

Progress with Transparency:

Moving Forward While Preserving Greenlee School Values

State of the School Report, 2008

By Michael Bugeja, director

The State of the School is good because of several factors: the support of our operations in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the respect for our research in the Office of Provost, the high regard of our programs by professional journalists and practitioners, the work ethic of the faculty and staff, the generosity of our alumni and corporate partners, and the successes of our students. In the past year Dean Michael Whiteford has awarded the School a new faculty position in journalism. He and associate deans have supported our research and proposed Ph.D. in Science, Technology and Risk Communication. Our faculty members continue to amass contributions in research, teaching and service, with year-end total contributions increasing 21 % over the previous year and 257 % over those in 2004, when we first started keeping records according to our monthly call to the faculty. (Biggest increases annually have been in research and professional service, showcasing the balance of our programs.) We continue to partner on internships and apprenticeships with such companies as Meredith Corporation, Pioneer, Scripps, Principal, SeenOn!, McDonald's, Lee Enterprises, KCCI/WHO-TV, and others, with our students securing spots at such outlets as ESPN and USA Today. And our Advisory Council, benefactors, and friends continue to reward us with record donations each year, providing support for professional development for faculty and scholarships for students. These are attributes that form the mosaic of our success. But they rest on a key base, an enduring component that elevates the Greenlee School over many of our peers, and that is, our commitment to transparency and shared governance.

Shared governance at Iowa State University is articulated in the constitution of the Faculty Senate, “recognizing the central role of cooperation in collegial decision-making.”¹ The concept of shared governance was shaped in part in 1920 by the American Association of University Professors, which called for faculty involvement in the selection of administrators, awareness of budget, role in personnel decisions (promotion and tenure), and development of educational policies. Over time, the AAUP identified areas where the level of shared governance could be measured at the institutional level, including the climate for governance, the president’s and faculty’s roles in joint decision-making, the transparency of communication, the trustees’ or regents’ performance, and the structure for governance.²

We can use these standards to evaluate the level of shared governance in our School, taking into account the climate in which governance is practiced, the level of communication concerning those practices, the nature of joint decision-making, the Advisory Council’s role in our educational mission, and the governance procedures on which we operate as a comprehensive unit.

It is important to put this on record. While our Governance Document, Faculty Handbook and College procedures are based in part on shared governance, our recent success has also included other practices which, upon reflection, the faculty may want to consider for inclusion in any update of our policies and procedures. Moreover, our cohort of assistant professors will begin this year to go through promotion and tenure and, in time, will take expanded leadership roles in service, governance, and other aspects of operation. Thus, we need to secure for their future and the preservation of our culture the tenets we practice officially or unofficially that ensure progress and transparency.

¹ “Faculty Senate Constitution, II. Faculty Senate,” Iowa State University; available at <http://www.facsen.iastate.edu/History/FSConstitutionApproved200602.pdf>

² “Evaluation of Shared Governance,” American Association of University Professors; available at <http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/issues/governance/goveval.htm>

Climate as defined by the AAUP concerns the general atmosphere of the workplace. Ideally, administrators and senior employees should treat each other and especially those who report to them with “collegiality, respect, tolerance and civility” so that interactions and communications among all constituents are “open and carried out in good faith ... in an atmosphere of trust.”³ A positive climate in the Greenlee School is due in part to the dedication of our merit employees and professional and scientific staff. They are models of collegiality and service every day for alumni, faculty, students, and other constituents.

Whenever I see the word “collegiality,” I make a point to define what that is and what it isn’t. Collegiality is not *congeniality* (although the latter sometimes is an outgrowth of that). Collegiality involves the manner by which employees with a common purpose go about their business fulfilling that purpose. Collegiality is an outcome of a healthy governance climate, meaning that the opinion of all stakeholders is sought before decisions are made affecting them. This is why our main motions go through standing committees and why minutes of meetings are required by our Governance Document and Policies and Procedures (II.F MINUTES, Gov. Doc.; IV FACULTY COMMITTEES, Pol.&Proc.). It is a part of our collegial practice, as well, for administrators and committee chairs to consult with any professor or staff member whose work, service, and/or expertise can help inform an issue, enhancing communication in the process.

The director’s role in shared governance is to model it. In addition to working collaboratively with standing committees and following our Governance Document, I have instituted the following practices to promote transparency:

- *Director looks to search committees to determine viable candidates for open positions,* rather than make recommendations to an administrator who decides on the final hires. This only makes sense. Faculty will play a key role with incoming personnel in such matters as

³ “Evaluation of Shared Governance,” American Association of University Professors.

promotion and tenure. Thus, when a director selects candidates who differ from ones recommended by search committees, problems are bound to ensue. Moreover, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences plays a key role in oversight of the hiring decisions and collaborates with the director on approval of such considerations as salary, rank, and suitable fit (based in part on faculty votes in meetings). Safeguards are in place to ensure the best candidates are hired for the right reasons.

- ***Director makes offers to acceptable candidates with search committee members present*** so they can witness negotiations and so new hires realize our culture of transparency. This practice eliminates suspicions when candidates say one thing to faculty and another to administrators, concerning demands for salary, course assignments, or research support. Faculty attending such negotiations also can answer any questions a prospective professor may have concerning pedagogy or scholarship, which colleagues often know better than administrators.
- ***Director works collaboratively with Promotion and Tenure committee*** in helping faculty craft position responsibility statements and create dossiers and timetables for mid-term and comprehensive reviews. The PRS articulates workload and performance expectations; moreover, it represents a candidate's flight plan mapping his or her career trajectory. P&T committees provide valuable input in assessing the suitability of the PRS, noting how duties enhance or detract from progress toward promotion and tenure.
- ***Director does not read accomplishments at faculty meetings nor select which ones to tout and which to overlook.*** Reciting accomplishments during announcements at faculty meetings wastes time. Rather, we solicit achievements and contributions in research, teaching, and service with the call for faculty agenda items, ensuring that all who respond are highlighted in our monthly online newsletter.

- ***Director prepares the agenda for faculty meetings.*** The headline of the lead article of our first Monthly Memo announced: “They’re called ‘faculty’ meetings for a reason.”⁴ That reason is shared governance. We prepare for faculty meetings two weeks before they are scheduled. Faculty should have a clear understanding of what action needs to be taken and what issues addressed, well in advance of any meeting date, allowing adequate time to analyze issues rather than react to them. Nothing undermines shared governance as much as surprise motions that bypass standing committees and appear without warning on an agenda distributed at the start of a meeting. This is why we put out a call for agenda items two weeks in advance, with main motions written pursuant to *Roberts Rules*, including alerting faculty via email about proxies. The format of our faculty meetings is based on procedures common to faculty senates—including announcements, approval of minutes, committee reports, main motions, and new/other business. All three Greenlee administrators have served at one time or another on a faculty senate, learning from the experience, which is why we encourage such service for our junior professors.
- ***Director does not vote on main motions unless there is a tie.*** This is more than courtesy. When chairs or directors vote on main motions, they create over time the impression of a personal agenda. Conversely, on matters where the faculty is truly split, a director needs to make the tough calls in the interests of the School.
- ***Director does not put items on the agenda by executive order or privilege*** but proposes measures through standing committees so as to model shared governance and collegiality.

⁴ “They’re called ‘faculty meetings’ for a reason,” Monthly Memo, August 2003, available from <http://www.jlmc.iastate.edu/news/files/MonthlyMemoAug03.pdf>

- *Director appoints chairs of standing committees to his Advisory Committee* so that senior professors can inform him on process and policies, especially ones that affect budget (such as partner accommodation) and workload (such as professional development leaves).
- *Director respects open records*, putting copies on file in the Reading Room of all memos as well as a notebook of budget allocations and expenditures in the main office.⁵

These practices continue to foster collegiality and help establish a culture of mentoring as well as transparency. The Greenlee School is known throughout the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences as a unit that takes pride in guiding the careers and developing the talents of assistant professors, lecturers, and clinicians. We mentor at several levels, relying on senior professors and peers to enhance our efforts in research, service, and teaching.

The Greenlee Roundtable has been cited as outstanding in our previous re-accreditation site visit, with ACEJMC members noting in 2004 in their report that this forum creates “a post-doctoral group where writing meetings put real deadlines on assistant professors’ calendars for their research.” We cover a range of topics, often inviting guests or senior professors to discuss their scholarship, work ethic, or teaching prowess.

Mentoring enhances professional development. In the spirit of openness, derived in part from the Roundtable, our faculty members felt confident enough to develop their own forums, including “Research Fridays” and “Teaching Fridays.” We bring in top researchers from ISU and the country to share their methodologies with our faculty, staff, and graduate students. This year we founded “Teaching Fridays” in the same format, inviting guests internally and externally to share their pedagogies and classroom practices.

⁵ A summary of this year’s budget is available in the main office in keeping with III.A.2 of our policies document.

We not only believe in mentoring and professional development; we fund it, based on the generous support of our alumni and benefactor base, with each professor receiving an individual account of \$3,000 to enhance scholarship with an additional \$2,000 for efforts in grantsmanship. This investment in our School is due in large part to the work of the ISU Foundation and our 700-plus individual benefactors, several of whom serve on our Advisory Council. That body also is an indicator of shared governance; its members do not interfere with our processes and procedures but serve as mentor to me and other administrators throughout the institution. Because they rank among the most accomplished of our alumni and friends, Council members also serve as unofficial adviser to professors and students, informing us about issues in the business world that may affect our graduates. They also visit our classes as guest lecturers and our student organizations as guest speakers, conduct roundtable sessions on media issues, and provide feedback on internships, class projects, and other academic assignments.

The Council has helped shape the advising culture at the Greenlee School. Many members remember that culture from the days of former chair Jim Schwartz when teachers had an open-door policy and guided careers. In fact, one of our most successful alumni, Roy Reiman, who sold his publishing empire for \$760 million, wrote about how his adviser Harry Heath helped keep him in journalism when he wanted to switch majors to veterinary medicine. In his memoir, *I Could Write a Book*, Reiman details how Heath devised a plan of study that included required courses in veterinary medicine and journalism, so that Reiman could graduate on time, and then enrolled him in a magazine course that challenged students to publish.⁶ If a student placed three stories in magazines, he or she got an “A.” Reiman published 27 magazine stories from that one class and went on to found a media company that reached 15 million subscribers. This anecdote so inspired

⁶ *I Could Write a Book*, VISIONS magazine, Spring 2006, available from <http://visions.isualum.org/spring06/alumniprofile4.asp>.

Public Document

Lou Thompson, the chair of our Advisory Council, who also had Heath as an adviser, that he established an award in his former professor's name along with providing a \$2,000 gift to faculty members nominated and selected by our Student Advisory Council.⁷ This is an example of how the Council helps us safeguard Greenlee values that have endured for generations.

The role of advising was emphasized by Susanne Shaw in a talk at the August convention of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. Shaw, as you know, not only is a professor at the University of Kansas' William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications; she is the director of the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications and this year's winner of the Gerald M. Sass Award for Distinguished Service to our disciplines.

In accepting that award, Shaw spoke about the role of advising in journalism education.⁸ She noted that professional advisers, such as we have on our Council, do more than their share of advising in many journalism schools. "This is not necessarily bad," she said, "but faculty members often don't take career or academic advising as seriously as they should because there is little reward for them. Good academic advising is hard work, and it is more than simply selecting what classes a student plans to take the next semester. It is faculty talking with students about career plans, internships, and courses in the liberal arts that will complement a journalism education."

Shaw also noted that when the Council had 12 standards for accreditation, there was a separate one, Standard 4, pertaining to student records and advising. "Now, with the nine standards, academic advising is part of Standard 6: Student Services. I am not sure that the quality of academic advising gets as much attention from site teams as it should." We will be sure to emphasize our commitment to advising when our site team visits us next academic year.

⁷ Assistant Professor David Bulla won the award in 2006; Professor Eric Abbott won it in 2007.

⁸ A copy of Susanne Shaw's entire speech is reserved in our Reading Room. It contains important information about reaccreditation and assessment as well as views on the role of advising.

I will conclude by speaking briefly about our re-accreditation. I am very proud of our collective accomplishments. We have worked for more than five years at improving our internship coordination and research, and we are looking forward to the ACEJMC visit and process because we believe that our school now meets or exceeds standards, even in assessment, on which we have been working diligently since 2004. But the fact remains that we made progress because of transparency and shared governance, values we must preserve for the next generation of teachers, staff, alumni, and scholars at the Greenlee School.

We have one of the largest cohorts of assistant professors at Iowa State University. Within two years, six will have been evaluated for promotion and tenure with more advancing annually thereafter through mid-term reviews on their trajectories toward senior status. Those who successfully achieve that academic milestone at an institution of this stature will have to begin serving their junior partners with the same commitment, collegiality, and transparency as they have been served by our eight associates and professors who have been chairing committees, working as mentors to multiple faculty members, and helping navigate the School to premier status. If we heed the values and practices responsible for this progress, we will be able to ensure quality education, research, and service for the next generation of faculty, students and alumni.