

Statement on Working Groups

This document provides an overview of best practices regarding the relationship of GFA to working groups, and working groups to standing committees and to the faculty in general. It is a “living document,” which may be updated with faculty and GFA experiences.

1. A working group is a process by which a specific issue receives focused attention. Faculty committees, members of the faculty, or members of the administration suggest topics for working groups to GFA.
2. The chief responsibilities of GFA regarding working groups are their establishment, composition, and the recognition of the service contribution of faculty who serve on them.
3. To ensure that faculty service does not expand unnecessarily and working groups run smoothly, GFA will limit the number of working groups that meet concurrently. Working groups will only be established when the work cannot be performed by existing standing committees.
4. In collaboration with interested members of the faculty and administration, GFA will provide a charge to the working group, proposing the timeframe for its work, the outcomes expected, and possible pathways for any recommendations (e.g. the standing committees and forums to which recommendations may be referred). GFA will also suggest a process for interim feedback.
5. The working group conducts its tasks independently from GFA or any other standing committee. However, working groups will communicate with the faculty during their deliberations, giving updates on their work, and inviting input. GFA can serve to facilitate such communications.
6. Once the working group develops its recommendations, the working group will appoint a member to shepherd them forward, in consultation with GFA. If this role extends beyond the initial term of the working group, it will be recognized as continuing committee service. The recommendations may be taken forward in a number of ways:
 - a) The recommendations may be taken to relevant standing committee/s. The standing committee may propose changes to the working group’s recommendations as part of a collaborative discussion.
 - b) Should the working group disagree with the conclusions of a standing committee, the working group may choose to take their recommendations to the faculty directly.
 - c) In the absence of a relevant standing committee, the working group may take its recommendations to the faculty for discussion and/or a motion at a faculty meeting.
 - d) The working group will provide a final report of its work and deliberations regardless of whether the working group outcomes include recommendations for action.

As with all policy decisions, faculty may endorse action for implementation, but faculty support may not be sufficient for its implementation. In particular, certain recommendations, such as those with budgetary implications, may depend on factors beyond faculty support.