

Faculty Participation in the Selection, Evaluation, and Retention of Administrators

The statement that follows, a revision and expansion of the 1974 statement on Faculty Participation in the Selection and Retention of Administrators, was prepared by the Association's Committee on College and University Governance. It was adopted by the Association's Council in June 1981 and endorsed by the Sixty-seventh Annual Meeting.

The Association's 1966 *Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities* rests largely upon the conviction that interdependence, communication, and joint action among the constituents of a college or university enhance the institution's ability to solve educational problems. As one facet of this interdependence, the *Statement on Government* asserts the expectation that faculty members will have a significant role in the selection of academic administrators, including the president, academic deans, department heads, and chairs.¹ As a corollary, it is equally important that faculty members contribute significantly to judgments and decisions regarding the retention or nonretention of the administrators whom they have helped select.

The Selection of Administrators

The *Statement on Government* emphasizes the primary role of faculty and board in the search for a president. The search may be initiated either by separate committees of the faculty and board or by a joint committee of the faculty and board or of faculty, board, students, and others, and separate committees may subsequently be joined. In a joint committee, the numbers from each constituency should reflect both the primacy of faculty concern and the range of other groups, including students, that have a legitimate claim to some involvement. Each major group should elect its own members to serve on the committee, and the rules governing the search should be arrived at jointly. A joint committee should determine the size of the majority that will be controlling in making an appointment. When separate committees are used, the board, with which the legal power of appointment rests, should either select a name from among those submitted by the faculty committee or should agree that no person will be chosen over the objections of the faculty committee.

The role of the faculty in the selection of an administrator other than a president should reflect the extent of legitimate faculty interest in the position. In the case of an academic administrator whose function is mainly advisory to a president or whose responsibilities do not include academic policy, the faculty's role in the search should be appropriate to its involvement with the office. Other academic administrators, such as the dean of a college or a person of equivalent responsibility, are by the nature of their duties more directly dependent upon faculty support. In such instances, the composition of the search committee should reflect the primacy of faculty interest, and the faculty component of the committee should be chosen by the faculty of the unit or by a representative body of the faculty. The person chosen for an administrative position should be selected from among the names submitted by the search committee. The president, after fully weighing the views of the committee, will make the final choice. Nonetheless, sound academic practice dictates that the president not choose a person over the reasoned opposition of the faculty.

The Evaluation of Administrators

Institutions should develop procedures for periodic review of the performance of presidents and other academic administrators. The purpose of such periodic reviews should be the improvement of the performance of the administrator during his or her term of office. This review should be conducted on behalf of the governing board for the president, or on behalf of the appointing administrator for other academic administrators. Fellow administrators, faculty, students, and others should participate in the review according to their legitimate interest in the result, with faculty of the unit accorded the primary voice in the case of academic administrators. The governing board or appointing administrator should publish a summary of the review, including a statement of actions taken as a result of the review.

The Retention of Administrators

A more intensive review, conducted near the end of a stated term of administrative service, may be an appropriate component of the decision to retain or not to retain an administrator. When used for such a purpose, the review should include such procedural steps as formation of an ad hoc review committee, with different constituencies represented according to their legitimate interest in the result; consideration of such added data as the administrator's self-assessment and interviews with appropriate administrators and faculty and students; and submission of a report and recommendations, after the subject administrator has had an opportunity to comment on the text, to the board or appointing administrator. The board or appointing administrator should accept the recommendations of the review committee, except in extraordinary circumstances and for reasons communicated to the committee with an opportunity for response by the concerned parties prior to a final decision. The report should be made public, except for such sections as the board or appointing administrator and the review committee agree to be confidential, together with an account of actions taken as a result of the review.

All decisions on retention and nonretention of administrators should be based on institutionalized and jointly determined procedures which include significant faculty involvement. With respect to the chief administrative officer, the *Statement on Government* specifies that the "leadership role" of the president "is supported by delegated authority from the board and faculty." No decision on retention or nonretention should be made without an assessment of the level of confidence in which he or she is held by the faculty. With respect to other academic administrators, sound practice dictates that the president should neither retain an administrator found wanting by faculty standards nor arbitrarily dismiss an administrator who meets the accountability standards of the academic community. In no case should a judgment on retention or nonretention be made without consultation with all major constituencies, with the faculty involved to a degree at least co-extensive with its role in the original selection process.

The president and other academic administrators should in any event be protected from arbitrary removal by procedures through which both their rights and the interests of various constituencies are adequately safeguarded.

Notes

1. According to the "Statement on Government,"

Joint effort of a most critical kind must be taken when an institution chooses a new president. The selection of a chief administrative officer should follow upon a cooperative search by the governing board and the faculty, taking into consideration the opinions of others who are appropriately interested. . . .

The selection of academic deans and other chief academic officers should be the responsibility of the president with the advice of, and in consultation with, the appropriate faculty. . . .

The chair or head of a department, who serves as the chief representative of the department within an institution, should be selected either by departmental election or by appointment following consultation with members of the department and of related departments; appointments should normally be in conformity with department members' judgment. The chair or department head should not have tenure in office; tenure as a faculty member is a matter of separate right. The chair or head should serve for a stated term but without prejudice to reelection or to reappointment by procedures that involve appropriate faculty consultation (AAUP, *Policy Documents and Reports*, 10th ed. [Washington, D.C., 2006], 137, 139).