

Appendix III

The following was made available through the Committee's website and was distributed to participants prior to and at town hall meetings.

Summary of the Governance Structure at Western and Our Objectives

The Task

The Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Renewal was struck in June 2015 in response to concerns about the effectiveness of the governance bodies and lack of university community participation in the decision making processes at Western. The Committee's full terms of reference can be found here http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/senate/renewal_cttee/Ad%20Hoc%20Committee%20on%20Renewal%20-%20Terms%20of%20Reference%20and%20Membership.pdf, but, in summary, we have been asked to review governance at Western, with particular focus on collegial governance and the role of Senate. We have been asked to review the constitutional documents of Senate and to consult widely within the campus community. The intent is that the Committee's work and recommendations will lead to more robust and transparent decision making processes and practices.

The Committee has determined that a review of constitutional documents, in and of itself, is necessary but not sufficient in order to accomplish our goals. We are most interested in understanding, through broad community consultation, how the lived experience of governance at Western maps onto our constitutional policies and procedures.

Process

Through the fall, we will conduct the document review and consult with members of the university community, seeking to identify the gaps between stated policy and procedure and actual practice. Following this we will make recommendations that will bridge those gaps, either by more appropriately implementing current regulations or by adopting better practices. To that end, we are planning a series of meetings – large and small – to hear from a range of constituencies, with the hope that members of the community will help us to identify the challenges they experience and propose solutions for consideration. In addition to face-to-face meetings, we have established a dedicated e-mail address to which input can be sent.

Our Governance Structure

Western, like most Canadian Universities, is an autonomous, non-profit organization created by Provincial legislation, in our case, 'The University of Western Ontario Act'. The Act provides for a bicameral structure (two bodies) to govern the institution, the Board of Governors and the Academic Senate. As such, the Act specifies that governance at Western is a shared process and responsibility. As the 1996 review of the Act by a joint Board/Senate committee stipulates, an emphasis on collegial decision making is consistent with "the University's character as a public, collegial enterprise" (Final Report of Review of UWO Act, 1996).

The following is a brief description of our governing bodies:

- The Board has 28 members comprised largely of individuals external to the community, although nine of its members are faculty, staff or students from the university. It is responsible for “the government, conduct, management and control of the University and of its property and affairs.” (UWO Act)
- The Senate has 103 voting members, comprised of 77 elected faculty, staff, students and individuals from the general community.) Further, there are 23 ex officio members including: the President, who serves as Chair, all Vice Presidents and Deans, Principals of the Affiliates, etc. The University Secretary sits as a non-voting member on both bodies. The Act grants the Senate responsibility for academic policy and for specific academic matters, including admission standards, programs of study, qualifications for degrees, examinations, scholarships and convocation.
- Although Senate and the Board are differently constituted, with different areas of responsibility, they are intended to work together to govern the university. Interactions between the two bodies occur as a result of: 1) there being an overlap of members, e.g., Board members sit on Senate and Senate nominates members to sit on the Board, 2) the bodies acting in advisory capacities for each other, 3) the requirement of joint approval of certain strategic and policy documents and decisions.
- Both bodies have standing committees to carry out the detailed work deriving from their respective responsibilities.
- The Act provides that meetings of both bodies are open to the public and are so advertised; however, confidential matters may be discussed in closed-door sessions.
- The Senate and Board by-laws set forth the procedure by which business is brought to each body for discussion and action if required. Those by-laws are supplemented by Sturgis’ Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure.

Detailed information about the governance structure, standing committees, election procedures, etc., can be found on the University Secretariat’s website: www.uwo.ca/univsec. In addition, staff in the Secretariat would be pleased to answer questions or provide additional information upon request.