

A/S STANDARD STRUCTURE FOR STANDING COMMITTEES

Preamble:

The terms of reference for the Arts and Science Executive Committee require it "To review periodically the Arts and Science committee structure, and to make recommendations for the modification of same to Arts and Science Council." In that spirit, the Executive Committee has prepared a revised standard structure for Arts and Science standing committees along with recommendations for specific committees regarding terms of reference and, in some cases, non-standard structures. The main principles guiding the structural recommendations have been those of elected divisional representation, continuity of membership, and student representation. The terms of reference have generally been updated to reflect the changing nature of the Faculty and of University committee and governance structures.

Committee Structure:

The standard structure for standing committees in the Faculty of Arts & Science is as follows:

- Six (6) Faculty academic staff members, elected by Arts & Science Council, for staggered three-year terms ensuring continuing divisional balance (2 members each from Sciences, Social Sciences, and Humanities). Terms normally commence on September 1.
- The Dean or the Dean's designate (ex officio; designation is normally to an Assistant or Associate Dean)
- Two (2) student members of Arts & Science Council, appointed by the Executive Committee for one-year terms (The Students' Union normally provides nominations).

The Chair is to be elected, for a one-year term, by the committee from among the committee's members, all of whom are eligible for the role.

All committee members are eligible to vote in meetings although the Dean (or Dean's designate) normally exercises this right only in the event that a committee's vote is tied.

Quorum is 50% of the committee members plus one although the Chair shall endeavor to ensure the greatest possible participation.

Meetings are normally called by either the Chair or the Dean (or Dean's designate); however, any two other members of the committee may jointly call for a meeting.

A Faculty academic staff member going on leave shall be replaced by another Faculty academic staff member from the same division for the duration of the leave.

A Faculty academic staff member resigning from a committee shall be replaced on the committee, as soon as time permits, by another Faculty academic staff member from the same division for the balance of the resigning member's term.

If the Chair is unavailable for a meeting, the committee shall elect an Acting Chair for the duration of the meeting.

A standing committee is free to draw on the expertise of people from outside the committee as it sees fit; such people will not have voting rights.

A standing committee must meet at least once a year and must report to Arts & Science Council at least once a year, by the May meeting at the latest.

[Transition period: The Arts & Science Executive Committee shall establish a procedure to initiate the staffing of committees in a way that is consistent with balanced divisional representation and continuity.]

Election process:

Faculty academic staff members are elected to standing committees by Arts & Science Council in a meeting in the spring semester preceding the commencement of new terms.

- The Executive Committee normally acts as the nominating committee for standing committees and presents those nominations to Arts & Science Council.
- A motion is made "That Arts & Science Council proceed to elect members to Standing Committees of Arts & Science by a show of hands."
- Each standing committee is considered in turn and further nominations are invited from the floor of Council. Where there are more nominations than available positions, an election is held.
- All Arts & Science elections use approval voting (motions #2949 and #2950, Meeting #152, October 30, 1991) which means, in short, that a voter can vote for as many candidates as he or she approves, including all or none of the candidates.

Undergraduate students are appointed to standing committees by the Executive Committee (normally on the recommendation of the Student's Union) after they have been appointed to Arts & Science Council by General Faculties Council (on recommendation by, in turn, the Students' Union and Arts & Science Council). These appointments normally happen at the beginning of the fall semester.

Rationale:

The general model for the structure of standing committees in the Faculty of Arts & Science includes the principles of elected divisional representation, continuity of membership, and student representation. Some further principles on which this structure is based are:

- (a) The Dean should always have representation on a standing committee, for organizational awareness and communication if nothing else. This follows the usual tradition of the presiding officer of an organization having ex officio membership on all standing committees.
- (b) Continuity is important so that there is a shared memory within the committee of recent deliberations. Consequently, a three-year standard term for faculty members is proposed. The staggered terms of the faculty members are also meant to ensure that the majority of the faculty members on the committee will be experienced committee members. Currently, most committees have only two-year terms. However, as the first year is often the period where the committee members are becoming familiar with their role, it seems wasteful to spend only one following year as an experienced committee member. Student members, as they belong to an inherently transient group, are elected for one-year terms. However, there is no reason why an interested student could not serve consecutive terms, and such consecutive terms are encouraged. Consecutive student appointments could easily be managed (as has happened in the past) through the Students' Union nomination process.
- (c) The election process, made explicit here, follows the current election process for most Arts & Science standing committees (the Executive Committee does not act as the nomination committee for itself and is currently elected by secret (electronic) ballot rather than a show of hands at a Council meeting).
- (d) The inclusive term "Faculty academic staff member" is used throughout to indicate that both Faculty Members and Academic Assistants are eligible to serve on Arts & Science Standing Committees.