The following are informal notes taken during the breakout session. They are not intended to serve as a verbatim transcript of the proceedings.

A large group (approximately 25 individuals) attended the 11:30 session. The session moderator laid out discussion parameters by synopsizing the crisis in scholarly journal costs, and linking the faculty publication process in such journals with the “culture” of peer review for advancement (as seen in the workings of the Senate Budget Committee). A lively discussion followed with all attendees actively engaged. The most important conclusions are listed immediately below, with a fuller narrative of the dialogue following.

Overview of Discussion and Top Themes

- Discussion focused intensively on how to link faculty promotion and advancement with published output. Key issues include how to guarantee a rigorous review for excellence in any new venues (journals, simulations, etc) that appear. This led to an open-ended discussion of how “metrics” might be created to give objectivity and a framework for evaluating works regardless of whether they appear in high-priced journals, Open Access journals or elsewhere.
- Some speakers argued that the faculty has “subcontracted” peer review to journal editorial boards—if so, they further argued that the faculty must “take back” the process as media evolve.
- Everything important about peer review can be identified and separated from the processes of editorial review, publishing and dissemination—and the work of peer review must be in the hand of the faculty.

Running Narrative of Discussion

Metrics and Linkages Between Publishing and Advancement

A general discussion began with several questions regarding how or whether publishing activity can be linked with rank and step. Highlights:

- “Suppose we were to move away from using publishing in high-priced journals and give Open Access more equal weighting—how would peer review change?”
- “How would the Budget Committee establish evidence of solid scholarship if this were the case?”
- Disciplines vary—humanists often favor full books published versus journal articles.
- Scientists have discovered many ways of finding the “Smallest Publishable Unit” and this fuels the proliferation of new journals (print and electronic).
  - This causes a proliferation of articles
  - “This form of PR is a ‘sham’”
  - “We need new self-discipline in publishing—a smaller number of higher-impact articles [and other forms of output] would be a good thing”
One speaker questioned whether “expensive equals high impact” –he said that an online report he published on the Berkeley campus has been cited far more than any of his peer-reviewed works, suggesting that impact is more complex than simply looking at “big name” journals. "We’ve subcontracted’ peer review to prestigious journal editorial boards who tell us what’s deserving to be published—when we could be doing that ourselves. “If you don’t use journal editors in this fashion, perhaps the home department cannot fully evaluate certain kinds of work without outside evaluation—nice thing about editorial boards is that they cover many institutions.”

Reinvigorate Academic Culture

“The faculty must force a ‘reinvigoration of academic culture’ that is less in the thrall of the journal marketplace”
- “The academy has ‘abdicated’ the responsibility of evaluating quality in published works to journals”
- “Open Source journals would be fine if we had an authentic community that really did perform evaluation of the work”
- [Moderator:] “The [Budget Committee] system is flexible to a large extent as long as you can satisfy the quality standards”
- “The Academy has created incentives to drive the “Smallest Publishable Unit” force—we need to take back the APM—we can’t afford to wait for ‘outsourced’ review by journal boards—we need to take back the ethics and process”
- We need to change the criteria to encompass evaluation of new modes of dissemination (software, multimedia, simulations)—but there must be objective evidence and guidelines to provide fair review publications in those new media

Metrics and Understanding Quality and Impact

“We need new ‘metrics’ for evaluating the quality of the many new journals that are published, and in turn we need new ‘metrics’ for objectively evaluating faculty publishing in light of the many venues that appear”
- “Citation rates say ‘something’ about quality but they don’t say ‘everything’ we need to know about quality”
- “Sometimes footnoted references have more influence than we think”
- We know how papers reference each other—this constitutes a ‘web of community’—this community must remain intact as scholarly communications change, and it’s already more significant than the journal title
- “Discussing the ‘quality’ of a journal is an ‘input’ measure (faculty writing and research)—not an ‘output’ measure
- “The [dossier] review process guides the Budget Committee to what it should read—tech reports don’t get the same treatment as journal articles but might have more impact over a career”
- “The processes of evaluation, publishing and dissemination vary widely across disciplines—whatever the processes are, excellence in writing and research is vital [getting back to the metrics discussion string]
- “Are we letting the journal crisis ‘drive’ a review of criteria for faculty advancement?”
- Is the relationship between acceptance and turn down rates a better indicator than citation rate?
- “We need more ‘post publication’ indicators to help peer reviewers—citation indexes, letters, other impact indicator”
- “Junior faculty may be in a better position to offer guidance and make comments on the how to evaluate newer open access journals”
- “There is a culture of ‘what has worked before’ at play on the Budget Committee which is handed down to new committee memberships—annual workload of the committee is already high”
- Quality of faculty is a key concern, and measures are complex to isolate and evaluate

Peer Review Can be Separated From Publishing Processes

“We must retain the ‘peer review culture’ whatever avenues of publishing and dissemination unfold”
- To do so, it’s helpful to break the publication process into three parts:
Editorial Production
- Peer Review
- Mode of Dissemination (print, e-journal, open access, Web site, etc)
  - “These three processes can be disconnected and are movable to future electronic forums that may appear
    - “The academy is conservative and slow to adopt new structures”
    - “Structural change must build upon prestige”
    - “It takes a long time for things [articles] to appear”
  - The Academy must be more aggressive [with metrics and retaining peer review]
  - “The separation of content, editorial and dissemination procedures—the whole system presents a risk for the entrepreneurial activity of starting a journal. Should libraries take this over? Not likely to happen.”
  - “It’s vital to recognize that UC Berkeley peer review is closely linked with national and international communities (societies, etc)”

Campus Peer Review is Closely Linked to Larger Spheres of Community
- “Faculty evaluation must be transferable to new environments”
- UC Systemwide needs to be involved in identifying what sorts of new metrics to specify [NOTE: It was not clear whether the speaker was referring to the Academic Senate or the UCOP.]
- “Scientists and Humanists needs to talk more about the contrasts between the academic life in the Sciences and the Arts & Humanities—Arts and Humanities faculty comprise 19.9 percent of the faculty systemwide”

Relationship Between Publishing and Advancement
- “Within the Humanities ‘culture’—is it possible to break book-length works into sections (e.g., 10-12 chapters) in order to facilitate career development between the ‘moments’ when books are published?”
- “For example, book sections [and working papers] could be available on the Web of ‘open review’—but senior faculty may be more comfortable with this.”
  - “We must understand the various academic cultures [in disciplines] in order to evaluate those cultures and move forward with changes”
  - “The problem isn’t the Budget Committee—they’re flexible—the problem lies at the departmental level”
- “The ‘rush’ for tenure hastens works and may have an impact on quality—many books would benefit from more research before publication”
- “The Academy must accept new publication venues and do its best to influence scholarly societies”

Conclusion
Moderator Bogy concluded by urging people to attend the second session on “Changing Academic Culture” and coming up with some specific recommendations for the Senate.

notes by Terry Huwe
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