Chapter 36, Wisconsin Statutes, delegates to the faculty "primary responsibility for academic and educational activities and faculty personnel matters." It also provides for the participation of faculty in the general governance of their institutions and empowers them to organize themselves in the manner of their choosing to discharge both their primary and consultative responsibilities.

Since merger, the faculties of the several institutions have without exception organized themselves at the institutional level in ways designed to carry out their responsibilities under state law and Regents and institutional policies. However, questions have repeatedly arisen concerning the assumptions, principles, and operating procedures that would effectively relate faculty governance bodies organized at the institutional level to Central Administration and the Board of Regents. Since 1971 these questions have been addressed through a variety of informal understandings and arrangements. In 1973 the Board of Regents, upon recommendation of President Weaver, established the Interim Faculty Consultative Council. This body, consisting of representatives or designees of the senates, university committees, or senate executive committees of the several institutions, has served as a link to support better communication between the System and the institutional faculties.

While these arrangements have worked reasonably well in most situations, they suffer from two inherent disabilities: (a) they do not provide a formal statement of the "appropriate procedures" for faculty-administration relationships in System policy development and decision-making; and (b) they have not undergone any formal process of discussion and ratification by the faculty Senates. This promotes continuing ambiguity as to whether or not these arrangements represent the ways in which the faculties wish to relate to Central Administration and to the Regents. During the past year Central
Administration, faculty senates, and voluntary faculty organizations have
brought forward proposals concerning formal organization at the System level.
The following document represents the emerging consensus on this question.

I. General Principles

A. Decentralization and Institutional Autonomy

Consistent with the intent of Chapter 36, Wisconsin Statutes, the faculties of the UW System believe that the formal agencies of faculty
governance should exist at the institutional level. The faculties do not
seek any continuing formal agency of faculty governance at the System level.
When faculty judgment concerning a particular policy or procedure of the
System is sought on a systemwide basis, it should be sought separately from
each institutional Senate (or the executive body or agency delegated to
act for it) and from voluntary interinstitutional faculty organizations.

It should be emphasized that the System is a federation of
institutions, each of which enjoys the maximum autonomy consistent with the
statutory responsibilities of the Regents and the President for statewide
planning and coordination of Wisconsin higher education. It is proper that
each institution should speak with its own voice on matters of systemwide
policy and procedure, and it is recognized that frequently there cannot be
a single voice speaking for all of the faculties of the several institutions.
When discord concerning a matter requiring systemwide resolution exists
among the faculties, resolution must be undertaken by the Regents in the
best interests of higher education.

B. The Roles of Chancellor and Faculty

Consistent with the principle of decentralization, the statutes
designate the chancellors as executive heads of their respective faculties
and institutions, and each faculty as responsible for the immediate governance
of the institution with primary responsibility for academic and educational
activities and faculty personnel matters. The statute places with the
chancellors the direct and major responsibility for consultation with
their faculties. As heads of their faculties, the chancellors are expected
to report to Central Administration and the Board of Regents the positions
and actions of their faculties as these affect the development or
implementation of System policies or decisions.

Heads of faculty governance bodies or interinstitutional faculty
organizations should at their request be heard directly by the President
and by the Board of Regents on matters that concern the faculties.
faculties, while maintaining these rights of direct communication with the
System, normally consult with their chancellors on matters of System policies
or procedures. Chancellors have the responsibility for informing their
faculties concerning System developments; for facilitating their participation
in such developments; and for communicating the views of their faculties to
Central Administration and the Regents.

C. Consultation with the Faculty

The Board of Regents, Central Administration, and the chancellors
commit themselves to the principle that on matters of systemwide policy
and procedure there shall be full consultation with the faculties and their
representatives. Adequate time must be provided for review by the
institutional faculties prior to action upon or implementation of any
systemwide policy or procedure. It is recognized that all major System
policies are likely to impact on the responsibilities of the faculties.

The Board of Regents, Central Administration, and the chancellors
have the responsibility to take all practical steps to ensure that the
institutional faculty governance bodies, other agencies delegated to act
for them, and insofar as possible the faculties generally, are informed
concerning System policy developments. Faculties should also be kept
informed of avenues available for participation in policy developments, and of the time and place of consideration by the Regents of the policy at issue, or for decision by Central Administration on matters not requiring Regents action.

D. Systemwide Task Forces

The President or Central Administration may from time to time find it useful to establish systemwide ad hoc task forces or study groups. Such groups should be used sparingly, to address issues that are systemwide in nature or that affect several institutions in the System. Task forces or study groups do not create policy or replace the established roles of faculty governance bodies at the institutions.

II. Procedures

A. Consultation with the Faculty on Policy or Procedural Development

1. Time for Consultation. All System documents representing new or changed policies, procedures, guidelines, or directives relating to matters specified by statute or Regents action as among the governance duties of the faculty, shall normally be sent directly to the chancellor and to the executive officer of the faculty Senate of each institution no less than two months prior to the time of proposed action thereon, except that:

If the communication occurs between April 1 and August 1, ordinarily no final action shall be taken on the matter until October. If a document must be implemented or brought for action pursuant to implementation in a period of less than two months, Central Administration shall request more rapid response from the chancellors and the faculties, while explaining the reasons for this request. It is assumed that the faculties will organize themselves in ways permitting unusually rapid review and reaction to documents when necessary. It is further assumed that the President or Regents will hear faculty agencies protesting a request for
quick response on the grounds that the reasons for emergency response
are not compelling.

2. Testimony on Regents Agenda Items. As a matter of policy, the
Board of Regents welcomes testimony from faculty members as individuals,
from faculty governance agencies of the institutions, or from voluntary
associations of faculty members or their agencies, on any matter placed
on the Board agenda for discussion, or for discussion and action.

a. To expedite consideration of the widest range of opinion, the
Regents ask that such testimony insofar as possible be submitted in writing
in advance of the meeting at which the matter is scheduled for Regents
discussion. Such written testimony should be sent to the Secretary of the
Board for distribution to the Regents and to relevant officers of the
institutions and of Central Administration.

b. Insofar as possible, requests to give oral testimony before a Board
committee or the Board concerning an agenda item should be made to the
chairperson of the appropriate committee or to the President of the Board
prior to the meeting. The request should state the item concerning which
testimony is to be offered, and the agency, if any, to be represented by
the person wishing to testify.

Requests to present oral testimony will be honored at the discretion
of the chairperson of the committee or the President of the Board. In
general, such requests from faculty senate or faculty executive committee
chairpersons, or from representatives of major voluntary interinstitutional
organizations of the faculty, will be honored. Regents committee chairpersons
and the President of the Board reserve the right to stipulate the time that
can be made available to any person making oral presentations, and to
constrain testimony that is irrelevant or unduly repetitive of material
already before the Board or committee.
c. To facilitate oral testimony or written presentations by faculty, the Board and Central Administration will observe the following procedures:

(1) When matters of policy or procedure that affect the concerns of the faculty are proposed for Board consideration, information about the time and place of the committee meeting at which the matter will be considered will be sent to chancellors, and to the executive officers of faculties and of agencies delegated to act for them, at least 30 days prior to the meeting.

(2) In the event of a failure to provide such information in a timely way, consideration of the matter at issue will be delayed for a month if possible; if not, emergency inquiry will be made concerning faculty interest in providing testimony between the time of distribution of the Board agenda and the convening of the relevant Regent committee.

B. Formation of Systemwide Task Forces and Study Committees

1. Appointment Procedures. In constituting task forces and study groups, the President or a designee of the President shall solicit nominations from each chancellor with the stipulation that the chancellor shall consult with the institutional faculty prior to forwarding the names. A brief description of the qualifications or expertise of each nominee shall accompany the nominations. While the President will solicit a certain number of nominees from each institution, the institution may provide fewer names if it so chooses. When the task force is appointed, the President shall announce its membership to the chancellors and to the executive officers of the institutional faculties.

2. Membership Considerations. It is assumed that systemwide task forces or study groups, in order to carry out their work efficiently, may not always provide for representation from all institutions of the System. In constituting such groups, Central Administration shall give consideration to: (a) the established expertise of the nominee in relation to the topic
under consideration; (b) the desirability of a balance in the institutional representation on the task force, and on other recent task forces; (c) the desirability of rotating participation in System affairs among different members of the faculty; and (d) the importance of including significant numbers of women and of underrepresented racial/ethnic groups.

3. Institutional review of reports and recommendations. The President shall circulate copies of all systemwide task force reports to all institutions for review and comment. When such reports are submitted to the Regents or to outside agencies, the President shall include a summary of institutional reactions.

C. Systemwide Meetings with Institutional Faculty Governance Representatives

1. Definition of the Systemwide Group and Its Schedule. To improve communication with faculties and their governance agencies, the President shall schedule during the academic year regular meetings with institutional faculty governance representatives from each institution of the System. The faculty of each institution is expected to designate a representative to attend such meetings.

Meetings are ordinarily scheduled on the Tuesday of the week preceding meetings of the Board of Regents, except that in the absence of an agenda sufficient to justify a meeting, the President may cancel any meeting. The President may schedule special meetings on his/her own initiative, or at the request of faculty representatives. At the initiative of the President, meetings are held either by assembling the group in one location or by use of teleconferences.

2. Purposes of the Meetings. Meetings with faculty governance representatives are intended to facilitate communication between System officers and institutional faculties. They provide an occasion for the President or a member of his/her staff to explain policy proposals going to
the Board of Regents, and to respond to questions concerning such
documents; for institutional faculty representatives speaking as individuals
to offer suggestions concerning such proposals; and for institutional faculty
representatives to bring to the attention of Central Administration matters
of systemwide concern, or of special concern to their institutions.

Items may be placed on the agenda of each meeting either by Central
Administration or by any institutional faculty representative designated to
attend the meeting. Upon its own initiative or at the request of any
institutional faculty representative to the group, Central Administration
will duplicate documents pertinent to an agenda item, and assist faculty in
the development of pertinent data.

Upon their own initiative or at the request of the President, each
institutional faculty representative will undertake to bring to the
attention of his/her faculty information and perspectives discussed at
the meetings.

As a special order of business, Central Administration may request
faculty serving as members of the group to bring to a meeting information
on the status of documents circulated for review by the faculty governance
body of each institution. In the presence of such a request, it is the
responsibility of the representative attending the meeting to be prepared
to express faculty reactions at his/her institution on the question being
addressed. However, the group of institutional faculty governance
representatives shall not provide advice or take a position on any issue
in the name of the group.

D. Communication with the Faculty

1. Distribution of Regents Agenda. The Board of Regents office shall
distribute the full or outline agenda for each meeting of the Board of
Regents to the chancellors; to the executive officer of each faculty Senate;
to other agencies designated by the faculties to act for them in governance
matters; and (where such persons are different) to the faculty members
designated to act as institutional governance representatives at systemwide
meetings. Faculty organizations other than those specified above may
request placement on the agenda distribution list, by written request to
the Secretary of the Board; the President of the Board shall determine the
response to such requests.

It is the responsibility of faculty Senate presidents or chairpersons,
and (where such persons are different) of the faculty members designated to
act as institutional governance representatives at systemwide meetings, to
communicate information on Board agenda items of interest or concern to
particular agencies or members of their faculties. It is the responsibility
of each institutional faculty to determine the means of communicating such
information.

2. Distribution of Regents Minutes. The Board of Regents office shall
distribute the summary minutes of meetings of the Board and its committees
to all faculty members or agencies included on the distribution list for
Regents agenda. Responsibility for distribution of minutes within each
faculty rests with the institutional faculty.

3. Public Availability of Board Agenda, Minutes, and Policies. The
Board of Regents office shall distribute to the library of each institution
copies of each Regents agenda, and full minutes of the meetings of Board
and of its committees. These agendas and minutes shall be maintained by
each institutional library at a place to be made known and available to
all faculty, staff, and students.

4. Direct Communication with Faculty by Central Administration. Central
Administration shall maintain one or more regular publications distributed
to all faculties of the System, and shall use these publications to inform
faculty about the time and place of impending hearings or Regent discussions of policies and procedures that concern the faculty. Central Administration shall distribute, in full or summary form, information on important policy and procedural actions taken by the Regents or by Central Administration.

The senior officers of Central Administration welcome opportunities for direct conversation with faculty Senate executive committees, or to address faculty Senates upon invitation by these groups and their institutional chancellors. Direct communication with Senate presidents or chairpersons is welcomed as a means for improving understanding of the intent and interpretation of System policies and procedures or regarding matters on which the institutional faculty and chancellor may have differing viewpoints.