

Background and Guidelines Regarding the Creation of Faculty Groups
(Intentions Document)
Rutgers University Libraries Faculty
March 10, 2017

In December 2016, the RUL faculty voted to reconfigure our faculty groups. The purpose of this document is to record the intentions of the faculty in making these changes, since many of these matters were not codified in the bylaws in March 2017. Nonetheless, they are still an important part of the changes the faculty agreed to at that time. This document is meant to provide guidance to faculty in the future and is not meant to be prescriptive.

The objective of these changes was to create a straightforward organizational structure with clear scope, leadership roles, and clear lines of communication, including two-way communication between the faculty and the Libraries administration. The changes were meant to strengthen the faculty's advisory role, complement working groups that report up through directors, and provide sufficient flexibility and agility to respond in a timely manner to issues of relevance to faculty and/or administration.

The Planning Committee

The purpose of a Faculty Planning Committee is to ensure a faculty voice in library directions, initiatives, and priorities, and to solicit and cultivate ideas. The Planning Committee might best be conceptualized as an executive committee of the faculty body, elected by that body, representative of that body, and acting on behalf of and in consultation with that body. It will also serve as a conduit from faculty to the University Librarian and her Cabinet, and vice versa. The coordinating function of the Planning and Coordinating Committee has been removed. The faculty voted to eliminate the councils, so that function is no longer necessary. Renaming the Faculty Coordinator and Deputy Faculty Coordinator as Faculty Chair and Faculty Vice Chair aligns with those changes as well.

In terms of membership, we should aim for a good mix of fresh eyes and experience, and a group that has a range of perspectives and expertise. As a faculty committee charged with advising the Libraries administration, the Planning Committee will not include faculty currently serving in administrative roles; administrators may attend by invitation. However, we strongly recommend to the Libraries administration that the Faculty Chair and Vice Chair continue to serve on the University Librarian's Cabinet.

Open planning meetings and ad hoc groups: a mechanism to advise the Planning Committee

The faculty planning meetings are separate from those required by University regulations and presided over by the University Librarian. Like the Planning Committee, they will not include library administrators. The planning meeting, led by the faculty chair, is intended to discuss long-term, "big-picture" issues to investigate and address during the course of a semester, issues that we feel are not being adequately addressed by the working groups or elsewhere. These planning meetings will be less formal than a regular faculty meeting, and the procedure has not been written into the bylaws. The scheduling of the meetings can be flexible, but once a semester seems reasonable.

The following process is suggested to advise the Planning Committee:

- a. The Planning Committee issues a call to faculty for issues of concern at regular intervals (once a semester is suggested as a good starting point);
- b. The Planning Committee meets and selects key issues to discuss for that semester;
- c. The Planning Committee convenes an open planning meeting of faculty (separate from the University Librarian's faculty meeting) to discuss and prioritize the key issues;

- d. The Planning Committee takes the issues and the will of the faculty under advisement, and forms ad hoc group(s) as needed to address the issue(s) and report back to the Planning Committee;
- e. The Planning Committee coordinates the ad hoc group's presentation of reports/recommendations at the next formal faculty meeting, over which the University Librarian presides;

Faculty input should be clearly invited and welcomed by the Planning Committee, with many avenues for communication made available. Issues could also come to the faculty from RUL administration through the Planning Committee or arise from within the Planning Committee itself. The format of the open planning meeting of faculty should be flexible and determined by the Planning Committee and might include formal presentations, etc. All meetings should provide easy access for colleagues at all four universities, either in-person or virtual. Those initiating a proposal should prepare a discussion document or other information for distribution in advance of the meeting. Ad hoc groups should be tailored to bring together the experience and expertise required to address the issue at hand and should consult with staff and other experts and stakeholders as appropriate. At the formal faculty meeting where an issue is presented, the faculty will in most cases vote; for example, it might vote recommend to bring the issue to Cabinet via the faculty chair.

Issue Groups

Like the ad hoc groups referred to above, the creation of these groups will be initiated by the faculty and managed by the Planning Committee. Colleagues interested in creating such a group will present a proposal at a meeting of the committee, and the committee will deliberate on whether to endorse the group. In most cases there will be a charge and either a timeline or a date to consider sun setting the group. Once a year the Planning Committee will review existing groups. Issue groups will be expected to present reports or recommendations at a formal faculty meeting, in the same way that the ad hoc groups will bring their work back to the faculty as a whole.

These issue groups are intended to be an additional channel, like the ad hoc groups, for the faculty to investigate important issues and make our voice heard. By virtue of the process by which they are created, the ad hoc groups will, in most cases, have a fairly narrow focus. But the issue groups might have a broader or more narrow focus, depending upon the intentions of the colleagues proposing the group. They should be flexible, responding to concerns among the faculty and issues as they arise. But, as they will ultimately be responsible to the faculty's elected representatives, the Planning Committee, they should be productive, proactive bodies, rather than solely a discussion group. Planning Committee should ensure that there is experience, expertise, geographic representation, and accountability to function effectively.

Approved: March 2017