

MEMORANDUM
Fairfield University
Secretary of the General Faculty

TO: Member of the Academic Council

FROM: Irene Mulvey, Secretary of the General Faculty

DATE: September 11, 2009

RE: Academic Council minutes

These are guidelines to follow when preparing the minutes of Academic Council meetings.

1. The Faculty Handbook specifies that the Council minutes “indicate the votes of members (i.e., tally and roll calls) as well as the proponents of major suggestions.” Although we have occasionally neglected to record which members voted for a motion, which against, and which abstained in the voting, the practice should be maintained to conform to the Handbook.
2. The Handbook also specifies that committee records contain minority as well as majority opinion; the Council minutes have generally followed this practice and should continue to do so. The Academic Council is the executive arm of the General Faculty; as such it considers, makes decisions and makes recommendations on any matter of academic concern that falls within the purview of the General Faculty, except for matters specifically reserved to the General Faculty. The Council provides the opportunity for exchange of opinion between faculty and administration in the ordinary working of the University. The Academic Council minutes are the only way that faculty will know what the council has done on their behalf, and why it was done.
3. The Journal of Record (1/22/68) indicates that “the gist of all communications [to the Council] be published in the Council minutes.” The communications themselves, including reports circulated at meetings, documentation, etc. should be included in the file of the Council minutes maintained by the Faculty Secretary, but the Recording Secretary and the Executive Secretary should trust their judgment in deciding what to summarize and what to distribute verbatim to the faculty.
4. The council acts by voting on motions. To avoid misunderstandings at a later date, these motions should be reduced to writing before the Council votes; they should be transcribed verbatim in the Council minutes.
5. To facilitate consultations of the minutes:
 - a. number the minutes exactly as the items for consideration are numbered on the agenda for that meeting.
 - b. Write the complete date of the meeting on each page in a footer and number the pages.
 - c. provide a separate underlined caption for each agenda item or topic
 - d. place all motions in separate, indented, boldface, block paragraphs and indicate in boldface the result of any vote on any motion.

6. Minutes must be approved by the Executive Secretary before circulation. Send your transcript to the Executive Secretary (electronically is best) for approval and forwarding to the Faculty Secretary for distribution.
7. Minutes are the only way that most members of the General Faculty will learn what the Council is doing. To allow this to happen in a timely manner, minutes should be prepared for distribution as soon as possible after the meeting, ideally within one week. These draft minutes should be labeled as “DRAFT minutes, not yet approved by the Academic Council.” Minutes are circulated to the General Faculty upon approval by the Council’s Executive Secretary, ideally before the Council’s next meeting; if there are any changes made at that time to the previous meeting’s minutes, those changes are noted in the current meeting minutes. The recording secretary should then prepare a copy of the minutes as approved by the Council and indicate on these that they were approved by the Council with the date of the approval.