

Staff Advisory Committee Statement Regarding Feedback on Proposed Faculty Governance Bylaws

Read at the 12/8/20 ASC meeting.

Thank you to ASC Chair, Rob Rupert, and the ASC Executive Committee for inviting the Staff Advisory Committee (SAC) to speak today. I am the SAC Chair and am joined by SAC Vice Chair, Meghan Perea and representative Ruth Seaholm. The SAC has 11 members this year, composed of Staff from units across the College and Dean's office, with our central mission to address issues of importance to and advocate for College Staff.

It is our understanding that in November 2020, the ASC was charged by Provost Moore to propose revisions to the Faculty governance bylaws as part of the College's reorganization process, and that Staff voices should be heard. We thank the ASC for allowing us to provide feedback and for acknowledging the SAC in these bylaws and the hope for collaboration. This feedback is the view of the SAC and we recommend the ASC solicit **broader** Staff feedback. Briefly paraphrased, the SAC suggests:

1. To include Staff members as ex-officio, non-voting members of ASFS committees, ad hoc committees, and divisional committees;
2. To include the SAC Chair as an ex-officio, non-voting member of the ASFS Executive Committee;
3. That Staff involved in the aforementioned committees would be given voting rights and representation when an issue involved the work completed or positions held by Staff;
4. That Staff be included in decision-making on new initiatives and College changes, in partnership, collaboration, and as equals and in parallel or combined committees with voting capacity on matters that may affect the work completed or positions held by Staff.

The proposed ASFS bylaws preamble states that the main goals of Faculty governance include fostering inclusivity and furthering the College's educational and research missions. In this moment of Faculty governance reorganization, Faculty and Staff have the opportunity to form a unique collaborative relationship in delivering on these missions in the best interest of our Students. Building collaborations with Staff **directly aligns** with these goals. Staff bring **valuable input, unique perspective and external expertise** on university processes **that could otherwise be missed** when making decisions, **thus helping avoid or predict issues with implementation**. We ask you to consider how inclusion and collaboration with Staff in Faculty governance conversations benefits the College and its members.

To provide examples:

- Having an Academic Advisor be part of the Curriculum committee, whether related to questions on degree requirements or online classes, could provide the committee with insight about how a curricular decision may impact a Student's degree trajectory.
- As individuals who interface daily with Students, Staff and Advisors are deeply involved with fostering inclusive environments and championing diversity and belonging, positioning us well to contribute to the Diversity and Inclusion committee.
- When decisions are made about College policies and campus-wide systems, consulting the Staff who are end-users and responsible for implementation could help identify bugs or problems early in the process.
- It is essential that Staff at both the administrative and department levels be involved in College budget conversations. Not only do many department-level Staff and FSC Staff hold a deep knowledge about College finances and are responsible for department budgets, but the College budget also directly impacts Staff salaries and FTEs.
- Ultimately, Staff are responsible for implementing many of the decisions that are made at the College level and, in many cases, by Faculty governance. Staff have intimate knowledge of how to navigate the university system, policies, and processes and have networks across campus units. **Having Staff in the room from the beginning of such conversations will help the Faculty project how these decisions can play out for our College and Students. Further, upfront involvement, rather than during or after implementation, has the potential to avoid unintended consequences or overlook unique solutions, thus leading to efficiency and improved outcomes.**

This is the most important part of our proposal: above all else, we must be included from day one on conversations about College-wide decisions such as the strategic plan and reorganization, which affect Faculty, Staff, Students and the direction of the College.

We have seen the fruits of Staff and Faculty collaboration before, such as in the 2018 A&S College Strategic Plan initiative and the 2019 Be Heard initiative's Faculty/Staff relationships team. Staff consider ourselves allies to the Faculty, Administration, and Students, and feel we can most effectively fulfill our mission to serve the university when we are part of these discussions, working together. Thank you and we welcome your comments and questions.