ESSAYS ON EARLHAM COLLEGE GOVERNANCE

Collected July, 2004, for inclusion in the *Earlham College Governance Manual*

EARLHAM'S VALUES AND STANDARDS

Approved by Faculty and Board of Trustees, October, 1969

[*Editor's note: This statement, approved by the Faculty and Board of Trustees in 1969, sets forth a broad set of ideals that inform the governance process at Earlham. These same ideals inform "Principles and Practices of the Earlham College Community," which describes our expectations for behavior in the community.*]

Earlham is a Quaker liberal arts college and draws its values and standards from the Quaker tradition, from Christian insights and beliefs, and from widely shared concerns about the fundamental purposes and needs of [human beings] in our time.

Earlham College is grounded in a respect for truth and a willingness to seek for the whole truth, insofar as mortal minds can discern it, about the universe and the whole of human experience. It seeks to avoid attachment to dogmatic creeds, intellectual smugness which may mistake preliminary and partial information for the total truth, and that cynical detachment which can, at times, reject even the rational search for truth. It attempts to communicate this openness to truth through its educational program and through the pattern and practices of the college community life.

Earlham College is devoted to the idea that truth is best sought and is most likely to be found through honest questioning and open listening, through rigorous reasoning and calm reflection.

Earlham College strives to create and to maintain a special quality of human relationships in which the individual can come to feel and accept both his own personal worth and a true sense of community with others. Earlham tries to accord full respect to every individual, to accept him as a person of worth and dignity, entitled to all fundamental human rights and capable of carrying significant responsibilities. This does not involve pretenses that every individual is equal to every other individual in ability, knowledge, wisdom or maturity. Earlham is an open community within the context of a Quaker pattern of search for consensus. We realistically recognize the necessity for division of labor and for weighted allocations of responsibility. The determination of the fundamental character of the institution and the ultimate legal and financial accountability for the institution, under its charter and the laws of the land, rest upon the Board of Trustees. However, students, teaching and administrative faculty and staff carry the major continuing responsibilities for defining and sustaining its educational program and administering its day-to-day operations.

Concern and responsibility for the community is the shared commitment of all who are members of the Earlham College community. Those who are not drawn to share that responsibility in substantial ways should not associate themselves with Earlham. Those who do share it have the right and the duty to work for its improvement in a spirit of honesty, open searching and concern for others. The basic human right of orderly dissent is honored at Earlham, but the use of intimidation or physical violence to express dissent is not accepted. Those means are entirely foreign to the spirit and traditions of the College, which

can neither submit to violence nor use it in dealing with conflict. Anyone who uses such means will, through his own actions, lay himself open to separation from the community. Earlham College, in keeping with the testimony of the Society of Friends, seeks to live in that spirit that takes away the occasion of irreconcilable conflict.

Earlham accepts the reality of human frailty. It recognizes that all make mistakes and that much of our most important learning comes through experience in which mistakes have been made. However, Earlham upholds the ideal of a high level of personal conduct and seeks to sustain a community consensus to support a suitable code of behavior. That code of behavior may be modified from time to time through appropriate deliberations involving the various constituencies, but so long as it represents College policy it is to be respected and enforced.

Central to the concept of individual responsibility for one's own life at Earlham is a sense of personal discipline. Anyone who chooses to associate himself with Earlham is presumed to accept certain expectations of self-discipline:

1. that s/he will apply himself and use the resources of the College for educational purposes;

2. that s/he will respect the right of all students and faculty to pursue their educational goals and to carry out their normal activities which are consistent with the purposes of the Earlham community;

3. that s/he will show to all other members of the Earlham community and its constituencies such courtesy and respect as will promote a vital, constructive and cooperative community life;

4. that s/he will abide by the laws of the lands, on the campus as well as off the campus, or accept the processes and penalties of the law for violations;

5. that s/he will make himself acquainted with and will respect the rules and regulations of the College community which s/he has chosen to join, or will accept the penalties for contrary action;

6. that s/he will govern her/his behavior by a code of strict honesty and respect for the rights, property and feelings of others.

CONSENSUS PROCESS

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The Consensus Process at Earlham

From the 1977-78 *Earlham Student Handbook*, original author unknown

Most students who come to Earlham are familiar with parliamentary procedures (Roberts Rules of Order) in decision-making. Few have worked in decision-making groups that are based on the consensus model. At Earlham the most effective group decisions are made when individuals understand and appreciate the differences between parliamentary procedure and Quaker consensus.

What is consensus? Consensus is not based on the concept of one person/one vote/majority rule. Decisions are not made by a majority that can override opposition. No votes are taken; there is no room for partisan politics or political maneuvering. Opinions should not be formed before group dialogue on an issue has begun. Consensus does not assume full participation of every person within a community in each decision, but utilizes the delegation of responsibility to groups or individuals.

Consensus is a group deliberation process based on the assumption that all who participate in the process are eager and open to finding a basis for right action. Group members' devotion to group deliberation and shared insight should be greater than to their own opinions on a matter. Opinions, facts and insights should be presented, "not in argument or debate, not deliberately criticizing a previous contribution, but as a statement of truth, as seen by the speaker. Everyone participating in the consensus process must want a decision and be open to new truth."

It is important in the consensus process that all members are given an opportunity for a full expression of their views. The process places particular weight and emphasis on a person's ability to perceive and articulate the moral basis for the proposed judgment. Discussion is frequently long and the discovery of an expression to which all can give approval evolves slowly.

In consensus, the clerk or convener of the meeting tries to be sensitive to the various expressions and trends in the discussion and tries to articulate what they are. It is his/her responsibility to gather and state what s/he believes to be the sense of the meeting. "Decisions do not in the end depend on the particular knowledge and wisdom of certain outstanding leaders but on a gathered insight in which the whole meeting is unified. The sense of the meeting is not derived according to numbers alone, but also according to the recognized experience, insight, knowledge and involvement of the group members. This matter of sense of the meeting is fundamental to the Quaker method."

At Earlham as in any decision-making group, the way is not always open for all to give approval or consent. At this point, the clerk has several options.

1. It may be necessary to postpone action through a period of quiet worship and reflection or even to a later meeting to allow judgment to mature. By doing so, the status quo remains operative.

2. Persons who feel that their moral grounds for resisting consensus are compelling for them but not for the group as a whole may choose to stand aside, allowing the group to proceed or an individual or group may be released to follow his/her or their own guidance in the matter.

3. The clerk of the meeting may review and examine the moral grounds given for dissent. The group may decide that these ground are not substantial, and thus allow the group to act even when it is divided. But this is a rare occurrence taken only after long and compassionate efforts to find other alternatives.

The consensus process creates decisions by seeking unity and concurrence on right actions. No participant in a group using this process to exercise its responsibility for making a recommendation or a decision can say he or she was not a part of the recommendation or decision made by the group. Consensus assures that decision making relates to and arises from basic policies and principles and that these fundamentals are reviewed each time an action is taken to see if there is a correspondence between the principles and the practice of the Earlham community.

(Quotations in the preceding paragraphs are from George Selleck, "Principles of the Quaker Business Meeting," Friends United Meeting, Richmond Indiana, n.d.)

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Consensus Decision-Making and the Spirit of Consensus

From "Governance Working Document," April 2002
By Nelson Bingham, Barbara Caruso, Sara Penhale and Tom Kirk
(a group of former Clerks of the Faculty)

It may be useful to distinguish (though perhaps not to separate) consensus decision-making and the spirit of consensus. Not every action must result from achieving broad general agreement from everyone in the institution: designing a department's curriculum, for example, or deciding exactly where to place a new building. Consultation on everything that affects the educational and spiritual goals of the college, however, should exemplify open-ness, respectful listening, the spirit of consensus. The more important a decision is in its implications and scope (for example, appointing a president or dean) the greater our responsibility to achieve wide consultation, though the final decision would be with the Board or with the president, informed by such consultation.

What Consenus Decision-Making Asks Of Us

From a talk at the September 1975 Faculty Retreat
(Reprinted *Earlhamite*, Vol. 97, No.1)
Commended by a minute of the Board of Trustees, June 1977
By Helen Hole

As to organization, there will be, it is true, a certain amount of hierarchy in the community, because this is a necessary mechanism for practical action, but the lines of communication will be kept open, as open as possible, and there will be exchanges across the lines. The Earlham custom of having each year certain faculty who also participate in administration and certain administrators who also teach helps this process of openness. Ideas and concerns coming up through different sections of the College and not necessarily based in Quaker tradition, will be seriously considered and the final decisions will be interpreted to those involved. There will be long faculty meetings and long wrestlings in committee meetings in search of common understanding; these will often seem slow, boring, inefficient, and sometimes painful; they will frequently involve the washing of a good deal of community dirty linen.

One thing is sure: this method will work only while there is a core of people who believe in it, and are willing to commit themselves to it, and especially while there are persons ready to introduce newcomers to it, and interpret it to them. It does not require spiritual initiates for its success; it does require commitment. When this is no longer present, Earlham will cease to function as a Quaker community. Because to me it seems that decision-making by consensus lies at the heart of every Friends' institution."

The Role of a Clerk in a Consensus Process

From *Building Consensus: Conflict and Unity*
By Monteze Snyder,
with Cheryl Gibbs, Susan Hillmann, Trayce Peterson,
Johanna Schofield and George Watson
(Richmond, IN: Earlham Press: 2001)

In Quaker-based organizations [such as Earlham] and Friends Meetings, the person who convenes the consensus process is called the "clerk of the meeting." Because the modern use of the word "clerk" has connotations that do not reflect the robust leadership role of this position, the term "facilitator" is often used in other settings. The clerk's job is to recognize common themes of agreement as well as to identify differences and conflicts. The clerk will serve the group by advocating the process of consensus rather than promoting a particular position, including a personal one.

To serve the group effectively as facilitator or clerk, you must be able to fulfill multiple roles during the consensus process. These roles seem to put you on "center stage" and give you a certain amount of authority and power. You must, however, remember that you really are a servant of your group or organization.

In addition, while you as facilitator or clerk have the overall responsibility of fulfilling these roles, you can only do so completely when members of the group also embody these roles to the best of their ability. Your major roles include:

- Educating: Help new people understand what is going on and help other members be more effective participants in the consensus process.

- Tone setting: Model attitudes that create an atmosphere in which people will be caring, considerate and respectful of one another.

- Facilitating: Manage the process while remaining neutral to the content of issues raised.

- Nurturing of group members: Encourage participation of all group members. Also encourage people to use their expertise, talents and abilities.

- Encouraging acceptance of differences: Help widen the group's circle of tolerance and appreciation of differences. This enables group members to feel comfortable enough to participate fully in the discussion.

- Problem solving: *Assist* the group in wrestling and dealing with problems – you are not responsible for fixing the problem.

- Serving as a team player: In groups that have a recorder or secretary, work with him or her to capture the sense of the discussion. Make sure that the results of the discussion are transferred to the decision-makers.

- Evaluating: Ask for feedback from the group to learn how to help the group work more effectively and to ensure that things are going well.

Essential Qualities of a Clerk

Quaker Robert Greenleaf, founder of the Servant Leadership movement, worked for many years in management research, development and education at AT&T. In addition, he was a consultant for M.I.T., the Ford Foundation, and many other organizations. Greenleaf (1987) affirms that the art of managing a consensus process rests on the clerk's having two very important qualities:

1) Faith in the process. The clerk must have a firm belief that consensus will emerge if worked with long enough and must communicate this belief through manner and facial expressions.

2) Skill of language and ideas. The clerk must be willing to try another set of words and ideas until consensus is found.

These are crucial to the leadership of consensus decision-making.

MATTERS OF WEIGHT AND AUTHORITY

Written for the "Governance Working Document," 2001
By Paul Lacey

At Earlham we use decision-making processes derived from, but not exactly the same as, those used by Quaker meetings. Some of the differences are important. In a "meeting for worship for the purpose of doing business," it is assumed that God may make a right course of action manifest by inspiring the words of any person in attendance. Some members of the Earlham community, coming into a meeting for business, may hold exactly the same hope and expectation, but most of us are probably not engaging with one another on that premise. Instead, we come together believing that open consultation and attempting to reach decisions among people of good will means that we can discern the truth, or the wisest course of action, by listening to one another and weighing arguments. The equality we try to practice in our decision-making does not rest on any assumption that everyone in a discussion has the same degree of expertise, or the same amount of lived experience, and both expertise and experience have to be important in trying to reach good decisions.

Here we again borrow and modify a term derived from the Quaker procedures, and speak of someone as having "weight" in some particular discussion.

Someone is said to have "weight" when she or he has a lot of good experience in listening to differing views and finding points of agreement in them, or when she or he has a gift for patient waiting, to let the implications of a decision emerge.

We would also call someone "weighty" who has a depth of ethical perception recognized as solid and dependable by other people. We sometimes say that someone is "the conscience" of a group, not because no one else is conscientious but because we see that this person is especially centered, sees broad implications of an issue sooner than others, and consistently examines the ethical dimensions of problems.

The person of "weighty" conscience may not have as much information as someone else, and ethical decision-making is difficult with insufficient information. We thus also speak of the weight of information or knowledge, and we would call someone "weighty" — entitled to be listened to with very great attention — who had studied a question and mastered its complexities. To be an expert, or to hold a job where one has had to develop a great deal of knowledge, confers some degree of "weight." Long experience conveys "weight." So does having been put in charge of an office or task, "the weight of authority," by which we would recognize that this person is empowered by a board (or a monthly meeting) to take certain actions.

"Weight" is by no means an absolute or permanent acquisition, nor is it distributed or assessed in some simple hierarchical fashion when we try to arrive at a decision. It is always a matter of degree. We "weigh" the contributions each person makes to a discussion

in the same way we "weigh" evidence. Vehemence of opinion, deep personal involvement or long-term interest in a subject, do not automatically confer special weight on the speaker's words.

Official responsibility for an action (for example the responsibility of a president, dean, business manager, librarian to bring in a budget and to administer it according to Board's directives, or the authority of the Board delegated to a faculty to be responsible for a curriculum) confers "authority." Such delegated authority is both legitimate and also a kind of "weight," but what we hope for is a melding of delegated responsibility, "authority," and experience, insight, wisdom, "weight." "Weight" and "authority" should not cancel each other out.

In arriving at a decision, we try to bring everyone with a stake in the outcome into the conversation, sometimes to work toward a consensus, sometimes to give the best-informed advice to someone whose job it is to take an action. All who are involved in such a process are equal in the sense that we are each entitled to share our insight and to hear the views of others. We will rarely be equal in "weight." We will differ from one another in degree of expertise, in experience, in authority, in sensitivity and insight – each of which may confer "weight" on an individual for this decision. None of us owns our weight; it is conferred by how others discern what we bring to the specific case, how well we participate in a common search. And to throw our weight around is to lose it as an ethical or intellectual or spiritual power, in the eyes of our colleagues.

THE ROLE AND MEANING OF CONSULTATION

Adapted from "Governance Working Document," April 2002
By Nelson Bingham, Barbara Caruso, Sara Penhale and Tom Kirk
(a group of former Clerks of the Faculty)

The distinction between "consensus" and "consultation" is at the very heart of our governance system. Confusion of these two processes can (and does) result in frustration and debilitating cynicism. On the other hand, it is precisely the careful conception and use of these twin processes that renders our way of governance practical and workable.

Some decisions, which will affect the vitality of the institution, rest ultimately with one individual (notably the president), and as such, are not subject to a consensus. At first glance, the allocation of decision-making authority to some subgroup of the whole, or even more, to one individual (even the president) would seem to violate the spirit of consensus and to convert the ultimate governance principle here to one of simple power.

This is exactly where the concept of consultation becomes essential to our governance system. Many consensus decisions will, in fact, be decisions about recommendations to the president. These consensus decisions will be reached by committees, departments/programs, or other groups of three to12 members. Generally speaking, our governance documents specify what this consensus recommendation process should be for various types of decisions – personnel, finance, curriculum, student life. It would be practically impossible (even if it were desirable) to require any consensus decisions of the whole community. Indeed, only a limited range of questions will be decided by the consensus of a group as large as the Faculty Meeting.

If the spirit of consensus governance is to be preserved in light of this reality, it is absolutely essential that the president, the Faculty Meeting, the Board of Trustees, or any other ultimate decision-making authority insist upon a thorough and meaningful process of consultation as a pre-requisite for any consensus recommendations and/or for any ultimate decisions. What should such consultation entail?

Every individual and every group who has or feels a significant stake in a given decision must have an opportunity to speak on such a decision. The president and/or any group responsible for either a consensus recommendation or a consensus decision must act to ensure that adequate consultation will occur prior to a decision and must have assurance that, after a consensus is reported, genuine consultation has occurred.

The key here is the idea of genuine consultation. This means that the president and/or any consensus-seeking group must sincerely believe:

a) specific decisions will, over the long term, be better decisions if they emerge from a wide sharing of input from interested community members; and

b) the expression and nurturing of a sense of community within all community members over the long term has value that transcends virtually any specific decision – i.e. the feeling that each of us matters to the community at large is an essential value for Earlham, which provides the more important rationale for active consultation.

Consultation is, thus, never simply an obstacle to efficient decision-making; it is never simply a step to be included in the consensus-seeking process. Rather, it is the very heart of the decision-making process.

It must be emphasized here that this does not mean that everyone will feel wholly positive about each consultation process or about each decision reached by the relevant authority responsible for making that decision. It is the spirit of this process that is essential. The consensus-seeking group must truly respect and want to hear the ideas, feelings, concerns and suggestions of all of those who feel a stake in the decision. That group must engender a sense of trust that each person does matter and that the eventual decision will represent that group's honest discernment of the best approximation of the will of the community. It must be noted here that, on occasion, the consensus-seeking body will have access to information that is not available to the wider community. (Personnel decisions, because of the confidentiality of records, are often in this category.)

Another important facet of consultation is the sharing, after the fact, of relevant factors leading to a decision. Full disclosure of such factors may not always be possible because of the confidentiality of some information; but this goal should be approximated as fully as possible, asking the community's trust in the process and in the decision-making group beyond that point. This trust is an absolutely essential element for consensus/consultative governance to serve the ultimate ends of strengthening the sense of community and reaching the best decisions. Generally, a reservoir of such trust is based upon the cumulative experience of community members with consensus/consultative decision-making. It can be called into question by a specific decision but, if a more pervasive mistrust develops within the community, the sources of that mistrust must be resolved before any real hope will exist that the consensus/consultative process will be made meaningful and effective.

ORGANIZING CONSULTATION

Adapted from a letter to the College community, November 2003
By Doug Bennett

We have come to look to the Faculty to construct the standing mechanisms through which consultation by the President or other administrative officers takes place. The Budget Committee, for example, works closely with the Vice President for Finance in developing a draft budget for the college. When ready, this draft budget is a recommendation to the President, who takes it, or a revised version, to the Board for approval.

Most such mechanisms designed for consultation are small groups — standing college committees — that include faculty (teaching and administrative), students and staff. The logic of such small settings is not just timesaving. We are, I believe, trying to develop a measure of expertise in those who participate, and also trying to provide consultation through dialogue and deliberation — as opposed, say, to petitions, polling or plebiscites. Occasionally there are calls (often from students) for using more expansive settings for consultation, but I believe this would risk shallower input and poorer decisions. It is the quality of consultation that counts, not the quantity of those consulted.

This responsibility of the Faculty to construct the mechanisms of consultation is grounded in the belief that it is better for the Faculty to constitute the standing college committees to provide authoritative consultation than it is for the President or another administrator to create them ad hoc. When no standing mechanism for consultation has been created by the Faculty, however, those bearing responsibility still need to consult broadly, using their best judgment about whom to consult. Occasionally the Faculty or the President will create an ad hoc committee to work on a particular issue.

On some occasions the Faculty can serve directly as a body for consultation. While there certainly are questions where the Faculty as a whole is the most appropriate such body, using it as a general organ of consultation has two problems. The Faculty Meeting engages in dialogue and deliberation as well as any large body with which I have had experience, but it is not a setting for *developing* expertise. So I believe it is best used for consultation when the Faculty can be expected already to *have* a measure of expertise on a topic. And second, the Faculty meeting is only composed of Faculty. As a consultation mechanism, it excludes from participation students or hourly staff.

As they do their work, ad hoc or standing college committees should provide meaningful opportunities for other members of the community to provide comments or constructive suggestions. This may be accomplished, for example, through open meetings or circulation of draft documents. Committees should make a special effort to seek to hear the views of those who may be most affected by a decision.

Whenever we participate in governance, we need to work from initial clarity about "whose decision is this to make?" and "as a consequence of what process?" Lacking this, we should seek clarity — shared clarity — before we plunge into the substance of the matter. The documents in our *Governance Manual* should provide the answers to these questions.

With the lines of responsibility clear, we need to be sure that consultation provides additional perspective or wisdom, not further obstacles or diminished authority. When we participate in consultation and the decision is someone else's to make, I believe we need to do our best to affirm the responsible person's competence, integrity, and commitment to Earlham's values. When we fall short of such affirmations, consultation can turn into something both more painful and less productive.

<u>SOME CASE STUDIES</u>
Usual Process for Making Various Kinds of Decisions

Adapted from "Governance Working Document," April 2002
By Nelson Bingham, Barbara Caruso, Sara Penhale and Tom Kirk
(a group of former Clerks of the Faculty)

We make decisions about different kinds of matters in different ways. Why? One key reason is that relevant competence about various matters is lodged with different groups or individuals. We hire the teaching faculty, for example, because of their expertise about their scholarly field and about educational matters.

Many decisions involve the work of a college committee, but, depending on the matter, that committee may make a final decision, or a recommendation to the Faculty, or a recommendation to the President, Vice President or Dean. The documents in the Governance Manual (especially the Faculty Governance Document) provide authoritative guidance on who makes what kinds of decisions and via what process. Here is an overview of the different ways we make some of the most important kinds of decisions.

<u>Curricular Decisions</u>

The Faculty (which includes all teaching and administrative faculty) has final responsibility for making all curricular decisions. The Faculty makes these decisions in Faculty Meetings, which are scheduled to take place every other week throughout the school year.

Proposals for change in the curriculum normally come before the Faculty Meeting as a recommendation from a committee. In most cases the recommendation comes from the Curricular Policy Committee (CPC). Proposals or concerns to be addressed may be taken to CPC by academic departments or programs, or by divisions, or by administrative faculty (such as the provost, the associate academic dean, the registrar/associate dean of the college). Individual faculty who initiate a proposal or wish to raise an issue usually do so, first, at the department/program or divisional level although there is nothing to prevent such an individual from taking something directly to CPC. (Such a step will very likely prove inefficient since CPC is almost certain to engage in consultation with all relevant academic units.)

All such matters with institution-wide implications are brought by CPC to the Faculty Meeting for approval. Changes in general education requirements (including creation of new requirements), creation of new academic options (such as allowing minors or laying down of majors) generally occur after in-depth study and consultation and a consensus recommendation by CPC. The Faculty Meeting does not respond well to surprises; hence, it is the responsibility of CPC to insure that any proposal has enjoyed full deliberation and thorough consultation before bringing it to the Faculty Meeting. It is common for CPC to create ad hoc subcommittees for the purpose of studying an issue and developing a proposal.

CPC does have the authority, delegated by the Faculty Meeting, to make final decisions regarding a wide range of smaller decisions (for example, changes in majors or minors and approval of new courses).

Certain other committees such as the International Programs Committee, the Committee on Academic Programs, the Advisory Committee, the Athletic Committee, etc. may also bring recommendations regarding the curriculum for Faculty Meeting action. See section VI of the Faculty Governance Document for the charge and composition of college committees with responsibility for curricular matters. Occasionally the Faculty may create an ad hoc committee to consider a major issue regarding curriculum, as it did in creating the Ad Hoc Calendar Committee in the mid-1990s.

Budget Decisions

Each year, the Budget Committee, working with the vice president for financial affairs, develops an annual operating budget for the college. That proposed budget is then taken as a recommendation to the president, who in turn makes a recommendation to the Board of Trustees for final approval. It is also made available to faculty, students and staff for information.

Although the Budget Committee may focus on individual department or program budgets or other specific line items, most of its attention is directed at consideration of the major parameters that shape the budget — enrollment projections, tuition and fees, financial aid and faculty and staff compensation. After a full consultation, the committee will reach consensus on a proposed budget for the next year.

Any member of the community who has a concern about budget matters can raise such issues with the vice-president for financial affairs or the convener of the Budget Committee, either of whom may determine that such an issue should be considered by the full committee.

Governance procedures for making decisions about the budget, and about other administrative matters can be found in Section IX of the Faculty Governance Document.

Faculty Personnel Decisions

Governance procedures for faculty personnel decisions can be found in section IV of the Faculty Governance Document, and in the Faculty Handbook. Appointments of teaching faculty are made by the President, after receiving recommendations from the Faculty Interview and Search Committee (FISC) and the Student Faculty Affairs Committee (SFAC). They make these recommendations working in concert with search committees for each position.

Decisions about reappointment, tenure and promotion are made by the President, after receiving recommendations from the Faculty Affairs Committee and the Student Faculty Affairs Committee. Tenure decisions also need to be confirmed by the Board of Trustees.

In making such recommendations and decisions, FISC, FAC and SFAC follow carefully drawn policies and procedures spelled out in the *Faculty Handbook*, which is approved by the Faculty Meeting, the President and the Board of Trustees. From time to time FISC or FAC may recommend changes in such policies and procedures.

Appointments of administrative faculty members are made by the President following recommendation from the Vice President or Dean who oversees the administrative division in which the person will work. Generally, such appointments are recommended by a search committee. Policies and procedures for making such appointments, and for evaluating and re-appointing administrative faculty members are spelled out in the *Faculty Handbook*.

Community Life Decisions

"Non-academic affairs of the community have been delegated by the faculty, with the concurrence of the Board, to the Committee on Campus Life, which is composed of students, faculty, staff and administrators. Actions of the Committee on Campus Life are subject directly to review and approval by the President of the College. Student Government and all student organizations and activities operate within the framework of policies and procedures approved by the Committee on Campus Life." (That important statement is from the Faculty Governance Document, VIII, A).

The Committee on Campus Life (CCL) is therefore a committee with broad and important responsibility for recommending policies that address community life. While CCL may often report on its work to the Faculty Meeting, it makes its recommendations directly the President. The President may ask the faculty to consider matters that come from CCL before making a decision, and also may ask the Board of Trustees to approve policies of particular importance.

Because several members of the leadership of Earlham Student Government (as well as other students) are members of CCL, this committee can also be an important venue for identifying issues that are important to students and deserve consideration by other committees, by the Faculty or by the President.

Students also have broad autonomy with regard to many aspects of campus life. Governance aspects of these matters are contained in the Constitution of the Earlham Student Government.

THE ROLE OF STUDENTS IN EARLHAM GOVERNANCE

By Newell Pledger-Shinn
July, 2004

At the center of Earlham's approach to governance is the principle that all persons are equally capable of discerning and bringing forth the truth, and that there should be space in the governance structure for each person to do so. By extension, any person likely to be affected by a particular decision should have the opportunity to discuss and comment upon that decision. With these roots in Quaker business practice, we place unusual emphasis on decisions and recommendations reached through collaborative processes. It is hoped that decisions reached in this manner will harness the best contributions of all participants and be better received by the community in light of their inclusiveness. An added value of consultation is the increased bond and sense of community that it creates.

Though an extreme model might employ campus-wide caucuses or plebiscites in service of these goals, the Earlham governance structure instead assigns responsibility for different types of decisions to a variety of smaller groups and persons throughout the community. This allows for more depth and deliberation, and also distributes the significant weight of community business across a variety of individuals, rather than burdening each person with responsibility for the whole.

The good news for students is that nearly every decision-making body on campus includes students as members. Even those that do not include students solicit student comment where appropriate. It is through student representatives on committees that the larger student body can best voice its concerns about key decisions, and it is through committee service that individuals can most directly engage with the governance structure. Through their service on committees students wield immense though often uncoordinated power.

Nonetheless, one of the most common student complaints about Earlham governance is some variation of: "Nobody asked *me* about decision X. What happened to consensus?" In fact, it is rather unlikely that any particular individual *will* be directly sought out for consultation on most decisions. In some cases a person or committee will issue to the campus at large a general invitation for comment. More commonly however, some smaller group of particularly knowledgeable or representative persons will be consulted in lieu of the whole. In other cases a committee comprised of student, faculty and staff representatives may rely on its members to represent the concerns of their constituent groups.

In any of the above cases, the weight of initiative rests with the interested community member to make sure that his or her voice is heard in the process. Typically students can be "heard" by joining or being nominated to the appropriate decision-making group, by contacting their representative in that group, or by writing a letter directly to the group or person responsible for making the decision.

Unfortunately, being "heard" does not necessarily translate into being agreed with. This often leads to that second refrain of student frustration: "I gave my opinion on issue X, but the persons responsible made the opposite decision anyway. Why wasn't I 'heard'?" It is true that any person or group vested with decision-making authority is under the obligation to consult broadly and to seriously consider the viewpoints received, but ultimate responsibility does rest with the person or group so charged. It is frustrating when a decision goes differently than we would have liked, but this does not necessarily mean the system has failed. We must be very careful to distinguish between failure of the appropriate process, and failure of the appropriate process to yield a decision with which we agree.

An important characteristic of student participation in governance is that it is typically of limited duration. The four-year student career is much shorter than many of the other regular planning and decision cycles that influence College governance. Accreditation, for instance, happens every 10 years, while strategic and master planning may cover a span of anywhere from eight to 40 years. Even annual budgets are prepared in the preceding year for the year to come. While any four student years are likely to overlap with a variety of these planning and decision cycles, they are unlikely to see any one of them through from start to completion.

When students complain that the governance structure is unresponsive to student concerns, there is some truth to the charge. A benefit of emphasizing shared decision-making and widely consultative processes is that decisions are more likely to be broadly supported, and over the long term more durable, not to mention of a higher quality for the variety of input. A cost is that these processes can be quite cumbersome and slow. Even when the governance process is moving at relative light speed and substantial issues are raised, discussed and addressed in the course of a single academic year, progress from a student perspective may appear to be painfully slow.

The greatest challenge then in student governance work (and perhaps all governance work) is to comprehend the opportunities and constraints of each particular moment in time. At some points the most productive use of student energies will be to carry through to completion those projects and goals identified as important and initiated by previous generations of students, faculty and staff. At other points, student voices are most urgently needed to contribute ideas and new initiatives for succeeding generations. Within any four student years there will likely be many moments of each type and it is important to know and recognize each of these moments for what they are. Student work in governance will be more rewarding and productive to the extent that it is working with and not against the momentum carried by the other parts of the institution.

Finally, a note on "the administration." On a campus where we urge our students to develop skills in critical analysis and to question the uses of power, we should naturally expect and encourage them to consider seriously the roles and actions of those empowered to conduct the business of the College. While "the administration" may be a tempting target for student activism, it is important also to remember what the administration actually is: a collection of extraordinarily talented and devoted individuals who have been drawn to

Earlham by the very same principles and ideals that draw our students here. It is difficult for students, staff and faculty alike to live up to the expectations of our communal ideals on a daily basis. Holding both these ideals and our lived reality in creative tension, we are all best served when we approach one other with mutual respect and compassion.

Earlham is a place of significant vision, a place where one of the greatest pleasures is to work in collaboration with like-minded student and faculty colleagues in the pursuit of shared goals. The task of continually recreating this institution in the shape of our best ideals is enough to occupy the best thoughts and energy of everyone in our community. In a sense, to join the Earlham community once is to join it for a lifetime. Though its nature may change over time for each of us, participation in shared governance at Earlham is perhaps one of the most rewarding and educational experiences any of us can take from our time here, whether that time is measured in months, years or even decades. There is a place for each of us in governance at Earlham, and it is incumbent on each of us to find that place and to contribute what we can.

Coming To Understand Earlham Governance

Adapted from Governance Working Document, April 2002
By Nelson Bingham, Barbara Caruso, Sara Penhale and Tom Kirk
(a group of former Clerks of the Faculty)

Most faculty and student units of the College — departments, committees, dorms, faculty, or student meetings, etc. — conduct business through the use of consensus; therefore, it is important that community members understand the consensus process in its complexity. Understanding college governance is a process that takes time. Certainly, experience will be the greatest teacher as you participate in faculty or student meetings, department meetings, and college-wide committee work; but we urge you also to take advantage of both formal and informal means of learning about governance.

The formal means of learning about governance include:

a) Referring to this Governance Manual as necessary;

b) Participating in workshops on college governance and consensus that occur prior to the fall faculty retreat and during new student week;

c) Participating in governance-related workshops that are presented on an occasional basis;

d) As a faculty member, attending and participating in all Faculty Meetings; as a student, attending and participating in all-student and all-college meetings; as a staff member, attending and participating in all-staff meetings;

e) Seeking and accepting committee appointments; and

f) Reading a variety of resources on consensus decision-making (see the bibliography, below, for a few suggestions).

There are many informal means of learning about governance as well. Your faculty/student colleagues will be invaluable partners in the process. For instance, if you have questions about what happened during a given meeting, talk it over with others who were there. If you want to understand the background of a given campus issue, seek out someone who has experience or expertise related to that issue. As you begin committee work, the committee convener can explain matters. If you have a question, a dilemma, or an issue to raise, but you do not know where to start, consult with the Faculty Clerk or Student Government officers. The key is to engage yourself with the issues and ask for information or guidance.

Suggestions for Further Reading

Copies of all these are available in Lilly Library.

Howard Brinton. "Guide to Quaker Practice." Pendle Hill Pamphlet 20 (Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill Publications, 1950).

Paul Lacey. "Quakers and the Use of Power." Pendle Hill Pamphlet 241 (Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill Publications, 1982).

George Selleck. "Principles of the Quaker Business Meeting." Richmond, IN, Friends United Press Pamphlet Series, n.d.

Monteze M. Snyder, et. al.. *Building Consensus: Conflict and Unity.* (Richmond, IN: Earlham Press, 2001).

Michael J. Sheeran.*Beyond Majority Rule: Voteless Decisions in the Religious Society of Friends.* (Philadelphia, PA: Philadlephia Yearly Meeting, 1983).

From *Faith and Practice of Indiana Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends*,
Approved eighth month, ninth day, 1986

*[Editor's note: Consensus governance practices at Earlham are adapted from those of the Religious
Society of Friends, or Quakers. Around the world, Quakers are organized into a series of "Yearly
Meetings," regional groupings that include a number of local Meetings or Churches. Earlham is
affiliated with two Yearly Meetings in Indiana, Indiana Yearly Meeting and Western Yearly
Meeting. Each Yearly Meeting has its own "Faith and Practice," a book that sets forth the faith of
Friends and its ways of conducting business. The following statement on governance is from the Faith
and Practice of Indiana Yearly Meeting. Western Yearly Meeting's statement is quite similar. We
provide it here as background to give a sense of how Quakers articulate their governance process.]*

The Church as a Society

The Christian group whose faith and activities have been described in Part 1 of this
Faith and Practice is known historically as the Religious Society Of Friends (Quakers). The
name, Friends Church, is used by many Monthly Meetings, and some Yearly Meetings.

Friends recognize and emphasize the fundamental and essential truth that Jesus
Christ is the Head of His Church; that He dwells in the hearts of His believers; and that, as
they look for His guidance, their understandings are enlightened and they are enabled to do
His will. Members have equal rights and privileges in the Society, modified only by the gifts
they have received and their faithfulness in the exercise thereof. Friends recognize that each
member's gifts and responsibilities are subject to the corporate oversight of the Society.

The choice by early Friends of the term "Society" as the name for the group
indicates clearly their attitude towards organization. The word meant to them a corporate
fellowship, a vitally spiritual individual, without creed, rituals, or any administration of
sacraments. The Religious Society Of Friends is a community of believers among whom
there is but one Master and no human intermediary affecting any individual's relationship to
God.

Individual members and Monthly Meetings exist in community as members of the
body of Christ. As the foot needs the eye, all need each other, for the individual is dependent
upon and accountable to the Society. The spiritual life of the body is directly related to the
free flowing interaction of the Holy Spirit among individual members. To be virtually
Christian, every individual and every Monthly Meeting must maintain a living relationship
with all the members of the Society as well as with God. Thus the spiritual life of each
member is inseparable from his or her fellowship with the Society.

Equality of Rights

Friends recognize the fact that God has endowed each person with gifts and capacities which he or she is to develop and exercise to the extent of his or ability.

Each member has duties and responsibilities varying in character according to the member's talents and the faithfulness with which the member has cultivated them. All have equal rights and privileges in the consideration of the affairs of the body and in reaching conclusions as to the courses of action.

No appointments made for a particular service confer upon the appointed person or group any degree of arbitrary or final authority. Friends recognize no distinction in the rights, privileges and responsibilities of members because of education, race or sex.

Waiting for Guidance

The same reverent waiting that operates in the meeting for worship is also helpful in seeking divine guidance and unity of action in the transaction of business. Holding meetings for business following a period of worship opens the way for the continuation of the religious fellowship experienced during such a period. The right conduct of these meetings, even in routine matters, is important to the spiritual life of all. They are part of the organized undertaking to promote the Kingdom of God, and service in them may rightfully be regarded as service for Him.

Friends' Methods

It is the practice of Friends to give unhurried and sympathetic consideration to all proposals and expressions of opinion as the will of God is sought. Friends endeavor to respect an earnest and sincere minority and, if it seems necessary, may postpone action until Friends have secured more light on the question at issue and attained a greater degree of unanimity. When exercising this privilege each Friend should be certain that the expressed concern and comments are led by the Spirit of God. After due consideration has been given to all points of view, it is the responsibility of the Presiding Clerk of the Meeting to weigh carefully the various expressions and to discern and present to the Monthly Meeting what he or she believes to be the will of God for the Meeting.

When Friends are selected as representatives of the Monthly or Quarterly Meetings, care should be taken so that persons are not selected merely to represent the position of a Meeting but rather that the person selected be the one that is capable of discerning the will of God in the light of Christ.

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