

ACCOUNTABILITY PROCEDURES FOR THE UWM UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE

[Approved 11/26/02]

Introduction

The UWM University Committee (hereafter called UC) serves as the executive committee of the UWM Faculty Senate. The UC generally serves as the hub about which faculty governance turns at UWM and has traditionally been the front-line faculty governance partner with campus administration, to ensure faculty positions and interests are heard and actively pursued (also called "shared governance").

To be an effective governance partner, the UC must often engage in a variety of issues that require professional discretion and, in closed session, confidentiality. Unfettered discussion is expected and necessary. Consensus-building within the UC has been a long-standing tradition; as such, very few formal votes are taken, as discussion is pursued until a position on an issue can be supported by all members of the UC. This collegial approach allows the UC to provide a unified voice for the faculty that is broadly representative of the collective interests of all faculty, in the context of the UWM mission and initiatives/priorities. UC agenda items touch nearly all aspects of faculty life ... academic/research policies and programs, budget, administrative policies and personnel matters. UC members, while engaging in unfettered discussion, will conduct themselves at all times consistent with the UC Operating Procedures, UWM Statement on Professional Ethics ([UWM Faculty Document #2229, Feb 2000](#)) and relevant AAUP statements cited therein. The exercise of appropriate discretion and confidentiality in discussing UC meeting business with non-UC members will be expected and necessary, to ensure UC effectiveness as a governance entity.

While extremely rare, the need to hold a UC member formally accountable for breach of UC Operating Procedures and the UWM Statement on Professional Ethics may become necessary. This set of procedures is intended to guide this process. UWM Policies and Procedures, Chapter 6 (UWM Committees), are silent on dealing with committee accountability and/or disciplinary issues. Therefore, this set of procedures defaults to *Robert's Rules of Order (Newly Revised)*. Specifically, the Chapter entitled "Disciplinary Procedures," frame the following procedures. Accountability measures should only be imposed if the breach of procedures/ethics deals with conduct that is injurious to the UC and its governance functions.

Informal Accountability Measures

Occasionally, UC members may conduct themselves in counter-productive ways, having a noticeable and adverse impact on UC discussion, action and/or ability to function as a governance entity. The UC will make every effort to deal with episodic breaches of procedures/ethics informally. Counter-productive behavior will be discussed by the UC in "closed session;" if the UC member engaging in counter-productive behavior fully agrees to rectify behavior of concern, no further action is warranted. The UC Chair will make confidential

notes to file of these discussions, including any relevant documentation and agreed upon solutions.

Formal Accountability Measures

When the behavior of a UC member becomes patterned, disruptive to UC function, and breaches UC Operating Procedures, formal accountability measures may be indicated. These may include, but are not limited to, requiring a public apology, duration-specified suspension from meeting attendance, and expulsion from the UC. In order to bring forward formal measures, the UC will proceed as follows:

1. The UC will conduct a confidential investigation to prepare charges, if warranted. Three members of the UC will be identified to conduct the investigation, which must include interviewing the accused member. This group must document behaviors of concern, reasons for imposing accountability measures, cite appropriate policy documents, and recommend specific measures, if warranted.
2. The investigation group will present documentation and recommendations to the UC. The UC will consider whether those discussions should be held in closed session pursuant to Wisconsin Open Meetings Statutes section 19.85 of the Wisconsin Statutes. If charges leading to imposing accountability measures are indicated, the UC will make/pass a motion specifying charges and proposed measure(s). A simple majority of members present and voting is required to pass the motion. The UC will provide the UC Member with a confidential letter summarizing actions taken. If the UC Member opts to accept the proposed UC action, the matter will be considered closed.
3. Appeal of a UC Accountability Measure(s) Action:
If the UC Member does not accept the action in #2, above, the member will be suspended from UC participation pending the pursuit of an appeal. Since the UC is the Executive Committee of the UWM Faculty Senate, an appeal of the UC action may be made to the Senate. Such appeal must be made in writing to the Secretary of the University for transmittal to the Senate Rules Committee; the appeal will include the written findings of the UC, all relevant documentation, and a statement articulating why the UC action should not be upheld. Members of the UC will absent themselves from participating in the appeal; this does not preclude UC members being called by the Senate as witnesses, if needed. The decision of the UWM Faculty Senate is final.