

AN OVERVIEW OF UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE

THE FOUNDING GRANT

The ultimate responsibility for governing the University is vested in the Board of Trustees, whose powers are described in the Founding Grant of November 11, 1885, which has been amended on a number of occasions since 1885.

It instructed the Board of Trustees to give to the President of the University the following powers:

- "1. To prescribe the duties of the professors and teachers.
- "2. To remove professors and teachers at will.
- "3. To prescribe and enforce the course of study and the mode and manner of teaching.
- "4. Such other powers as will enable him to control the educational part of the University to such an extent that he may be held responsible for the course of study therein and for the good conduct and capacity of the professors and teachers."

ARTICLES OF ORGANIZATION OF THE FACULTY (ACADEMIC COUNCIL)

As a check on the broad powers of the President of the University, the Trustees, on March 31, 1904, adopted a policy document entitled *Articles of Organization of the Faculty*. That document was largely the work of a Trustee, Mr. Horace Davis, and of Professor Maxson Stillman, Professor of Chemistry. With various amendments, that document of policy persisted until May 17, 1977, as the principal authority for the powers of the faculty.

On March 17 and March 31, 1977, the Ninth Senate of the Academic Council approved a revised and updated version of that document -- *Articles of Organization of the Academic Council*-- which drew heavily from the earlier version. Following that approval by the Senate, the *Revised Articles* were accepted by the Board of Trustees on May 10, 1977.

The 1904 version of the Articles provided for the following:

1. An Academic Council in which the powers and authority of the University Faculty were vested.
2. An Advisory Board, elected from the full professors of the University, with duties related to appointment, reappointment, and promotion of faculty, and with the right to make recommendations and to tender advice to the President of the University on a broad range of issues.
3. A Committee System, divided into one group called Administrative Committees and another called Academic Committees. The Academic Council was empowered to establish other standing or *ad hoc* committees as the need arose.

The Academic Council elected ten of its members to serve, along with the President, Vice President, and Registrar, on the Executive Committee of the Council. Among its other duties, the Executive Committee had the responsibility of appointing Academic Council members to serve on the Academic Committees.

With surprisingly few modifications, the structure of the President, Academic Council, Advisory Board, and Executive Committee served the needs of the University from 1904 until the late 1960s.

By the late 1960s, however, the size of the faculty had grown considerably, and the Academic Council had become so large a body that it found itself unable to transact business conveniently and expeditiously, particularly at the time of the disorders arising from the war in Vietnam.

THE SENATE OF THE ACADEMIC COUNCIL

The perceived shortcomings of the Academic Council as a deliberative and legislative body led to a movement in the faculty to establish a representative Senate of the Academic Council in which, with provisions for review of Senate decisions, the power of the Academic Council was to be vested. The first Senate of the Academic Council was convened in Autumn Quarter 1968-69.

The *Charter of the Senate*, approved by the Academic Council on 4/11/68, and ratified by the Board of Trustees on 5/16/68, with subsequent amendments, provides a mechanism whereby fifty-five members of the Council are elected by various Electoral Units to serve staggered two-year terms on the Senate. It further provides for a Chair of the Senate, a Steering Committee of the Senate, and a Committee on Committees. The *Charter* also provides for 15 *ex officio* members of the Senate without the right to vote. Senate *Rules* provide for three standing guests from the Associated Students of Stanford University and a representative from the emeriti faculty. These standing guests also are without the right to vote, but like *ex officio* members, have the right to speak.

For any given academic year, the Senate elects a Chair and four other of its members to serve with the President or a designee of the President (usually the Provost), as the Steering Committee of the Senate for that academic year. The first duty of the Steering Committee-Elect is to appoint, from the members of the Senate-Elect, a Chair and six other members to serve as the Committee on Committees of the Senate.

With the establishment of the Senate, the Executive Committee of the Academic Council was abolished. No single body now performs the various duties previously carried out by the Executive Committee. The Steering Committee performs some of the duties of the Executive Committee, notably in receiving reports from committees and in planning subjects for study and discussion by the Senate. The Committee on Committees performs other duties previously carried out by the Executive Committee, in particular, in appointing and nominating Academic Council members to serve on committees and in recommending the establishment of new committees and the discontinuance of existing committees.

The Senate, following its own Senate *Rules* adopted in 1969, refrains from taking any action, in the first instance, on any matter which is properly the concern of any of the Committees of the Academic Council. Only after the matter has been considered and reported to the Senate by the appropriate Council Committee does the Senate take action—generally by acting on a recommendation from that committee. For the enactment of legislation governing the scholarly and teaching work of the University, the Senate of the Academic Council is now the authorized body, but there are extensive provisions whereby any decision of the Senate can be challenged and made the subject for review and referendum by the Academic Council.

The *Charter of the Senate* provides that the meetings of the Senate shall be open to all members of the Academic Council and that all decisions of each Senate meeting and the votes by which the decisions were taken shall be reported in writing to every member of the Academic Council within seven days after the meeting. The issue of *Stanford Report* published the week following a Senate meeting always includes that *Report of Senate Actions*.

THE COMMITTEE STRUCTURE OF THE UNIVERSITY

The system of committees now in force in the University springs from an action of the Senate in September 1969, following the approval of the Report on the Committee Structure of the University. By and large, the pattern of earlier days is maintained. Those committees which previously had been called Academic Committees and had dealt with the scholarly work and teaching in the University, now have their counterparts, in various forms, as the standing Committees of the Academic Council. The committees which had been known as Administrative Committees have in large measure been replaced by University Committees, though there are, in addition, a number of administrative and advisory groups. From time to time the President of the University appoints Commissions or Task Forces, which are bodies designed to respond to specific instructions and requests from the administration. They generally are assumed to be temporary bodies. Committees of the Academic Council formulate policy on all matters related to teaching and research, the central functions of the University. These committees are charged and appointed by the Senate of the Academic Council through the work of its Committee on Committees. The policies formulated by Council committees do not take effect until approved by the Senate of the Academic Council.

In Spring of 1992, the Senate established a new Planning and Policy Board. The Board comprises nine voting members. The candidates are nominated by the Committee on Committees from among the entire Academic Council membership. The PPB's charge includes articulating the academic vision and mission for the University, examining long-term trends and their implications for the University, and formulating academic policy issues for consideration by the faculty.

University Committees, which deal largely with matters related to those activities that support the teaching and scholarly work of the University, report to the President. These committees formulate recommendations for policy, but such recommendations do not take effect until and unless approved by the President. Charges to University Committees are written by the President, who also appoints the Chairs of University Committees. Faculty and student members of these committees are appointed by the President on nomination of the Committee on Committees (in the case of Academic Council members) or of the ASSU Senate Committee on Nominations (in the case of student members). From time to time University Committees deal with matters that are of particular interest to the Senate of the Academic Council. On such occasions, the Senate may request a report and the President may invite that University Committee to present a report to the Senate. Such reports are not subject to Senate action.

There are six administrative panels at Stanford, five of which are for the purpose of ensuring compliance to external regulations and internal policy regarding hazardous agents and human or laboratory subjects used in the course of University teaching or research activities. These panels review and approve proposed procedures involving agents or laboratory subjects, draft relevant new policies, and frequently oversee the implementation of such policy. The President appoints the members of these panels which report to him through the Vice Provost and Dean of Research and Graduate Policy. The composition of these panels, frequently mandated by external regulatory agencies, include faculty, staff, students, and in some cases, public members who have expertise in the relevant areas.

Each year the Office of the Academic Secretary to the University Provides on its Web-site the memberships of the Senate, the Advisory Board, and all Academic Council and Senate committees as well as University-wide bodies, committees and panels. At the level of School and department there are many other advisory and policy-making committees, but these do not fall within the province of the Senate of the Academic Council. Committees at all levels are sufficiently numerous, and the demands on the time of persons serving on them sufficiently heavy, that the Committee on Committees has recommended that any individual's concurrent service should be limited to one University-wide committee, one School-wide committee, and one departmental committee.

The Academic Secretary's Office web site contains additional information about faculty governance, committee charges and rosters, current (and recent past) Senate agendas with links to the documents distributed to Senate: <http://facultysenate.edu>