

From: APAFT Committee

To: Executive Committee

Date: Dec 3, 2010

Re: Report on Charge 4 of the APAFT Committee

Charge 4: Investigate policies at other institutions on vote of no confidence, especially regarding procedures for transparency, protection of affected parties, etc. and bring information forward for discussion.

Discussion: Very few procedures for votes of no confidence can be found on the books. One of the ones found was instituted at Cal Poly - San Luis Obispo in 1994. It is not clear if this procedure is still in effect. Another procedure found covers all votes by the entire faculty at Idaho State University. This procedure has been used for votes of no confidence as well as for votes on other issues of interest to the faculty at large. At both Cal Poly and ISU, the faculty senates are the starting points for petitions for a vote. At ISU, if at least 20% of the faculty petition the faculty senate for a vote, then the senate must comply with the demand. The ISU policy on a general faculty vote is at http://www.isu.edu/fs-handbook/part2/2_4/2_4b.html (Scroll to the end of the web page to Appendix B to Bylaws of the Faculty Senate.)

Two instances of unions conducting the vote of no confidence in university presidents were found (University of California system and Indiana University of Pennsylvania). A more frequent finding was that votes of no confidence were handled through faculty senates or similar governing bodies (Columbus State University, University of Toledo, University of Alaska Southeast). Each governing body devised its own procedure for handling the vote after it decided to hold a vote. The voters were either the entire faculty or just the senators. These votes tended to concern provosts, chancellors, and presidents. For one dean vote each college at a university had its own senate, and a college senate held a vote of confidence in its dean (University of Toledo). Otherwise, details about votes on deans are lacking.

An interview with Mae Kuykendall, who does research on votes of no confidence, appeared in *The Chronicle* in 2009, <http://chronicle.com/article/How-to-Fire-Your-President-/47315>. Her comments in the interview, as well as an e-mail she wrote to Wade Kotter, are consistent with what we found while looking for information. Formal procedures are rare, and very little information about votes makes it to the local press. The faculty who were involved in the vote are reluctant to provide details. In general, faculty turned to a vote of no confidence when they could not get satisfactory resolution of a situation that they saw as undermining their ability to work effectively.

Over the years, the American Association of University Professors has produced several statements about evaluation of administrators. In general, votes of no confidence are frowned on. The AAUP emphasis is on having a strong review process so that issues are brought out in the context of evaluation and feedback rather than as a result of a no confidence vote.

<http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/comm/rep/FacultyEvaluationof+Admins.htm?PF=1>

The AAUP does note that confidence in an administrator is one of the items that should be evaluated. One of the news reports about a vote of no confidence was actually about the results of an evaluation that included a question on rating confidence in an administrator on a scale from 1 (no confidence) to 5 (full confidence) (Mississippi State University-Meridian).

Conclusions: Vote of no confidence is rare and there is no widely used procedure for it. Currently, such a vote is an indication of very poor communication and conflict resolution and/or inability to build consensus. However, if desired, a procedure as part of regular PPM can be set up. On the other hand, better communication by administration and stronger voice of faculty in the shared governance may make development of such a policy unnecessary. Suggestions in this regard will be made in the committee reports on charges 6 and 7.