Faculty Governance Review

The faculty at California Lutheran University are seeking a consultant to assist in reviewing and possibly revising their faculty governance system. The current governance structure is the faculty as a whole, with various committees carrying out specialized functions. The Faculty Executive Committee (FEC) plans the annual all-faculty retreat, the monthly all-faculty meetings, and oversees the work of the committees. Faculty members are elected to FEC and to a few committee assignments, while the remainder of the faculty are appointed to committees by FEC.

The number of full-time faculty has increased by 45% in the past decade, from 137 to 200. The faculty handbook states that “faculty are expected to participate actively in the governance of the University through regular attendance at faculty meetings.” Faculty attendance posed a problem of achieving a quorum of 50% so the faculty handbook was changed a few years ago to define a quorum as only one-third of the voting faculty.

The desire to review the governance system arose out of a concern for maintaining the faculty as a whole structure with 200 faculty members. The committee structure has also been in place for decades, with periodic changes, and some have expressed a desire to re-design the committee structure. Furthermore, the most recent WASC re-accreditation report recommended that:

“California Lutheran should review best practices in shared governance and consider the university’s faculty governance structure, in light of expansion in graduate programs, the dispersed locations for delivery of programs, and multiple academic units, in order to strengthen and enhance a focused faculty role.”

The Faculty Executive Committee seeks a consultant who can assist in the following steps:

1. Determine comparison institutions (12-15) and data to collect, for example:
   a. Size of institutions (grad & undergrad enrollment; # of faculty)
   b. Structure (# of schools; # of campus sites; # of majors/programs)
   c. Faculty governance model; Faculty leadership roles; Decision making structure
   d. Faculty meeting schedules; Means of communication to faculty
   e. Committee structure

2. Gather the data on comparison institutions, as well as general information about faculty governance models. Present this information to key constituents at Cal Lutheran.

3. Review the Cal Lutheran faculty handbook, noting areas where modifications may be needed.
4. Facilitate faculty gatherings to discuss options and specific elements of different models of faculty governance, and propose new committee options. Compile results of these meetings.

5. Meet with deans of the college and schools to determine what sort of individual governance structures and committees they have, and help integrate them with existing, or proposed, governance structures.

6. If the faculty decide to make changes to the governance structure, draft revisions to the faculty handbook.

Timeline: We would like to start this process immediately, and expect that it will take at least 15 months to complete. Ideally, we would like to complete items 1-3 above in the spring of 2018, items 4-5 in the fall of 2018, and item 6 in the spring of 2019.