

SPECIAL REPORT
of the
RULES COMMITTEE
concerning
THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN AD HOC COMMITTEE
TO BE NAMED
COMMONWEALTH HONORS COLLEGE COUNCIL

Adopted unanimously by the Rules Committee,
acting on behalf of the Faculty Senate,
August 2, 2010

Presented at the
696th Regular Meeting of the Faculty Senate
September 16, 2010

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

William Richards Adrion
Marilyn Billings
Alexandrina Deschamps
Ernest May
John McCarthy (Chair)
W. Brian O'Connor
Ralph Whitehead
Donna Zucker

I. Introduction

The history of Commonwealth Honors College is unique among the constituent schools and colleges of the University of Massachusetts Amherst, in that it originated as a project of the Board of Higher Education, which solicited and evaluated competing proposals to establish a public Honors College in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The proposal from the University of Massachusetts Amherst was ultimately selected, and, on campus, its structure was memorialized in Faculty Senate legislation (http://www.umass.edu/senate/fs_docs/SEN_DOC_NO_99-005A-COMM-COLL_REQS.pdf). Commonwealth Honors College was also supported by a separate line item in the State budget for a decade, which gave it a degree of independence from usual campus administrative structures. However, in the course of the budget crises of the past two years, the line item in the State budget has disappeared, and Commonwealth Honors College has become the sole financial and academic responsibility of the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

In light of these new circumstances, it has been recommended that advisory responsibility for the managerial aspects of Commonwealth Honors College, and, possibly, faculty primary responsibility for the academic affairs of Commonwealth Honors College, be vested in a new council of the Faculty Senate, to be named "Commonwealth Honors College Council." This new Council will have some similarity to the Graduate Council (in that the lead administrator around which it is built is a Dean), but it may also have close working relationships with the Undergraduate Education Council (on matters of high-level policy), the Academic Matters Council (on matters of courses, programs, and specific academic requirements), the General Education Council (on matters pertaining to General Education), and the Research Council (on matters related to undergraduate research). It is intended that the Commonwealth Honors College Council replace the Honors Subcommittee of the Academic Matters Council. It has also be recommended that the Commonwealth Honors College Council be formed quickly, in order to provide appropriate campus-wide deliberation of the many critical issues currently facing Commonwealth Honors College.

In the judgment of the Rules Committee, the best way to satisfy all these recommendations, yet still allow for a prudent development of the best structure and charge for the Council itself, is to immediately establish the Commonwealth Honors College Council as an Ad Hoc Committee of the Faculty Senate (Bylaws, Section 4) under the powers by which the Rules Committee may act in place of the Faculty Senate during the summer (Bylaws, Section 6.3.1[m]). The Rules Committee will appoint membership for AY2010-11, after receiving recommendations from various sources. Part of the Charge to the Ad Hoc Committee will be to propose a permanent change to the Bylaws of the Faculty Senate, which will formally establish a permanent Commonwealth Honors College Council, whose members will subsequently be recommended for appointment by the Committee on Committees through the usual process. It is anticipated that the Commonwealth Honors College Council will submit a proposal to the Faculty Senate for a Bylaw change establishing a permanent Commonwealth Honors College Council in time for the second Faculty Senate meeting of the Spring 2011 semester (currently scheduled for Thursday, February 24, 2011).

2. Charge

The Commonwealth Honors College Council shall:

- (a) Provide advice to the Dean of Commonwealth Honors College (CHC) on all matters relating to the administration of the Honors College and its curriculum;
- (b) Develop policy recommendations on all matters relating to honors studies within the University, including:
 - (i) standards governing the establishment, modification and termination of all Departmental Honors and Multidisciplinary Honors;
 - (ii) standards governing CHC student admission and graduation;
 - (iii) standards governing membership on the Honors Faculty and the direction of Honors theses/projects;
 - (iv) development of a system designed to resolve such differences as may arise between honors students and members of the faculty; and
- (c) Send minutes of its meetings to principal administrative officers and to all academic deans as well as to those listed in Section 4/2/1 of the Faculty Senate Bylaws.

3. **Membership**

The membership of the Commonwealth Honors College Council shall be:

- (a) Twelve Faculty Members, with at least one from each School and College, and one from the Professional Library Staff, appointed by the Rules Committee following consultation with the Committee on Committees;
- (b) One Representative from Amherst, Hampshire, Mount Holyoke and Smith Colleges, designated by Five Colleges, Incorporated;
- (c) The Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and Campus Life or a designee, serving ex officio;
- (d) The Dean and Associate Dean of Commonwealth Honors College, serving ex officio;
- (e) The Chairperson of the Research Council or a designee, serving ex officio;
- (f) The Chairperson of the Academic Matters Council or a designee, serving ex officio;
- (g) The Chairperson of the Undergraduate Education Council or a designee, serving ex officio;
- (h) The Chairperson of the General Education Council or a designee, serving ex officio;]
- (i) The Provost or a designee, serving ex officio;
- (j) The Secretary of the Faculty Senate or a designee, serving ex officio, non-voting;
- (k) The Director of the Office of National Scholarship Advisement, serving ex officio;
- (l) The Registrar or a designee, serving ex officio, non-voting;
- (m) The Chair and a Member of the Commonwealth Honors College Student Advisory Board or a designee, appointed by the Dean of Commonwealth Honors College;
- (n) One Undergraduate Student, nominated by the Student Government Association; and
- (o) One Undergraduate Student, appointed by the Chair of the Commonwealth Honors College Council.

4. **Chairperson**

The Chairperson of the Commonwealth College Honors Council shall be elected annually from among the faculty members of the Council appointed in Section 3(a) above. The Dean of Commonwealth Honors College will provide staff assistance to the Chairperson with respect to preparation and dissemination of agendas, minutes, and such other items as may be required for the effective functioning of the Council.

5. **Subcommittees**

Most subcommittees of Faculty Senate councils are established by the council Chairperson, and positions on the subcommittees are by appointment of the council Chairperson. Initially, the following shall be Subcommittees of the Commonwealth Honors College Council:

- (a) Academic Standards and Thesis/Project Guidelines
- (b) Academic Curriculum
- (c) Research (Awards and Responsible Conduct of Research)

These subcommittees may be adjusted, terminated, or new subcommittees established, at the discretion of the Council Chairperson.

6. The Council Chairperson shall appoint Commonwealth Honors College Council representatives to the General Education Council, Academic Matters Council, Program and Budget Council, Research Council, and Academic Priorities Council.

7. The Commonwealth Honors College Council shall provide a report to the Faculty Senate by February 8, 2011. This report shall include a recommendation for changes to the Bylaws of the Faculty Senate establishing a permanent Commonwealth Honors College Council.

MOVED: That the Faculty Senate approve the Establishment of a Commonwealth Honors College Council as an Ad Hoc Committee of the Faculty Senate, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 11-001.
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