

Question: How should the Faculty Senate handle reports from Special Committees and Task Forces?

Location in the order of business:

Reports from special committees and task forces, that is, not standing committees of the Faculty Senate, are important parts of the work that comes before the Faculty Senate. Such reports will usually come from senate or joint faculty-administrative bodies charged with considering a particular question or issue. As a result, the report of the group (that is, its record of actions and conclusions) will need to be brought to the attention of the Faculty Senate during the New Business phase of the agenda. This is listed as Item 6, and would come before the presentation of written committee reports from the standing committees.

Presentation of the report:

When this part of the agenda has been reached, the president would recognize the reporting member to have the floor to deliver the report of the Special Committee or Task Force.

There should be a reporting member, that is, a person who is responsible for making or presenting the report to the Faculty Senate. It can be but need not be the chair of that committee. That report is likely presented in writing in advance of the meeting. The reporting member would then either (a) read the report in its entirety to the Faculty Senate, (b) read a presentation about the report, or (c) physically deliver the report in its entirety or the presentation about the report to the Faculty President for reading aloud by the reading clerk. In the interests of expediting the process, it is recommended that the report be circulated in advance, and that the reporting member be expected to make a brief executive summary of the report and its conclusions to the Faculty Senate. The report should clearly state recommendations if there are some being made.

The appearance of the reporting member and the reading of the presentation is then the point at which the Faculty Senate has received the report. There should not be a vote to *accept*, *adopt*, or *agree* to the report—doing so is unnecessary (for purposes of receiving) and has the effect of endorsing the report in its entirety.

At this point, the Faculty Senate president may entertain questions from the floor for informational purposes if it is desired. If there is action to be taken on the recommendations in the report, such questions can be deferred to the debate portion of the disposition of the report (below).

Disposition of the report (with no recommendations):

If the report is informational only (that is, no action is required or contemplated), then the reporting member yields the floor back to the president and the Faculty Senate moves on to the next agenda item.

Disposition of the report (with recommendations):

If there are recommendations, then there must be one or more *motion to implement the recommendations*. If the reporting member who presented the report is a member of the Faculty Senate, he or she is the one who makes this motion. There is then no need for a second. If the reporting member who presented the report is not a member of the Faculty Senate, then a member of the Faculty Senate must make the motion, and there must be a second. The maker of the motion is recorded in the minutes; the seconder is not.

Assuming that all of the recommendations are actionable by the Faculty Senate, it is then possible to consider the entire list of recommendations as a single item, to debate their implementation, and then vote on the motion to implement. If there is a desire to amend one or more of the recommendations, it is possible to consider each recommendation individually through a *Motion to Consider by Paragraph*, after which then the new entire list is voted upon in its entirety.

If only some of the recommendations are actionable by the Faculty Senate, it is appropriate to have a series of motions to implement the recommendations. One motion might apply to those recommendations that are actionable by the Faculty Senate. A second might be a motion to refer the unactionable ones to the university administration. The motions should be prepared in advance, and should be made available to the faculty senators so that they see how the recommendations have been divided and upon what they will be asked to vote. It would be prudent to have the final report coming to the Faculty Senate already differentiate these motions, but may not be possible.

These motions are then subject to amendment should senators so propose. They are subject to debate. They are then put up for a vote. This should be done for each motion separately, one at a time.

Additional actions include *lay on the table* (which does *not* make it go away, only temporarily set it aside until later in the year), *postpone to a certain time* (in the event that something isn't fully understood or a question has emerged) or *postpone indefinitely* (which is the way to get rid of the motion).

Following the vote, the matter is over and the Faculty Senate moves on to the next item on the agenda.