

Faculty Governance Steering Committee
Status Report
February 13th, 2009

Dear DePauw Community:

At the February 2nd faculty meeting, as many of you know, President Casey presented the faculty with five charges related to Intellectual Life at DePauw. These charges, which arose in large part from campus discussions which took place between August 2008 and January 2009, are to be addressed, in principle, by the May, 2009 faculty meeting. President Casey asked the faculty to find ways to include representation from the School of Music as part of our planning process. He also highlighted the need to seek broad and ongoing input from staff and students.

The FGSC is writing at this time to review the steps we have taken since the February faculty meeting and to outline the process that the faculty governance system will use in the coming months.

After considering nominations from the School of Music the FGSC is pleased to announce that Carla Edwards will be joining the FGSC for the purposes of these discussions. We have also developed plans for ensuring that input is considered from all faculty members (including tenured faculty, junior faculty, and part-time faculty) as well as from staff, administration, and students. Details regarding these plans are described in the "Spring 2009 Process Overview Report." Since no decisions regarding any of President Casey's charges have yet been made by our faculty governance system, there will be much work to do in order to develop responses to each charge this spring. We will need input from all of the constituencies on campus as we move forward.

As a first step subsequent to the February faculty meeting two forums were held for voting members of the faculty during the week of February 9th. Senior administrators with voting privileges agreed to refrain from attending these meetings. We realize that these meetings excluded the voices of non-voting part-time faculty members, voices that we are committed to hearing in the coming months. However, before investing significant time in a process that will eventually necessitate a faculty vote, we needed to take the pulse of the voting faculty.

During the faculty forums and in subsequent e-mails many views have been expressed. Some of these views have reflected on the process that has transpired since August, 2008. Other views have offered advice about how we can move forward. And still others have addressed specific charges. The majority of feedback we have received has been supportive and has called for the faculty governance system to move forward.

While most faculty members expressed enthusiasm for addressing President Casey's charges several points of concern were also raised. For example, some faculty members expressed concern that faculty workload issues were not prominently on the table. The FGSC is committed to the notion that everything remains on the table and will communicate this to the administration.

There was also some concern expressed that our process was moving too quickly and that the process is not sufficiently informed by study of relevant literature and data. On the other hand, some faculty members have pointed out that this process has actually been going on at least since a 1997 Task Force on General Education raised many of the issues that are still being debated today. We have set up a Moodle site to provide access to relevant literature, both that which was generated outside of DePauw as well as internal historical documents such as the report from the 1997 Task Force on General Education, along with a revised preface to that report written by many of the report's original authors to set the report in the context of the current discussions.

We look forward to hearing your ideas in the coming weeks.

Dave Berque
Carla Edwards
Bridget Gourley
Brian Howard
Marcia McKelligan
John Schlotterbeck
Greg Schwipps
Rebecca Upton