REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE ON DEVELOPMENT OF STRUCTURE TO FACILITATE FACULTY COMMUNICATION WITH STATE GOVERNMENT AND THE PUBLIC

As one unit in a large system, the UW-Madison must have both administrative and faculty agencies capable of communicating concerns and reactions to state government and to the general public. At present, there is no faculty agency having this as its primary responsibility. Recognizing this, the University Committee last spring established this ad hoc committee to propose some structure that would increase the communications capacity of the Madison faculty. Among the principal functions of such a structure would be:

(a) to communicate to state government and the general public the views of the Madison faculty on matters of concern to the University;

(b) to aid state government by facilitating its access to the expertise available within the Madison faculty;

(c) to recommend to the University Committee and the UW-Madison administration procedures for improving faculty communication with state government;

(d) to work toward establishing a more effective public information effort;

(e) to keep the University Committee and the Faculty Senate fully informed on matters under consideration by the legislature and other agencies of state government;

(f) to inform and, when appropriate, seek assistance from the Alumni Association, professional groups, and other organizations concerned with issues crucial to the University; and

(g) to maintain contact and coordinate activities with similar organizations on other campuses on issues on which there are common interests.

In seeking an effective mechanism to increase the faculty's capacity to communicate on matters relating to the welfare of the University and its faculty, the ad hoc committee has held a series of meetings with UW-Madison faculty, administrators, lobbyists, lawyers, and representatives of state government. A number of approaches were considered. The committee's general perspective in evaluating these approaches was (i) that the Faculty Senate, the University Committee, and other faculty committees already provide effective mechanisms for the formulation of faculty policy, but (ii) that existing governance bodies need increased capacity to communicate faculty views to state government and the public. The committee therefore concluded that the best approach would be to create a mechanism that operates as part of the existing faculty governance structure; this agency would aid existing faculty governance bodies in promoting faculty interests and policies. Therefore, we propose the following:

1. The creation of an agency that would be under the general direction of the University Committee.

This approach links the new agency directly to existing faculty governance bodies and guarantees that it will function in appropriate coordination with them.
2. The agency would be staffed by at least five faculty members, including one member of the Faculty Commission on Compensation and Economic Benefits and one member of the University Committee. One member of the agency would be designated as Executive Director. The agency could employ a person or persons to provide secretarial services.

3. In carrying out its tasks, the agency would enlist the aid of faculty members on an ad hoc basis.

One way the agency can maximize its effectiveness is to identify and utilize resources existing throughout the faculty. Indeed, it is contemplated that the agency would call upon many faculty members to participate in communication with government and the public.

4. The agency members would be appointed by, and the executive director designated by, the University Committee with confirmation by the Senate.

We believe that selection rather than election is appropriate, since the agency will serve in an administrative rather than a policy-making capacity. Moreover, to be effective, the agency members must have the ability to work with and be credible to the legislative and executive branches of state government. Selection is the most effective way of identifying and recruiting such individuals.

5. The executive director would be employed and paid by the agency on a part-time basis and would register under state lobbying laws.

Part-time employment of an executive director will give the agency the staffing it needs to work effectively. Since the executive director would sometimes be contacting legislators on matters of direct economic concern to the faculty, he or she should register under the state lobbying law. To avoid any questions of propriety or legality, efforts of the executive director on behalf of the agency should be paid for by the faculty.

6. Funds for agency expenses (including the salary of the executive director) would be provided by voluntary contributions from the faculty, collected through individually authorized payroll deductions.

Contributions of one-tenth of one percent by at least half of the faculty would be necessary to fund the proposed agency's operations.

In order to comply with the law concerning payroll deductions, an employee organization would be formed. The sole function of this organization would be to receive faculty contributions and disburse them for agency purposes. The governance of this organization would be vested in a board of directors consisting of the persons serving as members of the University Committee.

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7. The agency will become functional and payroll deductions will begin
when pledges have been received from a majority of the faculty.

In order that the agency be credible as a representa-
tive of the faculty, it should have meaningful support
from more than half the faculty. (This level of sup-
port would also provide the necessary funding, as noted
above.)

8. There shall be an annual report to the Faculty on agency operations. At
the end of the second biennium following the commencement of agency operations,
the University Committee shall recommend to the Senate whether the agency shall
be continued.

Resolution

Resolved that the Senate approves in principle proposals 1 thru 7 above
and instructs the University Committee to develop and recommend to the Senate
at its first meeting in the fall of 1976 a detailed plan for implementation.

Ad Hoc Committee on Development
of Structure to Facilitate
Faculty Communication with
State Government and the Public

Thomas Chapman
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