A&S&E Committee on Committees

This year, the Committee on Committees (ComCom) solicited candidates for a special election to replace individuals who either were on leave or had stepped down before the appointed end of their terms. A second annual election was held to replace individuals whose terms were expiring. The committee also contacted committee conveners in the fall semester to ensure that committees meet and choose a chair. The final meeting of the year is the "committee assignments" meeting that tries to match requests from the "faculty committee selection sheet" to available openings. The committee also helped the Committee on Tenure and Promotion (T&P) to find suitable candidates for an upcoming T&P case to be conducted this summer.

Karen Panetta’s and Jack Ridge’s terms on the ComCom ended as of May 31, 2006. At this time, the committee has no volunteers to assume the role of the ComCom chair for the upcoming academic year.

Election Issues

For the annual election, the committee gave out nomination ballots at the Arts and Sciences faculty meeting. Fewer forms were returned than we had hoped. The ComCom had to make up the difference by contacting more than 187 eligible faculty members. This process took approximately three months of calls, emails, and follow-up calls. The committee members thought it would be prudent to report the most popular reasons for declined responses to the Executive Committee. These responses are summarized here. Please note these are comments from faculty members and do not reflect or represent the opinions of the Committee on Committees.

- Committee service has no value toward tenure and promotion.
- Time spent on committees is intended to improve the university and programs are not being implemented.
- Research is now the university's focus and committee service is of no value.

The bylaws for elections state that there must be two candidates for each available position. This has continued to plague the ComCom. We postponed one election due to this issue and had the faculty override this bylaw by vote at a second election.

Until we can get more faculty members to step forward to participate, we anticipate that this issue will persist for future elections.

This is the second year in a row that the committee has been approached about how to remove a faculty member from an elected committee for not fulfilling his/her responsibilities. Our first suggestion is always to ask the individual to resign. In many cases, this method has worked fine. When the individual refuses, we suggest that some rules or guidelines be established to help resolve the issue.

This year, we directed individuals to the Grievance Panel, when the ComCom felt it was inappropriate for the committee to intervene on internal committee disturbances.

Conveners of Committees
This year, we approached and notified individuals one semester in advance that they were going to be assigned as conveners for the following year. By getting them to agree to this now, we feel that all committees should be prepared for the next academic year.

**Committee Software Database System**

In an effort to streamline the committee selection and election process, Karen Panetta developed a software architecture specification to help assist the ComCom in matching potential candidates for positions with their interests. This system would also help identify individuals who were not serving on any committees so that this information could be relayed back to department chairs. The system specification also included details on an electronic voting system to enable the university to conduct secure online elections.

We submitted the specification to the computer science department to see whether there was any interest in helping to develop this system. After they declined, Karen Panetta solicited a bid from a professional company, Digital Bungalow, which has done other web-based projects for the university.

We were happy that the Executive Committee endorsed our specification and plans and hope that this initiative moves forward.

**Open Issues**

A chair for the the ComCom still has to be chosen.

Lynne Pepall is now an acting dean and therefore may need to be replaced on the committee.

**Suggestions and Requests**

We suggest that each committee chair write up more detail for the committee description and workload so that new committee members understand how to implement the tasks required for their committees. As an example, for the ComCom, new members and chairs need to know the process for selecting candidates, how to create ballots, where to post ballots, and how to hold an election.

We suggest that the faculty committee selection form remove the question, “Do you want to be removed from a committee?” We have too many individuals being elected and then stepping down without good cause because they feel it’s acceptable since we offer it on the form.

With the numerous responses and questions we received about the operation of the Committee on Tenure and Promotion (T&P) with regard to lateral hires, we would like to ask whether there should be a time requirement for faculty to be at Tufts before being able to serve on the T&P, like there is for the Executive Committee.

Since the major issue our committee has continually encountered is finding willing candidates for committee service, we believe that sending lists to department chairs detailing which members of the department are currently serving or not serving on a committee would be beneficial.

To date, we do not have any software in place to automate this process. All data is provided by Catherine Doheney manually.

Finally, we have added a statement to the faculty committee selection form to the effect that if a faculty member does not submit a form, the committee will automatically assign him/her to a

July 24, 2006.
committee. This is the first year we have done this and as expected, many disgruntled faculty contacted us in the fall to let us know they disapprove of this practice. We request that the Executive Committee support us by endorsing this as an acceptable policy. We are also open to any suggestions on how to get faculty to step forward for committee service in a less assertive manner.

The committee would like to acknowledge Ms. Catherine Doheney and her assistant Brittany Mullins for all their support and guidance.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Karen Panetta
Chair, Committee on Committees