

**Overview of the Changes in Michigan State University
*Bylaws for Academic Governance***

Approved by Faculty Council March 16, 2010

Approved by Academic Council April 20, 2010

Introduction

These actions reflect the Faculty Council and Academic Council's deliberations and actions on the recommendations of the Report by the Ad Hoc Committee on Faculty Voice commissioned by the Academic Senate in Spring 2004, as well as a general review of the *Bylaws*. The Faculty Voice Committee's mandate was to analyze and propose alterations to the academic governance system at MSU. Some of the recommendations of the April 2005 Voice Report proposed changes in the *Bylaws*, while others focused on changes supportive of academic governance but not directly concerning *Bylaw* provision changes. Academic Governance has deliberated on all the Voice Committee recommendations via task forces, study groups and within the Faculty Council since 2005. The Faculty Council devoted its attention to specific *Bylaw* amendments concluding its deliberations and approval on March 16, 2010. Academic Council reviewed and deliberated on the proposed amendments from Faculty Council and concluded with approval of a final version of the document on April 20, 2010.

Overview

While the document before you includes proposed amendments for change in the current *Bylaws*, it is important to note that many of its provisions are unchanged and its basic structure remains a shared governance model within which key roles and responsibilities are played or exercised by Councils of faculty, students, University administrators and a range of University-level standing committees, as is the case within the current *Bylaws*. Finally, there a number of less significant changes, including those of an editorial variety, which are not addressed in this summary.

Specific significant changes are summarized below:

Composition of the Faculty: Individuals with faculty ranks (instructor through professor) appointed in the Health Programs and National Superconducting Cyclotron Appointment systems are specifically included in the description of the faculty. Individuals holding such appointments may be named to serve as the administrative officer of a major education and research unit of the University. However, individuals appointed to serve as a Dean must be a member of the regular faculty.

Title Changes: Changes in title are proposed for several entities within the *Bylaws* including Faculty Council changed to **Faculty Senate**, Academic Council changed to **University Council**, Academic Senate changed to **Academic Congress**, Executive Committee of Academic Council changed to **The Steering Committee**. In addition, the proposed changes in titles of some of the University-level standing committees are as

follows: University Committee on Academic Policy changed to **University Committee on Undergraduate Studies** and the University Graduate Council changed to the **University Committee on Graduate Studies**.

Chairperson Role: Changes in the sources of body chairpersons are proposed. The chairperson of the Faculty Senate will be selected from a slate of at-large faculty representatives on The Steering Committee by vote of the members of the Faculty Senate. The Faculty Senate chairperson also serves in the capacity of chairperson of the Academic Congress. The President of MSU retains a role as chairperson of the University Council.

Role of the Academic Congress: The role of Academic Congress becomes a bit more deliberative and action-oriented. The Congress has a role of endorsing or rejecting items which come before it, before referring the item back to the body originating the topic. Also, members of the Academic Congress who are present at a meeting may, by majority vote, call for an additional meeting but only on items on the original agenda of the current meeting.

Role of the Faculty: While most of the provisions of the Faculty Senate are the same as for the Faculty Council, a separate *Bylaws* section is proposed, describing the role and functions of the Faculty Senate to ensure recognition of the key role of the faculty within the academic governance system

University Level Committee Reporting Lines: An important change proposed in the current *Bylaws* has to do with the reporting lines to primary bodies of the various University-level standing committees of academic governance. Under the current *Bylaws*, all University-level standing committees formally report to Academic Council. Both the University Committee on Faculty Affairs and the University Committee on Faculty Tenure are required to report to Faculty Council as well. Currently, some of the committees have chosen to bring matters to both councils. The *Bylaw* amendments now propose that reporting lines vary depending on the functions of the various University-level standing committees or upon the topic being discussed. The University Committee on Faculty Affairs and the University Committee on Faculty Tenure which deal predominately with issues of “faculty life (tenure and promotion, salary and benefits)” report to the Faculty Senate, although these committees have discretion to obtain feedback from the University Council. The University Committee on Curriculum reports primarily to the Faculty Senate unless The Steering Committee or the University Committee on Curriculum decides that feedback is needed from the University Council before reporting to Faculty Senate. The University Committee on Student Affairs reports primarily to University Council with the exception, when dealing with issues of professional rights and responsibilities of faculty, the Faculty Senate must approve before going to University Council. The University Committee on Undergraduate Studies and the University Committee on Graduate Studies report primarily to the University Council, however on issues of establishment, moratorium, discontinuance and merger of programs, the Faculty Senate and the University Council will be informed of the

committee's consultation with the Provost. The other University-level standing committees report to the University Council. However, on recommendations concerning major academic policies the relevant University-level standing committee is to provide its report or a summary to the University Council as an information item.

The Athletic Council: While retaining its status as an "Other University Committee," it is recommended that this Council be represented in the University Council by its chairperson, who is to become a member of the University Council.

*Summary prepared under the auspices of the Secretary for Academic Governance,
Jacqueline Wright*