Final Report
Faculty Governance DTF
October, 2004

INTRODUCTION

In the Fall of 2002, a DTF was charged to study faculty governance at TESC. The goal of the DTF, according to our charge, was to "examine the current status of faculty governance to and offer suggestions for a model that may better respond to the needs of faculty at The Evergreen State College."

This DTF took over two years to complete our work partly because we wanted to take our time and do this work well and partly because other governance activities took precedence (in particular, the Provost hiring process of the 2003-2004 academic year) and our work was postponed.

METHOD

The DTF conducted a number of activities to gather information: a literature review, a review of the history of governance at TESC, a survey of faculty and several focus groups/interviews with faculty who have held administrative/leadership positions on campus.

In Winter, 2003 a survey was distributed to all faculty at TESC (continuing, adjunct, visiting and staff). 117 surveys were returned; 100 responses from 163 continuing faculty members yielding a response rate of 61% for continuing faculty members. 17 surveys were returned from the 122 adjunct, visitors, and staff faculty.

OVERVIEW OF GOVERNANCE AT EVERGREEN

Evergreen's faculty governance structure, like so many other things about Evergreen, is unique; decisions are made by the full faculty, instead of an elected, representative body. According to

the lore, from the founding until the late 80s, faculty governance at Evergreen was fully participatory and fairly unstructured.

The Agenda Committee is the organizing body for faculty governance at TESC. The AC is an elected body that works with the administration to decide on the agenda for faculty decision-making and events. DTFs (Disappearing Task Force) are charged by the Provost, in consultation with the Agenda Committee, to study issues and make recommendations to the faculty. Issues are discussed in Faculty Meetings and decisions are made using a form of Robert's Rules of Order. As part of our governance assignment, faculty are expected to attend faculty meetings – an unscientific count of attendance at last year's faculty meetings found that, on average, about 70 (out of 200+ voting members) faculty members attend each meeting. Faculty members are also expected to serve on a DTF or other such committee as part of their governance duties. Both faculty and staff serve together on most DTFs.

The Agenda Committee was formed at a particularly complicated juncture in Evergreen history. Before its inception the Provost chaired faculty meetings, aided by the Deans, and brought action items to the faculty for review and discussion. In the late 1970s the faculty began to annually elect a chair who simply conducted the faculty meetings. In 1986 it was hypothesized that administrators were using the informal structure of the faculty meeting to advance their own agendas and "manage" faculty opinion. A group of faculty met to draft what are now the operational guidelines for our current system. This first Agenda Committee organized the agenda of each meeting whereby faculty, staff and administrators submitted the agenda items for their review and possible inclusion on the next faculty meeting agenda. The Agenda Committee also monitored how DTFs were charged and approved their membership. They created the AC/DC ("Agenda Committee/Direct Communication") report that was published after each faculty meeting and outlined actions that had been taken or work that the Committee did separate from meetings of the whole faculty. Accountability, transparency, and communication were the chief motivating forces behind this new governance structure.

FINDINGS FROM OUR RESEARCH

- The majority of faculty members responding to the survey are satisfied with the "totality of their work life at Evergreen" (79%: 56% satisfied; 23% very satisfied). Over 50% of respondents indicated dissatisfaction with workload (not enough time), decision-making (administrative), power distributions and salary/benefits.

- While a substantial number (47%) would consider a union to negotiate contract and employment issues, the majority of faculty responding to the survey did not call for an overhaul of the governance structures and systems, as indicated below:

Prefer the following as an alternate for faculty meeting decision-making process?	% Yes
Faculty union to negotiate on contract and employment issues	47%
Remote Voting	33%
Elected Faculty Senate	31%
Appointed, rotating Faculty Senate	15%
Other	14%
Faculty decision sub-groups – make recommendations w/o review at faculty meeting	10%

- We like our participatory processes. When it comes to delivering the curriculum we are, in the majority, satisfied with our governance processes and structures (Planning Units, Deans, working with staff, hiring DTFs, etc.). The closer decision-making is to the curriculum and the implementation of our programs, the happier we are; the further away, the less happy we are.

- Significant distrust and dissatisfaction was expressed with "Third-Floor" decision-making.

- Faculty in other colleges and universities also express dissatisfaction with faculty governance and decision-making, regardless of the kind of governance system in place. And the trend of dissatisfaction (closer to the core mission, more satisfaction; further away, more dissatisfaction) is similar at other institutions, regardless of their governance

structure.[1] The national data indicate that we won't necessarily "fix" dissatisfaction at TESC with a different way of governing. Some dissatisfaction will always be present; it's the nature of the beast.

- Non-participation is a myth. All of us remain relatively active in faculty governance, in a variety of ways. Yet, participation in governance is threatened by workload and life issues. Teaching, community service, scholarly or creative work take a great deal of our time. Personal life issues (family obligations, illness, etc.) also have a significant influence on participating in governance.

- Beyond workload issues, a significant proportion of us cite ineffectiveness as the reason for choosing to not participate in certain activities – work needs to be done to make faculty meetings, DTFs, and faculty decision-making more effective.

- Trust is a major issue. We don't feel administration is practicing shared governance using the same definition as the faculty. Administrators may be practicing consultative or distributative governance, while faculty members are expecting collaborative/participatory governance.[2]

- Trust is related to transparency and accountability issues, at all levels of governance. We don't know when the Deans and Agenda Committee are significantly involved in "Third Floor" decision-making. If it is not clear that our perspectives are being represented (by the PUCs, Agenda Committee, Program Directors and the Deans), how can we be comfortable with our processes? How can the work of these bodies be more transparent and accountable?

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[1] Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis (2003). Challenges for Governance: A National Report. Los Angeles, CA: University of Southern California.

[2] Op cit. Fully collaborative - the faculty and administration make decisions jointly and consensus is the goal; Consultative decision-making – a communicative model where the faculty's opinion and advice is sought but where authority remains with administration. The model revolves around information sharing and discussion rather than joint decision making; Distributed decision-making - decisions are made by discrete groups responsible for specific issues. Faculty have the right to make certain decisions and the administration the right to make other decisions.

- A significant number of faculty expressed dissatisfaction with how DTFs function. DTFs that are close to the core function of the college (e.g., hiring DTFs) and those that have clear objectives and goals are seen as effective. DTFs that deal with issues that are less clear are seen as less effective.

- Significant dissatisfaction was expressed about faculty meeting and faculty retreats. The effectiveness of decision-making in this context is at question.

CONCLUSIONS

A confluence of elements creates conditions within which faculty power can be seen as being particularly weak. While we may be doing terrific work managing teaching and learning (through the Planning Units which may have supplanted the faculty body in power and decision making) are we exercising our power as a faculty body?

A triad of supposedly equal participants governs colleges and universities: administration, faculty and trustees. During the time of this study, faculty governance was perceived by the faculty as a weak link in the governing triad. The DTF believes it is time to re-invigorate and re-energize faculty governance at Evergreen. The administration (third floor) is perceived by many faculty members to make decisions without participation from the faculty or ignoring faculty input when the faculty's position is known. Apparently, decisions are made but the faculty does not know on what basis choices are made. As indicated earlier, it's possible that administration define faculty governance as consultative or distributive whereas the faculty believe the role to be participatory. The DTF believes we should begin to reinvigorate faculty governance by improving some of our current faculty governance systems and processes. Therefore, we propose, given the results of our research, that we look at making some changes to the Agenda Committee, DTFs and Faculty Meetings

Agenda Committee – the agenda committee's power and presence has apparently been underutilized in recent years. Some respondents point out that the committee is grossly under supported and cannot realistically be expected to mount large-scale, long-term efforts the way it is current structured. One thing to note: much to our dismay, we (the DTF) left the agenda committee off the survey. When thinking about faculty governance

bodies and structures at TESC, we neglected to include the agenda committee! In addition, the narrative responses to the survey did not highlight the agenda committee as a governance structure at TESC. This is in spite of the central faculty governance structure the agenda committee was designed to be. This suggests the agenda committee may need revitalization and reenergizing.

DTF's - DTF's are an essential part of governance at Evergreen but more than half of the respondents to the survey were not satisfied with the way DTFs are working. DTFs were characterized as "campaign committees for particular change," and "reports with models." Work needs to be done to improve the function and functionality of DTFs, including working to make the work of DTFs more participatory (DTFs are remarkably like the kinds of efforts that result in Not In My BackYard (NIMBY) movements).

Faculty Meetings - Faculty members want to participate in governance, including faculty meetings, but many opt out because not enough happens at faculty meetings or because the meetings are neither efficient nor effective. Consensus-based decision-making assumes and requires dialogue and deliberation, but we've not figured out how to dialogue and deliberate in large numbers; we need better large group processes. Timing of faculty meetings needs to be examined as well as the room in which we meet (couldn't hold all of us if we wanted…even with less than half of the faculty attending, there is still significant "spill-over" with people sitting on the edges, on tables, on the floor, etc.). We meet at 3pm, a time that is not convenient for people with school-age children (Planning Unit meetings are scheduled for 1pm; are we, unconsciously, saying that PU meetings are more important than faculty meetings?). Faculty voting is problematic (as are decisions as to how we will vote; supposedly made yearly).

RECOMMENDATIONS

The DTF proposes a series of recommendations. The recommendations targeting the Agenda Committee and DTFs involve a change in the Faculty Handbook and require faculty approval. We also have some policy recommendations about the Agenda Committee that are targeted for the administration (and do not require faculty approval). Finally, we recommend that the Agenda Committee take on the task of improving participation in, and satisfaction with, faculty meetings.

Agenda Committee

To stabilize the Agenda Committee, make it a more representative body of the faculty, link it more deeply to the Planning Units and to assist in assuring that AC members can exercise formal and informal power, the DTF proposes formalizing the membership of the AC as follows:

1) Membership to include representatives from Planning Units, the Tacoma program, Evening and Weekend Studies and NAWIPS (all on continuing contracts) along with four at-large positions (see overview paragraph).

2) The Agenda Committee elects its own Chair (see overview paragraph)

3) The ability for the Agenda Committee to formally charge DTFs is written into the faculty handbook (see #3).

4) To improve communications amongst and between the faculty and the AC, clarify reporting structures and strategies (see #6)

The formal Motion for changes to the faculty handbook to reflect the above recommendations can be found in the appendix.

The Governance DTF also recommends that the following additional support be given to the Agenda Committee:

1. Staff support in the form of a .25 FTE position who will assist with the documentation efforts (minutes and quarterly report) and additional research as needed. This position should be separate from the Provost's and Dean's offices.

2. A faculty development stipend should be awarded to members of the Agenda Committee each summer to partially compensate each member for extra time spent during the academic year. The stipend should be more than a token and at minimum equal 3 days of paid faculty development compensation (at present that figure would be $375). This recommendation recognizes that while every faculty member at Evergreen is expected to participate in governance, community expectations for an

active and engaged Agenda Committee does place an additional burden on faculty during the academic year.

3. PUCs and the Agenda Committee meet quarterly to facilitate coordination of and collaboration on governance activities related to academics.

Disappearing Task Force (DTF)

We propose that the (very short) description of DTFs in the Faculty Handbook be expanded to provide more specific information for the Agenda Committee and DTFs on what it means for a DTF to be "consultative and collaborative in nature." We also feel more accountability for what happens to the work of DTFs is needed. Thus we recommend the following addition to the Faculty Handbook (complete details of Motion in appendix):

Evergreen DTFs should be participatory, educate and engage constituents, be responsible for facilitating faculty discussions, and follow through on reports and recommendations.

Participatory: engage the faculty body in discussions; engage other affected constituents when necessary, i.e., staff, students.

Educate: play a role in educating those affected about the issues the DTF is working on, including staff, faculty and students

Facilitate: find creative ways for helping the faculty body discuss issues at faculty meetings, encourage faculty feedback and advice to the DTF, and facilitate effective processes for making faculty decisions on the issues under consideration

Follow through: Create a final report that identifies those responsible for follow through and distribute to faculty. Work with the Agenda Committee to take action on faculty decisions regarding the DTF's work, if appropriate. Meet with the Agenda Committee, Deans and Provost if necessary to create action or change. Final reports must be *archived* in the library and in the Provost's office. If a DTF report or action before the faculty is delayed or tabled for any reason, send notification of such to the Agenda Committee and faculty. Notify the Agenda Committee when a DTF is ready to "disappear."

Faculty Meetings/Governance Participation

While we are not proposing specific recommendations for changes to faculty meetings and participation in governance, we do believe that we need to rethink how we get people to the faculty meetings. **Therefore, we ask the Agenda Committee to take up the task of increasing participation in, and satisfaction with, faculty meetings.**

In addition to creatively encouraging an atmosphere of governance participation and working hard to invite faculty to the faculty meetings through a variety of venues, the Agenda Committee needs to also address the following questions/issues raised in our work:

- Faculty Meeting Rules of Voting and Order need to be addressed (Explore modified version of Roberts Rules; review voting procedures, etc.)
- How do we conduct faculty discussions effectively with large groups?
- Are we meeting at the best times and under the best of circumstances? Are there support mechanisms that could be put in place in increase participation (child care, meeting at other times, etc.)?
- How can we ensure that faculty meetings are meaningful and participation is important?

Finally, to address the possibility that we may not be doing a great job in developing/socializing new faculty around issues of governance, we suggest that the AC work with the Deans and Provost to create a New Faculty Governance Mentorship Program.

FACULTY GOVERNANCE DTF MEMBERSHIP

The Governance DTF did it's work across two years, during which a number of people were involved. The DTF was initially charged by Provost Enrique Riveras Schafer. Work continued and was completed under Provost Don Bantz. DTF members include: Bll Bruner, Sally Cloninger, Betsy Diffendal, Cheryl Simrell King (Chair), Allen Mauney, Laurie Meeker, Dan Ralph, and Chris Yates. David Marshall, Greg Mullins, Arun Chandra and Rita Pougiales also contributed to the DTF's work.

APPENDIX

Motions/Recommendations before the Faculty
Presented to Faculty (Handout), October 6, 2004

CONCLUSIONS FROM REPORT

- A triad of supposedly equal participants governs colleges and universities: administration, faculty and trustees.

- During the time of this study, faculty governance was perceived by the faculty as a weak link in the governing triad.

- Re-invigorate and re-energize faculty governance at Evergreen by improving some of our current faculty governance systems and processes, in particular the Agenda Committee (the main faculty governance body), DTF's, and Faculty meetings.

MOTION 1: Agenda Committee

To stabilize the Agenda Committee, make it a more representative body of the faculty, link it more deeply to the Planning Units and to assist in assuring that AC members can exercise formal and informal power, the DTF proposes formalizing the membership of the AC as follows:

5) Membership to include representatives from Planning Units, the Tacoma program, Evening and Weekend Studies and NAWIPS (all on continuing contracts) along with four at-large positions (see overview paragraph).

6) The Agenda Committee elects its own Chair (see overview paragraph)

7) The ability for the Agenda Committee to formally charge DTFs is written into the faculty handbook (see #3).

8) To improve communications amongst and between the faculty and the AC, clarify reporting structures and strategies (see #6)

Current Faculty Handbook language (Section 2.200, Academic Organization): The **AGENDA COMMITTEE** will play a strong role in faculty governance. The chairperson of the faculty will also be chairperson of the agenda committee. The agenda committee is a representative body of the faculty and has five main functions:

Replace with: The AGENDA COMMITTEE will play a central role in faculty governance. The agenda committee is a representative body of the faculty. Membership is composed of one person elected from each Planning Unit, one from the Tacoma program, NAWIPS, Evening and Weekend Studies, and four elected at large at a spring faculty meeting. The Agenda Committee will elect its own chair who will also

serve as chairperson of the faculty; the Chair will be a faculty member on a continuing contract. Membership is limited to faculty on continuing contracts with the exception of the four at-large members.

The agenda committee is a representative body of the faculty and has six main functions:

1. To review agenda items, consulting with the deans and provost prior to the faculty meeting to set an appropriate agenda. Issues which the agenda committee agrees are only extensions of existing tradition and policy may be settled by the committee in consultation with the provost and deans and then reported subsequently to the faculty for review. Other issues will be brought to the faculty for discussion (and perhaps for a vote), by means of reports. The agenda committee may both receive and request reports on matters of concern to the faculty from the provost, deans, planning unit coordinators, and other agencies of the college. These groups may also request meetings with and reports from the committee.

2. To decide if an issue is best brought before the faculty in one large body, in smaller discussion groups such as the current governance groups, or in alternative formats (such as a policy hearing). If the faculty meets in smaller groups, a member of the agenda committee would preside.

3. To review with the provost and deans the charges, constitution and membership of all Disappearing Task Forces (DTF's)*, committees, and planning and governance bodies (of the faculty and college-wide). The agenda committee will review and approve all faculty members recommended to serve on such bodies before they are officially charged. It may also negotiate with expectation of result with the appointing officer the number or proportion of faculty members in the group. Members of the agenda committee may themselves represent the faculty in such important efforts as strategic planning, college-wide governance and the program review committees; or (alternatively) the committee may work with the provost and determine faculty representation. Faculty who are serving on DTF's will inform the agenda committee of the progress of their work, particularly when they need guidance from the committee or faculty, or when they are ready to report*. Add: The Agenda Committee may also charge DTFs*.

4. To act on behalf of the faculty when necessary. In situations when it is not possible to convene the faculty, the agenda committee will be available for emergency consultation with the president, provost and deans (e.g., if guidance on the interpretation of the strategic plan or responses to a budget crisis is necessary OVER A BREAK). The agenda committee expects to be called in such events. Members who are available will be on year-round call; and in addition, each member of the agenda committee would agree to be available during one month each summer. They will be compensated on a per diem basis. There would thus be at least three members of the agenda committee available during each of the summer months.

5. The agenda committee shall also be consulted and actively involved in planning the yearly faculty retreats.

6. *ADD: The agenda committee will report directly to the faculty with results of their meetings by distributing minutes and will also publish a quarterly report on progress made in DTFs and on other academic issues.*

MOTION 2: Disappearing Task Force (DTF)

We propose that the (very short) description of DTFs in the Faculty Handbook be expanded to provide more specific information for the Agenda Committee and DTFs on what it means for a DTF to be "consultative and collaborative in nature." We also feel more accountability for what happens to the work of DTFs is needed. Thus we recommend the following addition to the Faculty Handbook:

Current Faculty Handbook Language (Section 2.200, Academic Organization): *DISAPPEARING TASK FORCE (DTF) is a short-term ad hoc committee for the purpose of gathering information, preparing position papers, proposing policy, offering advice, or making hiring recommendations. During the the college's first year, DTFs were initiated to avoid the usual patterns of extensive standing committees and governing councils. DTFs have traditionally been consultative and collaborative in nature and have a diverse, broadly based membership.

ADD: Guidelines for how Evergreen DTFs conduct their work:

Evergreen DTFs should be participatory, educate and engage constituents, be responsible for facilitating faculty discussions, and follow through on reports and recommendations.

> *Participatory: engage the faculty body in discussions; engage other affected constituents when necessary, i.e., staff, students.*
>
> *Educate: play a role in educating those affected about the issues the DTF is working on, including staff, faculty and students*
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send notification of such to the Agenda Committee and faculty. Notify the Agenda Committee when a DTF is ready to "disappear."

RECOMMENDATIONS NOT REQUIRING MOTIONS
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3. We recommend that the PUCs and the Agenda Committee meet quarterly to facilitate coordination of and collaboration on governance activities related to academics.