Summary of Bylaws Revisions Process and Updates

2013

Introduction:

The current Bylaws of the Faculty of Tufts University School of Medicine were last approved in 2000 and had not been reviewed comprehensively in over a decade. With the arrival of new leadership at the University, all schools were requested to review and update their bylaws and faculty handbooks. The medical school review was timely, given both the 2013 University NEASC reaccreditation and the upcoming medical school’s February 2014 Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) reaccreditation preparation and site visit, and the importance of clarifying the governance and organizational structure to meet standards related to institutional compliance.

Over the past two years, a small faculty working group (FWG) of five senior TUSM faculty representing the basic science and clinical departments, with administrative support from the TUSM Office of Faculty Affairs, reviewed and updated the existing Bylaws of the School of Medicine.

In addition to the faculty working group, governing bodies and standing committees were consulted and provided input or updated language regarding membership and practice. The Office of Faculty Affairs also solicited several internal reviews prior to presenting this draft to the dean’s team including a communications review, provost review, and University legal counsel review.

The document required both administrative and structural updates including:

- Extensive reformatting and clean-up of outdated information:
  - Removal of department, affiliated institution, and educational programs (moved to Faculty Handbook and web pages)
- Improved readability, grammar, and removal of redundant information; and
- Procedural language moved to the Faculty Handbook.

The following revisions were recommended:

- Separate the Faculty Governance (Bylaws) section from the Handbook (the latter providing more policy and procedural information);

- Retitle “Faculty Governance” section as “Bylaws of the Faculty of Tufts University School of Medicine” for easier reference;

- Eliminate the redundant, introductory pages 1-6, i.e., Introduction, Deanship, Faculty, General Faculty Meetings, Standing Committees, Executive Council, Faculty Senate, Faculty Participation in Trustee Committees (this information is detailed in the body of the document); Eliminate the Organizational Chart. Recommendation is to update and consider including on the TUSM Website or in Handbook;

- Reorganize the Table of Contents to consolidate information as appropriate and provide uniform format throughout per current version of Roberts Rules of Order (i.e. reduced from 10 Articles to nine (9) Articles);

- Move rosters of current affiliated institutions, educational programs, and departments to Handbook so these can be kept current and will not require Bylaws amendment to update;

- Combine the “Faculty” and “General Faculty” into one governing body denoting which members are voting, non-voting, and ex officio members of the Faculty;
• Clarify the specific rights and responsibilities for each of the three governing bodies and eliminate redundancies for the Executive Council, Faculty, and Faculty Senate;

• Update voting status for faculty groups (in keeping with other medical school’s practices) and for ex officio participants;

• Clarify the faculty’s ability to request reconsideration within a defined period for proposed major changes for research or teaching mission;

• Reorganize and update Standing Committees section to provide information that applies to all committees up front, and consolidate information about each standing committee in alphabetical order of committees for easy access:
  o Consolidation of the Student Evaluation and Promotions Committee and the Student Ethics Committee into one committee that handles the full continuum of student issues; and
  o Renamed Scientific Affairs Committee to “Academic Research Awards Committee” to better reflect committee responsibilities;

• Updated review of departments section; and

• Denote opportunity to vote both in person and electronically (in most cases, unless specified otherwise).