

INDIANA UNIVERSITY-PURDUE UNIVERSITY
INDIANAPOLIS
School of Liberal Arts
MEMORANDUM

TO: Bob Sutton, President
SLA Faculty Assembly
FROM: Margaret Ferguson
Chair of SLA Nominating Committee, 2006-2007
SUBJECT: Nominating Committee Report
DATE: September 11, 2007

The committee's work this year was very challenging. We had a very difficult time identifying appropriate names, getting faculty to respond to e-mails and then convincing individuals to agree to stand for election. Knowing of the difficulty in the past, I prepared a memo that was distributed at the faculty assembly meeting and also e-mailed to the faculty listserv soliciting faculty input. Only one person responded to my request for information and that person was a member of the committee.

It is my general sense that the process for choosing nominees requires substantial revision. Listed below are my observations on the committee's work this year and my recommendations (where I have them) for improving the situation:

- When requesting the list of faculty from the Dean's office, the chair should take care to assure that ranks are identified. The file we received did not contain that information and I didn't realize it until too late to be of use.
- Committee members felt we had an inadequate knowledge of faculty, both tenure line and lecturers. This was my reason for soliciting input from the larger faculty community which was not at all successful. Perhaps the committee could solicit input from chairs for names of both lecturers and tenure line faculty who might need (or welcome) service opportunities.
- Given the general guideline that committees be balanced between social sciences and humanities, ideally have gender and racial balance AND not have more than a single person from each department, the committee struggled to identify even a single person for each slot for several offices. Though I am told that there is no bar against more than one person per department serving on a single committee (at least for some committees) my experience on the nominations committee in prior years was that we tried to avoid that. This may simply not be possible in the future. If we abide by this guideline, faculty in smaller departments will bear a proportionally larger responsibility than faculty from larger departments. By way of example, having a single committee member from the English Department means that 30 tenure track/tenured faculty and a similar number of lecturers are excluded from nomination. This is simply not workable given the large number of offices to be filled.
- Given our hopes for diversity senior female faculty, being in rather short supply, probably end up bearing a disproportionate share of committee service especially

since many committees require that the members be at least tenured if not full professors. The committee finds this troubling. I am at a loss to identify a solution to this problem.

- The committee found it very difficult to get faculty to respond to our requests and harder still to convince them to stand for election. This was not true for every committee or office, but it was commonly true. In particular, we had great difficulty getting candidates for secretary and for promotion and tenure. We received several “no’s” for each “yes” we finally managed. Again, this is especially difficult since P and T is limited to (if at all possible) full professors.
- The committee should be attentive to the committees on which lecturers are eligible to serve and invite them to run in greater numbers than we have done in the past. The committee found it difficult to identify potential nominees among lecturers and to know which committees lecturers are eligible to serve on. Perhaps this was a failure of understanding on my part, but clarification would be useful.

These are my thoughts and I recognize they seem rather pessimistic. I should point out that many faculty members were very quick to agree to run for offices when approached and their willingness to serve is much appreciated. My fear is that service responsibilities are poorly distributed and that this is not healthy for the school.