1975-76 Annual Report
Faculty Rights & Responsibilities Committee

The FRRC was created as one of several reactions to the removal of tenure from three members of the UW-M faculty and the dismissal of a fourth faculty member, all for active participation in the campus demonstrations following the Cambodian Incursion in the spring of 1970.

The committee conducted its initial business in 1971, holding its first meeting on November 8th. Given the specific circumstances surrounding its creation, its charter forced it to focus on the responsibilities of individual faculty members, while the term "rights" remained an irrelevant part of its title.

The function of the committee was to engage in fact-finding and to hear cases of misconduct alleged against individual faculty members that might lead to their dismissal. Its charter directed it to dismiss complaints to refer them to other agencies of the university, or to recommend to the chancellor the dismissal of the faculty member against whom charges had been brought.

In its first year of operation the committee established rules of procedure that have been followed with but minor modification in each year up to the present. With its creation, however, the FFRC soon attracted a range of complaints that could be lodged with no other committee within the university structure. Several of these complaints made no charges against individual faculty members that might lead to dismissal, but instead raised other questions with respect to the rights and responsibilities of the faculty.

In its deliberations the members of the FFRC recognized the problem. The annual reports of the committee repeatedly have requested the revision and expansion of the scope and jurisdiction of the committee's charter. Faced with cases in which it recognized injustices and problems that were not resolved by other agencies of the university, the committee decided to conduct fact-finding, to hear cases informally, and to make recommendations, in excess of its charter, for their resolution.

Year after year, however, the committee heard nothing as to the implementation of its recommendations. Each annual report requested that the chancellor report back to the committee on the action taken, or his reasons for not taking the recommended action. Until this year no response was obtained from the chancellor.

At their first meeting this year, after holding sessions through the summer on a case that still is unresolved and outstanding, the members of the committee decided, before accepting
any new business, to review the open cases brought in previous years and to evaluate actions taken or not taken.

The chancellor was contacted and in response to the committee's request assigned Mr. William Winograd to meet with its members to review selected cases that have remained open and unresolved for as many as three and four years. After several sessions with Mr. Winograd it became clear to the members of the committee that the chancellor had not responded to the recommendations of the FFRC because, contrary to our charter, we had not recommended the dismissal of a faculty member, but instead had made alternative recommendations.

Meanwhile, we also had corresponded with and had met with the chairman and other members of the University Committee. It became clear from these sessions, and also from those with the representative from the chancellor's office, that the charter of the FFRC had to be revised to reflect the expanded scope of activities being undertaken by the committee in response to the diverse complaints brought before it. The committee then was charged by the University Committee with the task of revising its charter.

Before beginning, however, additional meetings were held with Mr. Winograd to make sure that the chancellor's office concurred with the new direction and expanded scope of the committee's activities.

In the course of these discussions, however, the members of the FFRC learned that at least four other groups within the university have become audience to complaints of varying kinds, and that the University Committee had reserved for itself the hearing of grievances. Before the committee began the revision of its charter, the chairman of the FFRC was instructed to communicate with the Human Rights Committee, The UW-M Appeals Committee, the Title IX Task Force and the Ad Hoc Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity to arrange to meet with them and with the University Committee to try to rationalize the complaint and grievance procedures within the university.

It should be noted that an Ad Hoc Committee Concerning Grievance Procedures and Policies established by the UW-M Senate in 1973 indicated a need to rationalize procedures on campus for complaints and grievances.

The FFRC is currently involved in trying to rationalize the complaint and grievance procedure. With respect to its own future, the membership feels that under a revised charter the FFRC could become the primary complaint and grievance committee for the university community. With adequate publicity and the office recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee of the UW-M Senate in its 1973 report, all complaints and grievances could be heard initially in the FFRC. There cases could be considered and referred to other agencies where appropriate, and recommendations could be made to the chancellor after investigation.
Alternatively, if other committees are to continue to do a part of the job with continuing jurisdictional confusion, the members of the FFRC recommend that the FFRC be dissolved.

If the first option is to be accepted, and the committee is to revise its charter to become the primary complaint and grievance committee on campus, it should begin work as soon as deliberations are completed with the Human Rights Committee, the UW-M Appeals Committee, the Title IX Task Force, the Ad Hoc Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity and the University Committee.

Given the importance of the task and the amount of work and responsibility involved both in the revision of the charter and in the hearing of cases, the revised FFRC should be viewed as a major committee assignment with its members elected by the faculty. Furthermore, the chair should be given released time as is the case with other major committee assignments.

Respectfully submitted,

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