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Report on the 2010 Illinois Wesleyan University Shared Governance Survey

IWU Chapter of the AAUP

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Conducted by the Illinois Wesleyan Chapter of the American Association of University Professors

1. Introduction

The Illinois Wesleyan University (IWU) Chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) conducted a survey on shared governance at IWU in January of 2010. This survey was adapted, with minor modifications, from Keetjie Ramo's "Indicators of Sound Governance,"[2] which the AAUP's Committee on College and University Government (Committee T) has approved as a tool for assessing the extent to which practices at an institution comport with national standards for shared governance in higher education. The main modification of the survey was to include the option of indicating that a participant did not have enough information to answer a specific question. The purpose of this modification was to accommodate a change in the intended audience of the survey. The survey was designed to be administrated to faculty "who are experienced in governance." However, we decided to modify the survey in the way outlined above to be able to administer it to all faculty, which we believe to be appropriate due to the governance culture at IWU. For instance, a large percentage of the faculty actively participates in governance, and there are regular meetings of the full faculty.

All full-time faculty members were invited by e-mail to participate in the survey, which was hosted at surveymonkey.com. The survey was completely anonymous; no identifying information of survey participants was made available to us, although the survey host stored IP addresses of participants so that the survey could not be completed repeatedly from the same computer.

The Chapter's request to have the university administer the survey was denied by Provost Cunningham, with an indication that she would have preferred that the survey be administered only to former chairs of major committees. We thank the Illinois Conference of the AAUP for a Chapter Development Grant that was used to pay for the surveymonkey.com membership fee.

2. Participation

During the 2009-2010 Academic Year, the university had approximately 180 full-time faculty according to the Office of Institutional Research and Planning. The number of participants of the survey was 77 (43%). Of the 57 participants who chose to disclose their tenure status 45 (79%) indicated that they were tenured and 12 (21%) that they were untenured. Of the 50 participants who indicated what

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[1] The author would like to thank Meghan Burke, Mignon Montpetit and Michael Thompson for comments on earlier drafts of this report.
[2] http://www.aaup.org/NR/rdonlyres/8074D67D-36D7-467C-97D8-0542A542DFC3/0/tsurvey.pdf

division they belong to 17 (34%) indicated that they were from the Natural Sciences, 11 (22%) from the Humanities, 7 (14%) from Business/Economics, 6 from the Social Sciences, 5 (10%) from Art/Music/Theatre, and 2 (4%) each from the Library and Nursing/PE.

3. Summary of Results

For each of the following 36 questions, participants were asked to check:

- "True" if the statement is true of governance practices or climate at IWU with rare exceptions;
- "More True than False" if the statement is more true than false of governance practices or climate at IWU;
- "More False than True" if the statement is more false than true of governance practices or climate at IWU;
- "False" if the statement is False with regard to governance practices or climate at IWU with rare exceptions; and
- "Insufficient Information to Answer Question" if they didn't feel that they had sufficient information to answer that question.

The first four possible answers were taken from the original survey instrument, while the fifth was added for this particular survey as outlined above. The survey also permitted participants to skip questions. To present the results of the survey, we computed the mean answer score by assigning the numerical values 4 to True, 3 to More True than False, 2 to More False than True, and 1 to False. Hence the range of the mean is 1.0 to 4.0. Neither skipping the question nor choosing "Insufficient Information to Answer Question" was used to compute the mean. In addition to the mean score, we give the number of participants who selected one of the four answers for each question (*n*) and the standard deviation (*SD*).

In addition to the numerical analysis of the answers provided, we have also included a number of comments that participants could leave at the end of each page of questions. The comments were selected to be representative of some but not necessarily all comments that were relevant to a particular question.

3.1 Areas of Primary Faculty Responsibility
In a number of areas of faculty governance identified as central by the AAUP, IWU fares very well according to the responses to the survey. All of the responses to the following questions received relatively high scores compared to other questions in the survey. These responses indicate that in the areas where the faculty has primary responsibility (such as curriculum or promotion and tenure), the faculty sets the relevant policies, selects faculty members to serve on the relevant committees, and makes recommendations that are rarely, if ever, overturned by the administration or the board.

Faculty committees largely determine standards and criteria for retention, promotion, and tenure.	*Mean* = 3.6 *SD* = 0.6 *n* = 59
The president and governing board avoid overturning faculty judgments in those areas in which the faculty has primacy (i.e., curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction, research, faculty status, and those aspects of student life that relate to the educational process).	*Mean* = 3.6 *SD* = 0.6 *n* = 53
Faculty committees determine educational policy, curriculum design, curriculum review, and standards and procedures for evaluating teaching and scholarly production.	*Mean* = 3.5 *SD* = 0.6 *n* = 60
Recommendations of faculty committees largely determine the nature of decisions regarding the faculty status of individuals.	*Mean* = 3.5 *SD* = 0.7 *n* =54
The faculty sets agendas, chooses representatives and leadership, and establishes procedures for committees that oversee those areas in which the faculty has primacy.	*Mean* = 3.5 *SD* = 0.6 *n* = 59
Since they may administratively overturn or override decisions and judgments of the faculty, academic officers do not have votes on faculty committees and legislative bodies.	*Mean* = 3.5 *SD* = 0.6 *n* = 56
Faculty members who represent the faculty on the governing board, institutional committees, and advisory groups, or who represent the institution to outside agencies such as athletic conferences, are selected by the faculty or are selected by others from a list provided by the faculty.	*Mean* = 3.4 *SD* = 0.7 *n* = 52

The periodic review of the Faculty Handbook and the common use of AAUP standards and policies were acknowledged in the answers to the following three questions. However, a concern raised by a participant in that context stated that

> "The [AAUP] standards are adopted without consideration of the institution[']s needs. [A] more finessed approach to adopting guidelines is needed. Who is to say that the [AAUP] standards are reasonable and/or affordable[?] There are serious doubts in my mind over the motives of adopting guidelines from a single entity."

On the other hand, another participant stated that "an Administrative/BOT commitment to AAUP standards would be comforting!" Given some other comments, it appears that the lack of familiarity with some AAUP policies may be responsible for the relatively low response rate to the second question in the following table.

The faculty periodically reviews and, when appropriate, proposes changes to the faculty handbook, senate by-laws, and similar documents.	*Mean* = 3.6 *SD* = 0.5 *n* = 62

Faculty leaders look to national standards (e.g., AAUP Policy Documents and Reports) for the faculty's appropriate role in the governance of the institution.	*Mean* = 3.5 *SD* = 0.7 *n* = 62
Structures, policies, and procedures for disciplinary and dismissal hearings, grievances, appeals, and allegations of sexual harassment are consistent with AAUP standards for due process.	*Mean* = 3.3 *SD* = 0.6 *n* = 50

3.2 Relationship of Faculty Governance to the Administration and the Board

The following questions deal with the relationship between faculty governance, the administration, and the board. The answers to some of these questions indicate a split of faculty perception of the administration and of the board. For instance, the president's acknowledgement of the importance of shared governance received a higher score than the same question did regarding the board (3.6 vs. 3.2). Furthermore, the answers regarding the board's responsiveness to faculty concerns were relatively low (2.7), as was the level of agreement with the characterization of the relationship between the faculty, administration, and board as "cooperative" (2.9). Several comments related to the board, all of them negative. One respondent stated in their comments that

> "[t]he Board of Trustees often seems to treat faculty input and opinion with little more than contempt."

Another respondent indicated that

> "Before this last year, I believed that faculty efforts on advisory boards were important. Now with decisions made by the Board of Trustees without regard for faculty/staff opinion it seems that these efforts are a waste of time."

Regarding the role of the faculty in the selection of the president, a faculty member indicated that

> "I have served on a Presidential search committee. The Board accepted the idea that faculty should be part of that committee, and faculty opinion was respected, but it was made quite clear that should there be a disagreement between the Board and faculty, the Board's decision would prevail."

The president verbally acknowledges the importance of shared governance.	*Mean* = 3.6 *SD* = 0.5 *n* = 58
The faculty shares with the governing board the primary responsibility for selecting a president.	*Mean* = 3.2 *SD* = 0.8 *n* = 45
The governing board verbally acknowledges the importance of shared governance.	*Mean* = 3.2 *SD* = 0.8 *n* = 55

Negotiations and communication between and among the faculty, president, and governing board are carried out in good faith.	*Mean* = 3.1 *SD* = 0.8 n = 61
Formal arrangements exist for regularly and accurately communicating faculty positions and concerns to the governing board, and for regularly and accurately communicating the views of the governing board to the faculty.	*Mean* = 3.1 *SD* = 0.9 *n* = 56
The president and board use established mechanisms to ensure a faculty voice in matters of shared concern, consulting either the faculty as a whole or representatives who have been selected or approved by the faculty.	*Mean* = 3.0 *SD* = 0.8 *n* = 56
Relationships between the faculty, academic administrators, and governing board are cooperative.	*Mean* = 2.9 *SD* = 0.7 *n* = 60
Given reasonable time, the governing board responds expeditiously to faculty concerns and to the need for action on institutional issues.	*Mean* = 2.7 *SD* = 0.9 *n* = 55

3.3 Governance Climate

The following questions relate to the climate in which faculty governance is conducted at IWU. The responses to these questions indicate that while faculty believe that they can express dissenting views on governance without reprisal (3.4), fewer agree that the campus climate supports a diversity of opinions (3.0). With respect to the latter point, a respondent indicated that "[t]he problem or restraint on diversity of views is the faculty, not the administration or the board."

Faculty members can express dissenting views on governance without reprisal.	*Mean* = 3.4 *SD* = 0.7 *n* = 56
Faculty members view participation in shared governance as a worthwhile faculty responsibility.	*Mean* = 3.2 *SD* = 0.8 *n* = 62
The campus community fosters participation and leadership by women, persons of color, part-time faculty, and members of other underrepresented groups.	*Mean* = 3.1 *SD* = 0.8 *n* = 60
The campus climate supports a diversity of opinions, schools of thought, perspectives, and personal styles.	*Mean* = 3.0 *SD* = 0.8 *n* = 64

3.4 Concerns about Governance Practices
The following questions relate to governance practices at IWU. The responses to these questions indicate some concerns in these areas. In particular, concerns are raised about the impact of faculty governance on improvements in the faculty's working conditions (2.8) and IWU's support of faculty governance through

workload adjustments or development of governance skills (2.7). Potentially related points are concerns about timely access to information needed to make informed recommendations (2.7) and concerns about adequate time given to faculty representatives to consult with their constituents (2.9). One participant stated that
> "Faculty reps especially those on CUPP do not always consult with their constituents. More needs to be done about this."

Given reasonable time, the faculty responds expeditiously to requests from the administration or governing board for recommendations and action on institutional decisions.	*Mean* = 3.1 *SD* = 0.8 *n* = 59
The faculty has a voice regarding the nature and goals of relationships with outside entities such as accrediting bodies, athletic conferences, etc.	*Mean* = 3.1 *SD* = 0.8 *n* = 40
Faculty representatives to the faculty committees, institutional committees, and other representative bodies keep their constituents informed of the agendas of those bodies and solicit constituents' views whenever appropriate.	*Mean* = 3.1 *SD* = 0.9 *n* = 59
Faculty committees largely determine policies and decisions concerning those aspects of student life that relate to the educational process.	*Mean* = 3.0 *SD* = 0.8 *n* = 53
Faculty representatives to institutional committees, advisory boards, and the governing board have adequate time to consult with their constituents before voting or making recommendations on important issues.	*Mean* = 2.9 *SD* = 0.9 *n* = 53
The faculty's participation in governance can improve and has improved working conditions for the faculty.	*Mean* = 2.8 *SD* = 1.0 *n* = 50
The institution fosters shared governance by maintaining reasonable workloads, supporting faculty development of governance skills, and rewarding participation in governance work.	*Mean* = 2.7 *SD* = 0.75 *n* = 63
Faculty members have timely access to the information they need to make informed decisions or recommendations on institutional matters.	*Mean* = 2.7 *SD* = 1.0 *n* = 58

3.5 Promotion and Tenure

The following three questions indicate concerns about the promotion and tenure process. As indicated above, there is strong agreement that "[f]aculty committees largely determine standards and criteria for retention, promotion, and tenure" (3.6). However, fewer participants agreed that the faculty renders recommendations in faculty personnel matters responsibly and through established procedures (3.2). The response to the third question below indicates a lack of formal procedures to

give departmental peers a voice in promotion and tenure matters (2.2). A comment that reflects this concern was that

> "PAT decisions are not always consistent with department decisions. Standards are not standard."

The faculty responsibly renders both positive and adverse recommendations in faculty personnel matters through established procedures.	*Mean* = 3.2 *SD* = 0.8 *n* = 53
The faculty determines criteria and procedures for conferring faculty status on administrators, librarians, coaches, and other professionals.	*Mean* = 2.9 *SD* = 0.9 *n* = 51
There are formal procedures at the departmental level to give peers a voice in decisions on the appointment, retention, tenure, dismissal, and promotion of departmental colleagues.	*Mean* = 2.2 *SD* = 1.0 *n* = 54

3.6 Concerns about Governance Policies

The following four questions received some of the lowest scores on the survey. They all relate to governance policies at IWU. The first two indicate that the faculty's influence in the selection and review academic administrators is not considered very strong (2.8 and 2.5, respectively). The lowest score on the entire survey indicates that the faculty does not regard its role in developing the budget as influential (2.0). With respect to the review of administrators, the following two comments express some of perceived shortcomings of the review process:

> "Faculty review of administrators happens too seldom to have a real impact"

> "To my knowledge, the outcome of evaluation of administrators has never been shared with faculty. So how do we know how effective we are?"

In section 4 below, a summary of AAUP policies in these areas is provided and compared to our perception of current practice.

The faculty has a strong influence on the selection of academic administrators.	*Mean* = 2.8 *SD* = 0.9 *n* = 48
Faculty participation influences the evaluation of academic administrators.	*Mean* = 2.5 *SD* = 1.0 *n* = 45
The faculty has an influential role in developing the institutional budget.	*Mean* = 2.0 *SD* = 0.9 *n* = 53

4. AAUP Policy Statements in the Areas of Concern

The following two sections contain excerpts of AAUP statements on two areas in which the response in the survey indicated significant concerns (section 3.6): the evaluation of academic administrators and the influence of the faculty on the development of the budget. In addition, they contain summaries of the existing policies and practices at IWU regarding these topics.

4.1 "The Role of the Faculty in Budgetary and Salary Matters"

The following paragraph summarizes the AAUP's position on the role of the faculty in budgeting matters:[3]

> The faculty should participate both in the preparation of the total institutional budget and (within the framework of the total budget) in decisions relevant to the further apportioning of its specific fiscal divisions (salaries, academic programs, tuition, physical plant and grounds, etc.). The soundness of resulting decisions should be enhanced if an elected representative committee of the faculty participates in deciding on the overall allocation of institutional resources and the proportion to be devoted directly to the academic program. This committee should be given access to all information that it requires to perform its task effectively, and it should have the opportunity to confer periodically with representatives of the administration and governing board. Such an institution-level body, representative of the entire faculty, can play an important part in mediating the financial needs and the demands of different groups within the faculty and can be of significant assistance to the administration in resolving impasses which may arise when a large variety of demands are made on necessarily limited resources. Such a body will also be of critical importance in representing faculty interests and interpreting the needs of the faculty to the governing board and president. The presence of faculty members on the governing board itself may, particularly in smaller institutions, constitute an approach that would serve somewhat the same purpose, but does not obviate the need for an all-faculty body which may wish to formulate its recommendations independent of other groups.

While the Council on University Programs and Policy (CUPP) is constitutionally charged to advise the administration on budgeting matters, most discussions of the budget occur in the Strategic Planning and Budgeting Committee (SPBC), which is not a faculty committee, but consists of faculty, staff, administration, trustees, and students. CUPP has three representatives on SPBC. Neither CUPP nor SPBC "participates in deciding on the overall allocation of institutional resources and the

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[3] "The Role of the Faculty in Budgetary and Salary Matters," in: *AAUP Policy Documents and Reports* (Redbook). 10th Edition. 2006: 149-152.

proportion to be devoted directly to the academic program," as the AAUP statement calls for.

While the presence of the visitors to the board on CUPP creates a link between faculty governance and the board, it does not lead to any communication between CUPP or the faculty in general and the board.

4.2 "Faculty Participation in the Selection, Evaluation, and Retention of Administrators"

The following paragraph contains the AAUP's recommendation regarding the review of administrators:[4]

> Institutions should develop procedures for periodic review of the performance of presidents and academic administrators. The purpose of such periodic reviews should be the improvement of the performance of the administrator during his or her term of office. This review should be conducted on behalf of the governing board for the president, or on behalf of the appointing administrator for other academic administrators. Fellow administrators, faculty, students, and others should participate in the review according to their legitimate interest in the result, with faculty of the unit accorded the primary voice in the case of academic administrators. The governing board or appointing administrator should publish a summary of the review, including a statement of actions taken as a result of the review.

At this point, the only faculty involvement in the review of academic administrators is in the review of the Provost/Dean of the Faculty and department chairs/school directors, but not in any review of other academic administrators or the president. Neither the policy for the review of the Provost/Dean of the Faculty nor for department chairs/school directors provides for a summary of the review being provided to faculty.

5 Conclusion

The results of this survey give a mixed picture of faculty governance at IWU. On the one hand, in the core areas of faculty responsibility, there appears to be agreement that we have a strong voice, but in areas such as budgeting, this does not appear to be the case. As one respondent put it

> "Shared faculty governance has been very strong in areas that do not require major financial commitments/decisions; but weaker in areas that involve the allocation of monies. While a faculty committee allocates faculty development monies and faculty participate in financial decisions at the departmental level and on the Speakers Committee, John Wesley Powell

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[4] "Faculty Participation in the Selection, Evaluation, and Retention of Administrators," in: *AAUP Policy Documents and Reports* (Redbook). 10th Edition. 2006: 145-148.

committee etc.; faculty don't serve within governance structures that set the OVERALL campus budget. […]"

This mixed response is reflected in the last substantive question on the survey: "In general, how satisfied is the faculty with its role in shared governance?" Of the 58 respondents, 4 (7%) indicated they were very satisfied, 28 (48%) indicated they were satisfied, 25 (43%) indicated they were dissatisfied, and 1 (2%) indicated they were very dissatisfied.

Joerg Tiede, President, Illinois Wesleyan University Chapter of the American Association of University Professors