

**INDIANA UNIVERSITY-PURDUE UNIVERSITY
INDIANAPOLIS
School of Liberal Arts
MEMORANDUM**

TO: Philip Scarpino, President
SLA Faculty Assembly

FROM: Gina Sanchez Gibau
Chair of SLA Nominating Committee, 2007-2008

SUBJECT: Nominating Committee Report

DATE: August 25, 2008

As in year's past, the Nominating Committee this year worked collectively to secure the slate of the ballot for the elected positions. Although we were not as successful in getting more than one nominee to run for each position in most cases, we managed to find willing nominees. This lack of success, of course, has more to do a general resistance from faculty to serve on committees than any lack of effort on the part of the Committee to secure willing nominees. With that said, I wish to acknowledge the work done by each of the faculty members on this committee: Johnny Goldfinger, Martin Coleman, Kelly Hayes, and Robert Rebein.

While this report should not serve as a space through which to air grievances, it is imperative that the Nominating Committee and the Faculty Assembly governing body be made aware of the need for a more smooth transition between Committees from year to year. It is important that Committees be given guidelines with which to follow and conduct their yearly duties; I believe that this oversight must be provided by the Faculty Assembly President and/or Agenda Council. I was pleased to see that progress is being made to remedy this situation this year, having received an email from the Agenda Council regarding present procedure of committees for this coming 2008-09 year.

Given that I am submitting this report later than should be expected, I hesitate to cast any condemnation on the process. However, I do feel compelled, again, to provide information on my experience so that potential pitfalls may be avoided in the future. With that in mind, I offer some suggestions and/or recommendations for future Nominating Committees:

- The designated convener of the first meeting should be notified that they are to convene the first meeting so that a chair can be selected. [Again, this is being remedied this year, from what I have observed]. I did not receive such notification last year. I subsequently looked on the SLA website and discovered that I was eventually designated as Chair.

- The convener should be instructed as to what should occur at this first meeting, which should take place during the Fall semester. At minimum, the first meeting should consist of the selection of a Chair, the review of the charge [from online], and the discussion of potential faculty to be approached for upcoming vacancies. I attempted to convene the first meeting during the Fall semester but had no idea what we would be talking about during it. This meeting was eventually cancelled.
- The convener and/or the Chair should be instructed to review the previous year's reports. This may seem like an obvious step, but I was not made aware that these reports were posted online. The reports previous to this year's have instructions on the need to review the bylaws and how to acquire equitable demographic representation of nominees, which will not be reiterated here.
- The Chair and/or Committee should arrange to meet with the Faculty Assembly President and/or Agenda Council to discuss the election procedure, to perhaps suggest alternative methods. It occurred to me, and perhaps some of my fellow members on the Committee, that there are problems with the procedure; in fact the same "usual suspects" serve as willing nominees, that some departments have never had an equitable representation on the SLA committees, and that some faculty who are simply unknown can remain hidden from our search efforts.
- The latter point also calls into question the process by which Nominating Committee members are selected; I was informed that it should be individuals who have a larger network of people with whom to solicit nominations, or a greater breadth of knowledge due to their length of tenure in the School. This limits the amount of people who can actually serve on this important committee.
- Another matter that should be considered is the politics of faculty ranking. Many junior members of the committee did not feel comfortable having to solicit senior colleagues for nominations. This sentiment should not be hard to fathom, if one considers the example of a junior faculty member soliciting nominations for the Promotion and Tenure committee.

It is my suggestion that the Nominating Committees of the future should enter into discussions with the Faculty Assembly governing body to suggest potential changes that would broaden the process, so that the volunteerism that has been characteristic in the past, be structured in a way that would facilitate a more compulsory process of accountability to the mission of the SLA. The procedure used by the campus Faculty Council, whereby all eligible individuals are listed as potential nominees, is a model which could combat faculty resistance and alleviate the frustrations of the Nominating Committee in having to convince faculty to serve.