the UFC be reformed to be more effective, but not that it be abolished or eliminated.
(2) Recommendations for Reform

Our recommendations address several recent criticisms of the UFC. Some believe it is insufficiently nimble, taking too long to act of significant matters. Some believe it is too large and that that, among many things, explains difficulties it has had with attendance and, on occasion, getting or holding a quorum. There has been criticism of the effectiveness of its committee structure. On some campuses, it has been difficult to recruit members to represent the campus on the UFC. Knowledge of the UFC’s actions, and even interest in its actions, appears to be low among our faculty colleagues which, in turn, adversely effects the ability of the UFC to attract members and the credibility of its actions.

We began with an open mind – we did not foreclose radical change in system-wide faculty governance. But, as we examined our own system and systems at other Universities, we concluded that modest changes were preferable to major overhaul. Thus, we recommend the following changes for UFC consideration.

A) Size and Composition of the UFC.

We considered several options for perhaps dramatically reducing the size of the UFC but, in the end, decided to keep the body at more-or-less its current size. We recommend no change in the number of student members (currently six), but recommend that student members should include graduate and professional students as well as undergraduate students. The specifics of how to accomplish this can be left to the All University Students Association (AUSA).

We recommend a reduction in the number of ex-officio Administrative members. We recommend that the only ex-officio members be: the University President, the Bloomington Provost, the IUPUI Chancellor and two regional campus Chancellors chosen by their peers. Attendance of ex-officio members has been spotty, contributing to quorum problems. When input is needed from other relevant University administrators, we trust that they would be invited to meetings and given speaking privileges.

Representation of NTT faculty on the UFC is a difficult problem. We recommend that, for a three-year-trial period, four NTT faculty be added to UFC membership: one each from IUPUI and IUB and two from regional campuses. The Agenda Committee should be charged with evaluating this system during its second year and making recommendations for the continued representation of NTT faculty at the start of the third-year of the trial.

B) Quorum.

We recommend no change in our current Quorum requirements.
C) Frequency, location and format of meetings.

We recommend that four UFC meetings be scheduled annually; two during the Fall semester and two during the Spring semester. We recommend that the incoming (newly elected) members of the next year’s UFC be asked to attend the final meeting of the UFC each Spring and that all UFC meetings be “physical” and held at the IUPUI campus. IUPUI is geographically central to the state and having the meetings there reduces travel distances and times from campus in the north of the state. Our conclusion is that physical meetings are preferable to the electronic meetings that have been tried over the last two years. This is not a matter of technology – the technology works adequately for the conduct of the scheduled agenda of the UFC. However, no additional interaction among UFC members, including discussion of matters not on the agenda among members, is possible in this non-physical format. By having the meetings at the center of the state and reducing their frequency, we’d hope to increase participation. Physical meetings also enhance the opportunity for faculty from various campuses to interact directly with University officers, including the President.

D) Leadership of the UFC

We recommend that the UFC continue to have two co-secretaries (although it might be useful to call them co-Presidents or co-Chairs). Terms of these co-leaders would be, as at present, two years and staggered. We recommend that the co-Chairs be selected by the Agenda Committee. A co-Chair could be any member of the UFC and, if not already on the Agenda Committee, would be automatically added to it. We recommend that one of the co-Chairs always come from one of the core campuses (either IUB or IUPUI) and that the other come from one of the regional campuses.

D) Standing Committees

We recommend a simplified committee structure with five standing committees in addition to the Agenda Committee. We believe these committees should be formed promptly after membership of the UFC is set annually and not, as has been recent practice, assembled only when there is a perceived need for the group to be formed. We recommend that the Chairs of four of these committees should automatically become members of the Agenda Committee – in order to enhance communication between the Agenda Committee and the Standing Committees. The Committees recommended are:

1) Finance and Facilities.
2) Fringe Benefits and Compensation.
3) Educational Policies and Student Affairs
4) Research Affairs.
We would continue one current committee, but not ask its Chair to serve on the Agenda Committee.

5) Honorary Degrees

The committees should establish effective collaboration with relevant University administrators (Vice Presidents) and officers. Through their Chairs, they should have ongoing discussions with those officers about matters relevant to their responsibilities. They should be proactive, involved in planning, as well as – when necessary – reactive. Membership on the committees would be determined by the Agenda Committee, which would be charged with making sure that the committees represented campuses from across the system.

D) Agenda Committee – composition and function.

As noted above, we recommend that the chairs of the standing committees – not including the Chair of the Honorary Degrees committee – be added to the current Agenda Committee as full, voting, members of that group. This is desirable because we propose that the Agenda Committee, when necessary, be authorized to act on behalf of the UFC on any matter under the UFC’s authority. We anticipate that such action would be rare – in most instances, matters should be brought to the full UFC – we believe that some mechanism for the faculty to be heard quickly and nimbly is desirable. In order to conduct any such business, a majority of Agenda Committee members would have to be present and such action would require approval by two-thirds of those members. Any such action would be required to be communicated promptly to all UFC members for a brief “remonstrance” period. If one-fifth of the UFC members objected to the Agenda Committee's action, then the action would be tabled until the next regularly scheduled UFC meeting or, if required, discussion at a specially called meeting of the UFC.

E) Presiding Officer

We recommend no change in presiding officer – the University President should continue to be the Presiding Officer of the UFC.

G) Communication and engagement – with faculty, the administration and other constituencies.

We recommend that the Agenda Committee and the co-secretaries establish succinct, but timely, mechanisms for communicating information about the UFC and faculty governance across the system to all IU faculty. Such a newsletter – probably electronic – would include both information about the UFC and reports of the activities of faculty governance on all
campuses. It should be very succinct, most likely with links to additional documents and information. The Task Force also recommended that the UFC consider a resolution indicating that significant effective service in faculty governance should be considered positively in faculty merit evaluation and tenure and promotion.