



Proposed Faculty Governance Reforms Revised January 2024

University faculty have both the right and the responsibility to co-govern their institutions alongside appointed administrators, who are, in their role as administrators, the direct (e.g., president) and indirect (e.g., provost, deans) delegates of the trustees. This principle is codified in the [Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities](#), which was jointly formulated by the AAUP, the American Council on Education (ACE), and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB). Notwithstanding the hard work and shared commitment of faculty and administrator colleagues alike, in recent years the disempowerment of the Wesleyan faculty as co-governors of the University has been recognized as a problem.

After comparative study of the Wesleyan Faculty Handbook alongside the handbooks of Wesleyan's peer institutions, the Wesleyan AAUP chapter has drafted the governance reforms proposed here to address three absences: 1) of a faculty standing committee on line allocation; 2) of meaningful faculty participation in the budgeting process as it specifically concerns compensation matters; and 3) of a faculty standing committee on budgeting. Thus two of the proposals call for the formation of new standing committees of the faculty; the third proposal calls for improvements to the existing Compensation and Benefits Committee.

A Note on Process

These proposals originated with the Faculty Handbook Working Group of the Wesleyan AAUP chapter. After discussion with the chapter Executive Committee, drafts were circulated to the chapter membership and then discussed and endorsed by the membership at an all members chapter meeting in November 2023.

In November 2023, the chapter presented the proposals to the Faculty Executive Committee for its consideration toward review and vote by the entire faculty as a body. At that time, we also submitted them to the Educational Policy Committee and the Compensation and Benefits Committee for their consultation, since the proposals concern the formal purview of those standing committees. Members of the chapter Executive Committee and chapter Executive Committee attended a meeting of the FEC to discuss the proposals, after which the Chair of the Faculty collected written responses from FEC, EPC, and CBC, as well as the Advisory Committee and sent them to the Wesleyan AAUP Executive Committee in late December 2023. The Faculty Handbook Working Group and chapter Executive Committee reviewed these responses and has prepared this revised version of the proposals for review by FEC in preparation for consideration and vote by the full faculty.

Wesleyan AAUP is constituted by members of the Wesleyan faculty but has no formal role in faculty governance: therefore these proposals are offered by faculty colleagues to faculty colleagues, to be taken up within our internal governance structures. Each proposal is presented in the form of a revision to the Wesleyan Faculty Handbook and is followed by a justification.

1. Draft additions to the Faculty Handbook creating a new Faculty Resources Committee.

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(e) *The Faculty Resources Committee* shall consist of three tenured faculty members, one from each division, three untenured faculty members, one from each division, two continuing faculty members from any division, and one undergraduate student. No more than one faculty member may be from any single department or program. The President and Provost shall be ex officio members.

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(e) *The Faculty Resources Committee* (FRC) consults with and advises the Provost on (i) the allocation of all original and replacement tenure-track and tenure-eligible faculty positions to all university academic programs; (ii) all non-tenure-track appointments other than visiting faculty, including any changes in the title, rank, and status of existing continuing faculty; and (iii) allocation of faculty lines between programs following retirements or resignations.

The Provost shall inform the committee of all requests for tenure-track and tenure-eligible positions received from academic programs following the deadline for requests, and shall make available to the committee all information received about these requests. This information shall be provided in a timely way so that the committee has sufficient time to deliberate and offer recommendations before line allocation decisions are made. In reviewing line requests, the committee will consider: the recommendations of the Provost; the staffing levels; the curricular needs of individual programs; and their contribution to courses that meet university-wide curricular needs and priorities. The chair of the committee shall meet as needed with the chair of the EPC to ensure faculty staffing aligns with educational policy. The FRC will submit a written report on the rationale for its line recommendations to the whole faculty on an annual basis.

The President and Provost shall consult the committee regularly in long-range planning for the number, type, and distribution of all faculty appointments. Any proposal to change the size or composition of the faculty shall be brought by the Provost to the committee for advice. The committee will consider the Educational Policy Committee's curricular rationale and funding plan for new position(s), if applicable.

Justification: Wesleyan University is an outlier in lacking any shared governance over faculty line allocations at the university. This is confirmed by long standing faculty experience as well as a systematic review of faculty governance at peer institutions by the AAUP's Faculty Handbook Working Group. This investigation revealed that most of our peer schools have faculty committees empowered to advise presidents and provosts on the allocation of new faculty positions. For example, Amherst, Brown, Bryn Mawr, Mt. Holyoke, Pomona, Smith, Swarthmore, Trinity, Wellesley, and Williams have faculty committees either solely charged with determining or advising on faculty

staffing levels (e.g., an academic priorities/faculty personnel/academic staffing committee or the equivalent of our EPC empowered to do the same.) Indeed, what stood out in this comparison was how few faculty committees Wesleyan has generally compared to most of our peer schools (e.g., four faculty standing committees at Wesleyan vs. some sixteen at Amherst). Based on these comparisons, along with feedback solicited from colleagues at Amherst, Brown, Mt. Holyoke, Swarthmore, Wellesley, and Williams, a strong case exists for changes to Wesleyan governance by forming a new faculty committee devoted entirely to academic staffing.

In contrast, at Wesleyan, faculty staffing decisions are largely made at the discretion of the Provost and President without the advice or consultation of faculty representatives chosen by the Faculty as a whole or a transparent and consistent evaluation of university-wide curricular needs and budgetary resources. A lack of clarity and transparency about how faculty hiring decisions get made creates divisions between departments and faculty. No longer-term faculty staffing plan exists that is informed by faculty input. As a result, historically, decisions were made by the administration to staff many programs with non-tenure track faculty. Consequently, Wesleyan now has one of the lowest tenure densities in its peer group.

In the past, as part of the faculty's power detailed in the by-laws to "determine the course of study," various committees have been tasked with making recommendations for line allocation (see, for example, EPC's role in making recommendations for 20 new lines that was part of the "Proposed Legislation on Curricular Renewal," 1997-2000). The establishment of the FRC enables the faculty's regular exercise of this vested responsibility.

While the EPC has a remit over the curriculum and new academic programs, it exercises no formal oversight over university staffing levels, and given how overburdened it is, it should not be expected to oversee the FRC. Since the working group also found that Wesleyan has an unusually small number of faculty standing committees involved in shared governance compared to its peer group, establishing a Faculty Resources Committee should be seen as a priority: It will leverage the expertise of the faculty to make thoughtful staffing decisions that align with the longer-term curricular objectives and values of the university, and make the most of limited budgetary resources that can be devoted to staffing.

2. Draft additions to the Faculty Handbook giving the CBC a voice in compensation policy and in the operations of Human Resources, as well as in determining the composition of the compensation peer group and the compensation target within the peer group.

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(d) *The Compensation and Benefits Committee* shall be the delegates of the faculty and professional librarians. They shall consult with and advise the president on the establishment of the University budget as it relates to compensation and benefits. They shall arrange to meet in a timely fashion to consult with and advise the vice president for academic affairs and treasurer during the development

of the budget, in the making of compensation and benefits policy, and in the operations of Human Resources. The compensation target within the peer group, as well as the composition of the compensation peer group, shall be determined with the advice of the committee. The Compensation and Benefits Committee shall consult regularly with the faculty representatives to the Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees. The Compensation and Benefits Committee shall consult on their deliberations with the chair of the faculty, the faculty, and professional librarians and report directly to the faculty and professional librarians. The three tenured faculty members shall serve as the merit appeal subcommittee to provide a hearing for faculty who wish to appeal, by October 1, their merit award. In an appeal, the subcommittee will review all appropriate written material and interview concerned parties as deemed appropriate. The subcommittee will report its conclusions to the appellant and, if appropriate, make an advisory recommendation to the president.

Justification:

Compensation decisions put forward by Academic Affairs are not accompanied with sufficient justification, and the faculty remain frustrated by the lack of meaningful opportunities to discuss and negotiate these issues. Examples are the inadequate raises and bonuses paid out since the salary freeze in 2020-21, raises that are still far short of the inflation experienced over the last three years. A CBC-sponsored resolution passed by an overwhelming majority of the faculty in December 2021 to bring pay in line with the top third of our peer group was ignored by the administration, with the result that Wesleyan now ranks in the bottom third of that group. Rather than paying faculty salaries that allow our salary averages and rankings to rise within the existing peer group, the administration is proposing to devise a new compensation peer group. Compensation policy should be devised with active faculty input, and that should include the advice of the CBC on the composition of the compensation peer group and the salary target within that peer group. The faculty, as co-governors, should also have oversight of Human Resources' administration of compensation and benefits.

3. Draft additions to the Faculty Handbook creating a new Budget Committee.

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(f) *The Budget Committee* shall consist of six members of the faculty, two from each division; one undergraduate student; one graduate student; and one member of staff. The President, Provost, and Treasurer shall be ex officio members.

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(f) *The Budget Committee* shall be the delegates of the faculty, students, and staff providing oversight on all phases of annually budgeting the resources of the university. It serves to review, analyze, and offer recommendations to the President and Treasurer on all budgetary plans, proposals, and priorities. To ensure the committee's involvement in the annual budget process, the President and Treasurer will bring the draft budget for the next fiscal year to the committee's attention within thirty

days of the beginning of classes in the fall. They will meet with the committee to present their sense of priorities among competing claims on the university's resources and seek the committee's advice on how those priorities should be adjusted. At appropriate times during the development of the budget and at the discretion of the committee, the Treasurer will report the university's financial situation since the previous meeting, as well as any changes to budgetary assumptions. At its discretion, the committee may make a review of the draft budget, having access to all relevant information. The Budget Committee may also form ad hoc subcommittees to investigate specific budgetary issues or proposals. The committee shall be free to report or make recommendations on any budgetary matter to the faculty. In addition, the committee may host university-wide forums to allow it to hear the budgetary concerns and priorities of the wider university community. While the committee will consult regularly with the faculty representatives to the Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees, the committee may communicate with the Trustees over the draft budget directly and at any time. Before the presentation of the budget to the Trustees for approval in the spring, the President and Treasurer will consult with the committee on final budgetary allocations and adjustments. The chair of the committee shall meet as needed with the chair of the CBC to assure the budget aligns with compensation and benefits policy.

Justification: Longstanding faculty experience confirmed by a systematic review of faculty governance at peer institutions by the Faculty Handbook Working Group revealed that Wesleyan University is an outlier in lacking any shared governance over the development and composition of the annual budget. As in staffing decisions, the development of the budget is largely at the discretion of the President and Treasurer, with the result that faculty and student priorities are never formally voiced or considered in drafting the annual budget. As a result, highly consequential budgetary decisions are sprung on the faculty as *faits accomplis*, such as the recent announcement to dispense with student loans, among many others. Such precipitous decisions (without even the approval of EPC, which has a formal voice on this matter) will have massive budgetary implications for the longer-term, limiting other spending such as faculty hiring, among many others.

As revealed by the recent audit by Howard Bunsis commissioned by the AAUP chapter, lack of faculty budgetary oversight has resulted in financial opacity and miscommunication, Bunsis showed much larger and growing unrestricted financial reserves, annual operating revenues many millions in excess of expenses, and very robust annual cash flows and cash flow margins since 2017. This is at odds with what the administration has long communicated to the faculty about the budget. Meanwhile, large debts have been assumed for building projects while ever larger parts of the budget go to inflated senior management salaries, which are now among the highest in our peer group. At the same time, academic program budgets have only slowly returned to pre-pandemic levels, and many programs lack tenure-track faculty and administrative staff.

Wesleyan is one of the only schools in our peer group without a faculty budget committee. By contrast, at Amherst a Committee on Priorities and Resources (comprised of faculty, students and staff) is actively involved in the process of annual budgeting, and its views are presented to the

Amherst Trustees before the annual budget is finalized. Similarly empowered committees exist at Brown (University Resource Committee), Dartmouth (Committee on Priorities), Mt. Holyoke (Faculty Committee on Planning and Budgeting), Tufts (Budget and University Priorities Committee), Wellesley (Advisory Committee on Budgetary Affairs), and Williams (Committee on Priorities and Resources). The new Budget Committee will assure faculty representation throughout the annual budget process and keep the faculty informed about budgetary decisions. Such transparency will work to legitimate budgetary decisions and assure buy-in of the faculty when austerity becomes truly necessary in a crisis.