

Statement on Committee Testimony By the Steering Committee

The presenting of testimony is central to the concept of shared governance. The College governance document calls for committees to receive input from their memberships, from formal testimony, and from open comment from affected individuals and stakeholder groups. Committees are expected to be “proactive” in inviting stakeholder groups to provide testimony in both Step #2 and Step #3¹ of the recommendation process, i.e., prior to developing preliminary resolution and in receiving feedback prior to making final recommendations.

To meet these expectations, committees need to both identify stakeholder groups at the College that are interested in each particular issue and specifically invite their testimony at scheduled committee meetings or hearings. The normal practice should be that groups will be given adequate time to respond and that oral testimony will be presented on major issues. Written comments will also be accepted. Broadcast emails and notices on the governance web site are useful for informing faculty, staff, and students about a committee’s activities, but such emails or web notices that invite comments do not meet the requirement.

Committees should clearly report in their action minutes which groups were targeted as stakeholders, how input was invited, whether stakeholder groups provided oral and/or written testimony, and the substantive content of the feedback. Before forwarding any committee recommendation to the President, the Steering Committee will review the procedures followed by the committee to solicit stakeholder testimony on the matter and the results of such efforts.

¹ Step #2 -- Preparing a preliminary recommendation: Once the campus community has received the problem statement, committees can begin to collect data needed to make a recommendation. Committees typically receive input through committee membership, formal testimony, and open comment from affected individuals and all stakeholder groups. Committees must be proactive in inviting stakeholder groups to provide formal testimony prior to developing a preliminary resolution. When, in the best judgment of the committee, adequate clarity of the principles contributing to the problem are known, a preliminary resolution should be drafted and disseminated to the campus community through the Governance website.

Step #3 -- Making a Final Recommendation: Committees must use sound judgment to give the campus adequate time to review the preliminary resolution before making their final recommendation. Again committees are expected to be proactive in receiving feedback on the preliminary resolution. If a full calendar year has passed since the formal announcement of the preliminary recommendation, the committee must resubmit a preliminary recommendation to the campus community. When, in the best judgment of the committee, the campus community has responded to the proposed resolution of the issue, the committee shall send their final recommendation (complete documentation) to the Steering Committee.