

HLC Fact of the Day:
“HLC Assurance Argument: Subcomponents 5B2 and 5B3”
(with specific focus on “faculty voice”)
(September 19, 2017)

In the HLC Criteria for Accreditation, Subcomponents 5B2 and 5B3 say:

5B2: The institution has and employs policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students—in the institution’s governance.

5B3: Administration, faculty, staff, and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.

In our Assurance Argument being prepared for HLC, and in support of the 5B2 and 5B3 standards, this is what we say regarding “faculty voice”:

Faculty Voice

A number of faculty governance bodies exist for addressing academic policy, requirements, and processes. Eleven standing faculty committees work individually and together, as well as with administrators and students, to address the core academic and policy issues of Lindenwood University. The [Faculty Committee Handbook](#) describes each committee. [Faculty committees](#) (e.g., General Education Committee) take action on key academic issues and recommend changes in policies and programs. Committee accomplishments for the 2015-16 academic year are summarized [here](#).

[Faculty Council \(Bylaws\)](#) consists of two faculty members from each St. Charles School and at least one faculty member from each Belleville Division. Proposals for new and revised programs and policies are reviewed by the Faculty Council and the Deans Council before implementation. The Faculty Council [meets](#) bi-weekly, rotating online/e-vote meetings with face-to-face meetings. Elected faculty co-chairs represent each campus. The system provost, the Belleville campus provost, and the VPHR serve as ex officio members. The council’s principal responsibilities are to

- evaluate and make recommendations on faculty (positions, candidates, promotions, hirings, initial ranks, professional responsibilities, and recognitions),
- evaluate faculty personnel policies and procedures and recommend periodic revisions and improvements,
- define and promote scholarly activities,
- review and recommend policies and/or actions appropriate to address issues of concern submitted by faculty members, faculty committees, or the administration, and
- participate in the review and planning of university-wide initiatives.

This council thus serves as the voice of the faculty. [All-faculty meetings](#) occur at least twice each semester on each campus. These meetings are conducted by the Faculty Council. Faculty members, deans, and administrators are invited to attend. An Executive Session held at the end of these meetings after the dismissal of administrators provides a confidential forum to discuss any faculty questions or concerns.

Lindenwood has made significant improvement in its shared governance processes and establishment of a strong faculty voice. As Jason Lively (then Chairperson of Faculty Council) and Deb Ayres (VP for HR)

explained in their 2014 HLC Annual Conference [presentation](#), “Lindenwood has evolved into an institution that is benefitting greatly from a well-established system of shared governance.” The following initiatives have been part of that evolution:

- Development of an active and fully-functional Faculty Council that is closely involved in the formulation and approval of changes in academic policies and procedures. As Lively and Ayers note, policies follow a defined path through the governance system. Typically, a committee or school presents a proposal to the Deans Council. If approved, the proposal goes to Faculty Council for its review. If a proposal is not passed by Faculty Council, it may be returned to the committee/school or Deans Council for further discussion and modification.
- Restoration and codification of faculty rights, including Faculty Council’s direct participation in faculty member appeals of nonrenewal or termination for cause.
- Reduction of teaching loads to allow for improved pedagogy, student advising, and dedication to committees and faculty governance contributions.
- Establishment of regular communication between faculty members and the administration, including regular meetings between the president and the Faculty Council chairs.
- Creation of an academic freedom statement, composed by the Faculty Council and the administration, that appears in the Employee Guidebook and is integrated into the campus culture.

As a result of these changes, the American Association of University Professors voted unanimously to lift its sanction of Lindenwood University on [June 18, 2016](#).

To learn more about accreditation and Lindenwood’s comprehensive evaluation and site visit scheduled for November 6-7, 2017, and to see the countdown clock to the visit, go to the HLC page on the Lindenwood website here: <http://www.lindenwood.edu/about/higher-learning-commission/>.

Past HLC Facts are archived [here](#).

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