

ALL-COLLEGE TRI-COUNCIL

II. THE CREATION OF AN ALL-COLLEGE TRI-COUNCIL^{1*}

Background: One issue that surfaced repeatedly in our conversations with faculty, staff, and students was the need for a structure that brings members of these different communities and the governance bodies that represent them together to address issues that affect the entire campus community. Despite Hampshire’s deep commitment to a participatory system that takes seriously the perspectives of all members of the community, faculty, staff and student governance currently function largely as independent silos, with few formal methods for information sharing or deliberation. Nor does the campus have a governance body where faculty, staff, and students can bring their issues, concerns, and questions and get feedback from all constituencies.

The GTF recommends a Tri-Council composed of the leadership of the three primary governance committees on campus that represent faculty, staff, and students—the proposed Faculty Advisory Board (FAB), Educational Policy Committee (EPC), Staff Advocacy Committee (SAC), and the proposed Student Governance Association (SGA) that we discuss in Section III—to meet at least twice a semester depending on need to address issues that concern all three groups and to be available when community members have issues they want feedback on. The Tri-Council can bring issues it deliberates to the appropriate administrator, including the president, for discussion and perhaps action. We recommend that the first action of this new group is to write its bylaws.

This body would have the following responsibilities:

- a. Meet with members of the administration, including the president, to discuss important campus concerns and make recommendations.
- b. Call all-College community meetings to discuss key issues.
- c. Can mandate that agenda items be brought back to their respective constituent governance bodies for discussion and possible action.
- d. Help the three groups—students, faculty, and staff—to communicate regularly on important issues they are addressing separately that may affect the other groups as well.
- e. Enable the three groups to weigh in on motions/decisions being considered by individual governance bodies that may affect other groups.
- f. Improve communication among the three governance bodies and with the rest of campus.
- g. Provide assistance and guidance to faculty, staff, and students who bring issues, questions, and proposed policy changes to the Tri-Council.

Membership would include the chairs of FAB and EPC plus one additional faculty member from FAB, the chair and vice chair of SGA plus one additional SGA member, and the co-chairs of SAC plus one additional SAC member. Tri-Council meetings should be open to the community, with the option of going into executive session if necessary for particular issues. The governance coordinator would serve in an advisory role, *ex officio*, non-voting.

Rationale—Each group needs separate governance structures to support their initiatives; however, we need governance structures to facilitate communication between “estates”— that is faculty, staff, and students—since currently the three groups have no way to formally communicate with each other on common issues. A tri-council would provide a formal means of communication between faculty, staff and student governance bodies. It would also be a forum for deliberating and making recommendations on matters of concern to the entire community. A tri-council that meets regularly would also be able to surface issues that would benefit from more community-wide input.

^{1*} We note that in the Bylaws Community Council was defined as a deliberative body that included students, faculty and staff, and certainly a community council is what we have in mind. The term “Community Council” now refers to the student governance body, which is why we are here using the term, “Tri-Council.” Throughout this report our use of terms to refer particularly to new governance structures that we are recommending is solely to ease communication; we are not recommending the titles so much as the shape and character of these bodies.