



Academic Assembly: New Directions?

Shared in Spring, 2011, reviewed in AA's March 2nd meeting,
revised April 21st by R. Lavender



One

- **Use first meeting each semester for Faculty Presentations**

(added following suggestion and broad interest, March 30th meeting)

- 4 Academic Assembly members to present current work or sabbatical reports, as arranged with Provost's Office.
- **Pros:** Re-unites the Assembly and enhances members' understanding of colleagues' professional practices, Otis' variety of disciplines, and the larger context of faculty life
- **Cons:** ?

Two

- **Introduce reports from Faculty Senate, Chairs and Directors, and Provost's Office, and work toward the following improvements:**
- Fix the live feed to more suitably accommodate the Fashion Design members who are across town
- Develop a Web feed that allows Assembly members to join/listen/interact from a distance (*to be tested as of April, 2011*)
- Conduct ALL votes online to save time in the room and eliminate duplicative votes
- Research AA member attitudes and beliefs re attendance, etc.
- Chairs to consider rotating committee work more widely to involve more faculty members in the substance of AA

Two Cont'd:

- Urge faculty participation within each department: Add an Academic Assembly Monitor role to departments to assist, remind, print documents, lead discussions, etc. re AA matters.
- Hold meetings in a smaller space; consider adjusting the number of meetings per year and/or semester.
- **Pros:** Re-unites the Assembly and raises awareness of issues and concerns from varying points of view; re-energizes faculty governance by adding content that has been missing from the meetings
- **Cons:** ?

Three

- **The AA becomes a “representative” body, consisting of department/program representatives entrusted to hear, review, contemplate, report, revise, and vote on AA matters.**
- **Pros:** a smaller group that commits to the faculty governance process; representatives are selected, as an honor, most faculty are thereby relieved of the attendance and content/voting burdens
- Representatives would circulate information within their departments, gather input, synthesize, and report it to the Assembly
- **Cons:** few voices/minds decide matters affecting all; most faculty uninformed and reinforced for that distance from faculty governance; over emphasizes departments rather than unifying faculty from all disciplines

Four

- **Only those in the room at each Assembly meeting vote, and a majority or quorum of that group decides**
- **Pros:** A simple system that honors the faculty who care enough to attend
- Certain items could be determined or voted on in this manner, to honor the AA Committees' work and reduce the number of whole-Assembly votes each year
- **Cons:** Excludes all who care but have other commitments on Wednesdays, or otherwise are unable to attend

Five

- **Count only Nays: voting itself becomes a means of registering disapproval rather than approval, streamlining the voting process.**
- **Pros:** Requires less faculty time and attention to approve AA items; facilitates more efficient AA progress on items requiring a quorum
- Certain items could be determined or voted on in this manner, to honor the AA Committees' work and reduce the number of whole-Assembly votes each year
- **Cons:** Inadvertently reinforces member apathy — "I don't care" becomes the operating norm, by *intent*, as opposed to a condition affecting some but warranting counter-measures