

REPORT OF
THE FACULTY ORGANIZATION STUDY COMMITTEE
TO THE FACULTY OF CALVIN COLLEGE

May 4, 1972

The Faculty Organization Study Committee

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INTRODUCTION

At its April 1968 meeting the faculty, in response to a petition signed by seven of its members, voted to create an *ad hoc* committee to study “the faculty's role as a governing and advisory body.” The petition asked that the committee “study and make recommendations” with respect to three specific areas:

1. faculty committees, their structure, function, and responsibility;
2. departmental and divisional structure; and
3. the nature and composition of faculty meetings.

The grounds for requesting such a study were that the existing structures had developed piecemeal and not as part of a consistent pattern; that the increased size of the faculty had affected the nature and extent of faculty involvement, and that it was therefore necessary to provide means and procedures “to make faculty meetings truly vital and deliberative” and “to insure faculty participation in significant educational policy matters.”

As a result of this faculty action the Faculty Organization Study Committee (hereafter FOSCO) was appointed in July 1968. It began its work in September of that year. It has since held more than 135 meetings. It now presents the results of its work to the faculty. It does so in two parts: Recommendations and Report. It is only the Recommendations which will be presented to the faculty for formal action. The Report is intended to provide the background against which the faculty can judge the Recommendations.

The Report does not attempt to summarize or review all the ground that the committee has covered in its deliberations. It does not argue the merits of any specific recommendation or argue against alternative plans or procedures which the committee considered and rejected. It does not even argue that the body of Recommendations presented to the faculty constitutes the only good plan for faculty organization and the only way to insure faculty participation in the governing of Calvin College.

The Report has a more modest purpose. It (1) informs the faculty how FOSCO has construed its mandate; (2) it points out what the committee believes are some key issues; (3) it states some important general principles which FOSCO has followed, and (4) it summarizes its Recommendations, calling attention especially to those which depart most sharply from present practice or which introduce something new.

I. THE COMMITTEE'S INTERPRETATION OF ITS MANDATE

The committee has construed its mandate broadly. It did so for two reasons. First, the language used in the grounds for the petition assumed that the purpose of faculty organization and procedures is to get “faculty participation in significant educational policy matters.” The committee construed “significant educational policy matters” to mean more than those matters formerly within the purview of the Educational Policy Committee (now E.P. Committee and Professional Status Committee). Rather, it understood those words to mean all those policy matters which have a significant impact upon Calvin College as an educational institution. This, we believe, was also the intent of the petitioners.

Second, FOSCO soon learned that the governing of the college necessarily involves more than just the faculty. However important the faculty is—and we believe it is very important—its role could not be studied in isolation. The Board, the President, administrators, and students are also involved in governing the college. If all are not equally involved or not all involved in the same way in policy-making, all are interested parties and all are affected by the overall quality of the college's government. FOSCO's mandate obviously does not entitle it to make recommendations regarding Board or Student Senate organization or procedures, or on how administrative offices should be organized. Yet, FOSCO in its studies had to give attention to all of these. It could not study faculty organization *in vacuo* but had to see the faculty's role in relation to other agencies, officers, and interests. This is reflected in certain parts of the Report.

II. SOME KEY ISSUES:

A. *Should the whole faculty be involved in governing the college?*

Our answer to this question is “Yes.” The collegial form of government in which the faculty is primarily responsible for institutional policy making was until fairly recently the prevailing mode in most higher educational institutions. It is also the form that has traditionally prevailed at Calvin College. The committee believes not only that this form is appropriate for Calvin College, but is the form that is particularly well-suited to express the character of Calvin College as a Christian liberal arts educational institution.

B. *Can the whole faculty be involved in governing the college?*

Our answer to this is a qualified “Yes.” We believe the whole faculty can be involved if certain conditions are met. These conditions are partly organizational and partly procedural. Our

Recommendations, we believe, provide necessary tools—structures, procedures, rules—for faculty governing. We assume that the faculty members will have to devote some of the knowledge, their skills, their time, and their energy to the governing task. We are confident that they will do so.

C. *Where does power lie at Calvin College and where should power lie?*

To pose questions in these terms, as is often done, is to raise a false issue, FOSCO believes. To think in terms of faculty power versus Board power, faculty power versus administration power, or faculty power versus student power is to misjudge the nature of the institution and to place the problem of its government in a false light. Power relationships normally imply adversary relationships. The various agencies involved in the governing of the college *are not adversaries*. Calvin College is a Christian academic community and all parts of this community share a common purpose and a common commitment. The parts have different roles and different responsibilities but they do not lord it over one another, they do not coerce one another, they are not to be thought of as rival power groups. “For just as in a single human body there are many limbs and organs, all with different functions, so all of us, united with Christ, form one body, serving individually as limbs and organs to one another.” Romans 12:4,5 (NEB)

If one looks at power in purely legal terms, as a question of sovereignty, it is the Board of Trustees which controls Calvin College. The Board, in turn, is a standing committee of the ruling Synod of the Christian Reformed Church which owns and operates the college.

In practical terms, the Board has delegated primary responsibility for day-to-day operation of the college to the President of the college, to the faculty, and to administrators. These together share the major *responsibility* for governing the college. But while they share responsibility, they do not have the same functional role and they do not all participate in all aspects of governing. Nor, obviously, do they all devote an equal share of their time and attention to their governing roles.

D. *How are the respective roles of the President, the faculty, and administrators to be defined?*

There is no easy, simple answer. The committee struggled with this question at every stage of its study and deliberations and in connection with nearly every particular problem it confronted. It has concluded that there is no simple formula that can clarify the complex inter-relationships that exist, that can disentangle formal from informal relationships, and that can

sharply distinguish roles in a way that applies in all situations. Rather than trying to discover simplicity and clarity where it does not exist, we confine ourselves to some observations which may help the faculty in its thinking about this question.

1. We repeat what was said earlier about power. Whatever their roles and functions, these three elements in college government—the President, faculty, administrators—are not rivals or adversaries. They complement one another. Each is indispensable to the other.
2. The same person often fulfills more than one role. The President is the best example of this. We deal with his roles in more detail below, but we simply note here that he is not only the chief executive officer of the college (i.e. top administrator), he is also chairman of the faculty and *ex officio* a member of all faculty committees. Further, he is the link between the Board and faculty, between faculty and Board. Other major administrators are also faculty members although they have no teaching duties. Some teaching faculty members (e.g., the Director of the Counseling Center, Director of Upward Bound) hold administrative positions at the same time that they have teaching duties.
3. The distinctions that must be kept in mind, then, are not those of persons or titles or ranks, but of functions and roles. We can distinguish between three kinds of functions, each of which is an essential part of any governing process:
 - a. Policy-making: By this we mean laying down the rules, the guidelines, the standards which shall govern a group (in this case the Calvin College community). These rules are related to goals and purposes in the way that means are related to ends. The rules are intended to help the institution achieve its purposes or goals. Goals are usually fixed or they change relatively slowly. The rules or policies, however, may change frequently in response to changing conditions, available resources, the size of the group, etc.
 - b. Administration: This means carrying out or implementing a policy, applying rules and standards to individual cases. If policy-making with respect to a given matter is occasional and sporadic, administration is an on-going, daily activity. Administration, furthermore, tends to be a more specialized activity. Administrators have or develop skills which policy-makers do not need, at least not

in the same degree. Also, administrators usually develop an expertise which policy-makers rarely have. While policy-makers are generalists, many administrators are specialists.

- c. Leadership: This is the function that is most difficult of all to define. It is a personal quality as much as it is a function or an office. Although it is hard to describe, faculty members usually recognize it when they see it. In the context of an educational institution it is not to be thought of first of all as power to command. As a quality it subsumes the ability to inspire and energize a group; the ability to gain the loyalty and respect (if not always the affection) of group members; the ability to speak or to remain silent as the occasion requires; the ability to choose and decide; the ability to “represent” the group in its contacts and dealings with other groups and institutions. As a function it involves directing and coordinating the activities of other actors in the governing process; initiating or innovating change and encouraging others to do so; acting with vigor and dispatch when action is needed. These things only suggest the leadership element in government; they do not define or exhaust it.
4. Even at the level of abstract analysis the distinction between functions must not be drawn too sharply. One must not think of administration as being routine, mechanical application of rules with the administrator exercising no discretion or initiative. That is to reduce administrative functions to clerical duties. Administrators do and must have discretion. Administrators do and must make “low-level policy.” So, too, one must not think of policy-making as only making broad, general rules of wide scope and application, and intended for a short term. Policy-making and administration at times become almost indistinguishable. So, too, the leadership function admits of different degrees and intensities.
5. Although it is common to draw analogies between the governing process in the college and the governing process in a political community (state, city, etc.), such analogies can be misleading. They can be especially misleading if one concludes that because the functions described above are performed in both, therefore the same relationships must prevail between the bodies or persons who exercise these functions. One might then conclude that because the American political system is based upon a separation of

powers (functions), therefore there must be a separation in the college. Not even in public government is there so sharp a separation as is commonly supposed. Even if there were, this would hold no necessary implications for the governing of a Christian liberal arts college.

6. With these considerations in mind, we go on to draw some conclusions as to how all of this applies to the governing of Calvin College. Again with the *caveat* that the faculty should avoid thinking in legalistic or power terms and avoid making too-strict deductions from our generalizations, we will try to relate what was said above about functions and roles to the familiar offices and agencies of the college.
7. The policy-making function, FOSCO believes, should be performed mainly by the faculty. The faculty includes in its voting ranks the President and the top administrators. When these persons attend and participate in Faculty meetings, they do so in their role as faculty members. In that role they are the equal of every other voting member, no more, no less. The scope or ambit of the faculty's policy-making authority extends to all matters on which the college can legally make policy. This is not to say that the faculty exercises all of its authority or exercises it alone. In some cases the Board, which has ultimate legal power and responsibility for the college, alone makes policy. In many cases the Board reviews and ratifies important faculty decisions. It may on occasion veto them. In many instances of faculty policy-making, the faculty's decisions are *de facto* final. This sweeping description of faculty authority is simply a consequence of the fact that the board has delegated the major responsibility for policy-making to the faculty. And authority must be commensurate with responsibility.
8. The administrative function is exercised mainly by administrators. It is not the faculty's concern how the President, who in one of his roles is chief administrator of the college, organizes his administrative subordinates and assistants. How these other administrators organize their offices and how they delegate their administrative duties to staff personnel is not the faculty's concern either. Nor is the faculty to concern itself with individual acts of administrators, with particular cases. The faculty's concern is with how faculty policies are being carried out, whether these policies are effective in achieving their intended purpose, whether policies are consistent and coherent. To make judgment on these matters the faculty needs "feedback" from administrators.

Because major administrators are also faculty members, their presence at Faculty meetings and especially their membership on faculty committees makes this feedback possible.

9. The leadership function cannot and should not be concentrated in a single person or office. It is dispersed and diffuse. It is, however, more often personal than collegial. The President of the college exercises this function pre-eminently. He supplies overall leadership, direction, coordination. He is, ideally, a leader of the whole college community and exercises leadership on several fronts. As chief administrator he leads and coordinates the administration of the college. He is chairman of the faculty, *ex officio* a member of all its committees, chairman of some of its important committees, spokesman for the faculty in its relations with the Board. And it is he who most often speaks for the college in its contacts with persons and groups outside the immediate college community. But leadership is exercised by many persons other than the President. The Vice-President for Academic Affairs provides leadership and direction in academic matters and has an important place on faculty committees in this area. The coordinating aspect of leadership is especially important in his case. All administrators provide leadership and direction for their divisions. They also supply leadership to the faculty in framing policy proposals dealing with matters in their area. Department chairmen and committee chairmen should be leaders. Sometimes a leadership role is assumed by persons without any "leadership office." Any faculty member can become a leader within his department, on a committee, in a faculty meeting.

E. *What is the role of students in the government of the college? What should the role of students be?*

These questions raise issues that are among the most difficult and contentious of all. There is widespread disagreement among students, among faculty members, and among administrators on these questions. These differences are not always differences between groups; there are sometimes sharp differences among members within each of these groups. The differences, we think, are greater than they need be. They result partly from the fact that we all—students, faculty, administrators—tend to see things from our own particular perspective. Also, subjective feelings and emotions sometimes control our thinking here. And, finally, these are questions where a "generation gap" is likely to show up strongly.

If we are to overcome mutual suspicions and a tendency to “talk-past” one another, it is necessary to try to agree on what the facts are. We may not like the facts, but at least we will be talking about the same thing.

Once more we repeat the warning about thinking in power and adversary terms. Students are not adversaries and rivals of faculty and administrators; faculty and administrators are not rivals of students. We are all member of a single, Christian academic community, sharing a common purpose and a common commitment. When the college flourishes we are all increased; when the college languishes, we are all diminished.

Why then is there difficulty in getting agreement among all sectors of the community as to what the role of students is or should be? We think there are many reasons.

Students do think in power terms. Their perceptions or subjective feelings of powerlessness are correct if one looks at the matter in legal terms. Students have little formal power. Such power (we prefer the term “authority”) has been delegated to the President, the faculty and administrators. They, in turn, have delegated some power to student bodies, but the area of such power is not large. Students see that they have been excluded from most policy-making bodies. They hear about decisions taken by the faculty, the administration, the Board of Trustees. They are “outsiders” as far as these decision-making processes go.

But while their power in a legal sense is small and while they are outside many policy-making processes, this does not necessarily imply “powerlessness.” Influence is power in a very real sense and students do have influence because of the very nature of the institution. The college exists to serve educational purposes and to meet educational needs. Students are the college’s *raison d’etre*. Without students there would be no college. This automatically gives students influence and their influence is pervasive. The government of the college, even when it is not of and by the students, is *for* the students.

Some students who do not like such a formulation may be influenced by false analogies. Sometimes they are influenced by analogies to public government and to political democracy. They then stress the concepts of equality and participation. They feel that the government of the college must be something like a town meeting or at least a representative democracy, one in which all members of the community are equal and have equal rights to participate in all community decisions, directly or through elected representatives. Such an analogy is simply false. The government of a college is not and cannot be like the government of a city. (And

students who want more democracy and equality might well reflect on the fact that in polities organized on those principles, the citizens, who are supposedly “sovereign,” often feel even more powerless than do the students.)

Some students are also influenced in their thinking by what they see happening elsewhere. They read and hear about successful “student power” movements on secular campuses; they hear about supposedly sweeping changes in the government of other institutions; they are conditioned to think and speak in terms of power.

Calvin students generally have been reasonable, responsible, and moderate. But Calvin students may be influenced by the “spirit of the times.” (Faculty members, we add, are not immune to such influences.) They then judge by standards and criteria which have no place in a Christian academic community. Calvin should no more follow blindly the trends of secular institutions in its government than it does in its curriculum policies, its admissions policies, its housing policies, or whatever. The government of the college, as well as every other aspect of the college’s life, should reflect the fact that this is a Christian college. It is and must be different from secular institutions.

Faculty members, administrators, and especially observers outside the college community often have perceptions and subjective feelings that are very different from students’ about these things. They observe that students do have influence. Many aspects of college life have changed. If one looks at changes in just the last few years, for example, there have been real changes in the college’s policies on films, on dormitory hours, and on compulsory chapel attendance, to name just three. Such changes were not the result of faculty or administrative initiative, but of student influence. Persons who do not like the changes can easily conclude that students have “too much power” now, even though in a formal and legal sense their power has remained the same.

Faculty members and administrators may also be subtly conditioned by the rhetoric of power but reach different conclusions. Then they may see student demands for more “student power” as a threat to their own “power.” And if they are disturbed by what they regard as the bad consequences of greater student power on other campuses, they are reinforced in their view that student power is dangerous. Because students mistakenly use the rhetoric of power, faculty members and administrators, who rightly resist the rhetoric, may also overlook the legitimate grievances that may lie behind it. For this reason we reiterate that it is a mistake to think in

power or adversary terms. This can only polarize the college community and will contribute nothing to solving problems.

How then should we approach the problem of the students' role in governing the college? It is necessary, FOSCO believes, to face up to facts. They may be unpleasant facts for some, but nothing is gained by ignoring them or trying to wish them away. Students cannot govern the college. They cannot do so because they have no authority to do so. That authority has been entrusted by the Board to the President, the faculty, and administrators. It is they who are responsible for the day-to-day operation of the college and it is they, not students, who must account to the Board. They cannot evade this responsibility. They cannot abdicate their authority.

Does this mean then that students have no role in governing the college? Not at all. The faculty and administration have delegated authority over certain matters to students. They can do so in the future. But the faculty cannot in this way divest itself of its responsibility. The President and the faculty are still held responsible. That is why the faculty, quite properly, FOSCO believes, has been reluctant to grant complete autonomy to any student group or organization. When it has delegated authority to student organizations, it has done so within circumscribed limits and subject to conditions. When it grants students freedom to publish without censorship, for example, it also lays down a policy of "responsible freedom" and creates a Communications Board which includes faculty members and whose constitution was approved by the faculty. The faculty also approved the Student Senate Constitution. The constitutions of student organizations must be approved by a faculty committee.

Such delegations of authority have not always been satisfactory, however. From the students' point of view too little authority is delegated and over too few matters. Students feel, quite understandably, that they have little voice in making some of the policies in which they are most interested and which affect them most. From the faculty's point of view delegations of authority have sometimes appeared to create bodies which in effect, if not intent, were not accountable to anyone.

For these reasons we believe it is necessary to try a different approach. Instead of carving out separate areas of policy-making jurisdiction, an area for students and an area for faculty, we believe it is necessary to retain policy-making authority in the body which is responsible—the faculty. But this does not mean that students must be excluded from the processes by which the

faculty makes and reviews policy. Students can be and should be more closely involved in those processes. Several of our specific recommendations are designed to achieve that.

III. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The previous section conveys some of FOSCO's thinking on the broader questions it faced. These ideas led the committee to formulate some general principles which it followed in framing the specific procedures and the organizational structures embodied in the recommendations. We do not comment on them or argue them, but simply list them to let the faculty know what these principles are:

1. The faculty's function as a deliberative, policy-making body requires an organizational structure that will make deliberation possible.
2. This requires that the policy proposals on which the faculty is to deliberate and decide be carefully formulated, be presented in writing, and be available for faculty study for a reasonable time before they are acted upon.
3. The initiation and preparation of policy proposals cannot be performed by the faculty *in plenum*, but must be delegated to faculty committees.
4. The faculty must therefore have a committee structure which is as comprehensive as the faculty's policy-making authority. Every matter on which the faculty has authority to make or review policy should be within the scope of some faculty committee. Committee mandates and jurisdictions should therefore be defined as clearly as possible.
5. Because faculty committees are essential to the faculty's performing its policy-making functions efficiently and responsibly, the faculty should be in control of its committees. This will require that the faculty have a larger share in determining the composition of its committees than it has had heretofore.
6. Participation in the faculty's governing functions is the privilege and the responsibility of all faculty members. Therefore, opportunities to participate (as well as the burdens of participation) should be distributed as widely and as equitably as possible.
7. Because the policies made by the faculty usually affect persons, interests, and groups outside the teaching faculty, those affected by the policies and those who administer them should be incorporated into the policy-making process, at least in its initial stages.

Most faculty committees, therefore, should have at least one student member and all should have at least one administrator member. In some cases, it will be desirable to have Board members or alumni members also.

8. Because committees remain faculty committees despite the presence of non-faculty members, the chairman of a committee should be a teaching faculty member. Exceptions to this general rule are possible.
9. The number of non-faculty members on a given committee should be determined by the character of the committee's mandate. Generally, the greater the extent and intensity of student interest, the larger the student representation on a committee should be.
10. There must be greater openness in the policy-making process.
11. The work of academic departments, insofar as it involves only one department, should not be the business of the whole faculty or of any of its committees. In order to segregate such departmental affairs from general faculty concerns, it is necessary to have a fairly-detailed statement regarding departmental organization, responsibilities and procedures.
12. It is desirable to have student participation in departmental policy-making as well as in the faculty policy-making processes.
13. Defining committee mandates and jurisdictions as precisely as possible will not eliminate all uncertainties and ambiguities. To resolve these and to secure coordination between the work of committees working in the same broad area, e.g. Academic Affairs Committees, provision should be made for coordinating councils. Such coordinating councils should not be "super-committees" and should not have a policy-making role. Exceptions to this general rule may be necessary.
14. Faculty meetings, since they are the last and most important stage in the process of faculty policy-making, should be conducted in such a way as will serve their purpose. This will require that meetings follow well-defined procedures, that certain key officers be chosen by the faculty itself, and that meetings be open to more persons than have attended them in the past.
15. The meetings of the faculty as a deliberating, policy-making body should be distinct from other meetings at which policy-making is not the primary focus.

IV. SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

If these are the more important general principles FOSCO has tried to follow, what of the Recommendations themselves?

Nineteen of the Recommendations (1-19) deal with faculty assemblies: their format, composition, officers, procedures, etc. While not all of equal importance, these Recommendations, the committee believes, do hang together. In some cases the Recommendations codify existing practices. In other cases they introduce substantial changes. Those which propose something new and different are recommendations 1, 2, 4, 7, 8 (3), 9, and 19. The faculty will want to pay particular attention to these, we believe.

Four of the Recommendations (20-23) deal with reports to the faculty. Most of the details here are new, but the committee does not anticipate as much controversy in this area as in some others.

Ten of the Recommendations deal with faculty committees. It is difficult to summarize these since one of them (Recommendation 33) covers the whole structure of committees FOSCO is proposing. Some of the committees are the same as some present committee, but sometimes with a new name. Others are new committees. Of the latter, it is the Committee on Committees and the Priorities Committee which we regard as most innovative.

As for the other Recommendations which deal with committees, all of them introduce some new element or procedure, but none of them proposes anything which FOSCO regards as a radical change. The most important changes proposed are contained in Recommendations 26, 30, and 32.

Recommendation 34, dealing with departments, is again an omnibus recommendation covering a long, detailed statement on departmental organization and functions. Most of this codifies what is (or should be) current practice. While there are portions of this statement that undoubtedly will produce controversy, FOSCO does not believe there are any radical changes proposed here, except perhaps in the suggestion that students be appointed to departmental committees.

Recommendation 35 on Divisions does propose a significant change. It proposes to abolish divisions as we have known them. Some may regard this as a radical change, but FOSCO does not. We propose that instead of trying to revitalize existing divisions the faculty make it possible (but not mandatory) to create a new and different kind of division which would be organized

quite differently and have limited special functions.

Recommendations 36-41 are implementing resolutions which, FOSCO believes, will make it possible to have an orderly transition to the new faculty organization if the faculty chooses to adopt the other Recommendations.

Respectfully submitted,

FACULTY ORGANIZATION STUDY COMMITTEE

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