

# Restructuring and Reducing Committees – Handout #11

## THE PROBLEM

The Grande Department had a problem. The department had far too many committees and too few faculty members to serve on them. Since the committee sizes were first established, the department had lost many tenure-track faculty lines and/or shifted to more non-tenure track faculty who were currently ineligible to serve on certain committees. Despite the expectation that all faculty members contribute to department, college, and university service roles, some faculty were over-engaged in service, while other faculty members rarely showed up to committee meetings and hardly ever took on committee assignments. Additionally, there were vague expectations for how much work each faculty member should contribute to each committee, resulting in some faculty carrying more of the weight, and others “free-riding.” Morale was low among the faculty who typically took on committee leadership roles, because they felt the department was taking advantage of their willingness to lead. There were also some committees that were too large, met too frequently, and/or seemed to have outlived their purpose within the department.

## A SOLUTION

The Grande Department decided to conduct an audit of existing committees, while working to reorganize and reduce committee service within the department. The department determined which committees were still needed, and which could be combined. They formally established the purpose for each committee, while also proposing guidelines for how often the committee should meet, the number of faculty members that are needed for each committee, and the assigned roles of the committee. They also classified each committee as having high, medium, or low intensity, which signified the faculty time commitment required to serve. Additionally, the department created a document that listed nine department committees (Table 1), and the three positions wherein the department sends a single representative to the college, university senates, or IRB council. Finally, the Grande Department clarified how many committees each faculty member should serve on to meet service expectations (Table 2). In all, the audit reduced ambiguity regarding committee service within the department and clarified the purpose and requirements of department committees. It became much harder for individual faculty to “shirk” committee work because they had more defined roles.

**Table 1. Committees**

	<b>Purpose of the Committee</b>	<b>How many times it meets and time of year</b>	<b>Number of Members</b>	<b>Assigned Roles of the Committee</b>	<b>Intensity</b>
Merit Review	Make recommendations for merit; provide guidance on merit review materials	3 meetings in April each year	4 faculty	Chair, 3 members	High-intensity
Promotion & Tenure Subcommittee	Work with candidate as they prepare materials; review promotion and tenure applications; review and make recommendations regarding the promotion and tenure process	1 meeting in May to review timeline; review of materials online over summer, 1 meeting to review drafts, 1 meeting to confirm final case	4 faculty	Chair, 3 members; 3 members each focus on one area: teaching, research or service	High-intensity
Admissions and Fellowships	Facilitate the admissions process, including recruitment, review of applications, and selection of students; review fellowship applications and select recipients	1 meeting in fall to review timeline; 1 meeting in January to review files  Submission of final decisions online	5 faculty, 2 doctoral students	Chair, 4 members  Each faculty member presents an even number of candidates	High-intensity
Curriculum Review	Review, make recommendations, and oversee policies on curricular matters; review course proposals	1 meeting to review the process; ad hoc meetings every 6 weeks if proposals are submitted	3 faculty	Each faculty member rotates presenting the proposal and writing the letter	Medium-intensity
Workload Committee	Review workload of faculty; make policy and practice recommendations	1 meeting to review timeline; ad hoc as necessary; work online	4 faculty	Assigned roles	Medium-intensity
Research & Grants	Recommend ways of enhancing the research function of the department	3 meetings a year	3 faculty	Advisory group roles	Low-intensity
Budget & Planning	Make recommendations regarding the department budget and strategic planning; review budget applications	2 meetings in April before department budget is submitted	3 faculty	Advisory roles	Medium-intensity

	<b>Purpose of the Committee</b>	<b>How many times it meets and time of year</b>	<b>Number of Members</b>	<b>Assigned Roles of the Committee</b>	<b>Intensity</b>
Rep to University Senate	Represent the department's interests at University Senate meetings; report University Senate decisions to the department	4 meetings each semester	1 faculty	Advisory	Low-intensity
IRB Representative	Review department IRB applications; answer faculty IRB questions	1-day training at the start of each semester; ad hoc online review	1 faculty	Advisory	Low-intensity

**Table 2. Faculty Commitment to Committee Work:**

Assistant Professors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serve on 2 college/university or department committees</li> </ul>
Tenured Associate/Full Professors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chair 1 department committee</li> <li>• Serve on 2 other college/university or department committees</li> </ul>
Instructional Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chair 1 department committee</li> <li>• Serve on 3 or more other college/university or department committees</li> </ul>