



Governance Advisory Committee Report to Sessions

Status report on discernment of the PYM structure

Origin of Work

1. The Administrative Council formed the Governance Advisory Committee in the Spring of 2022 as a single committee supporting all three councils.
2. Current Committee Members Appointed are:
 - a. Suzanne Day, Member - Nominating Council Representative, Westfield Monthly Meeting
 - b. Robert Greene, Member - Quaker Life Council Representative, Princeton Monthly Meeting
 - c. Bruce Haines, At large member, Providence Monthly Meeting
 - d. Tucker Manchanda, Member - Young Adult Friends Representative, Newton Monthly Meeting
 - e. Jeff Perkins, At Large member, Chestnut Hill Monthly Meeting
 - f. Neil Holzman, Member - Administrative Council Representative, Camden Monthly Meeting
 - g. Roy Zatcoff, Clerk, At Large member, Camden Monthly Meeting
 - h. Andrew Anderson, *Ex Officio* - Treasurer, MM of Friends of Philadelphia
 - i. Christie Duncan-Tessmer, *Ex Officio* - General Secretary, Chestnut Hill Monthly Meeting
 - j. Linell McCurry, *Ex Officio* - Chief Financial Officer, Lansdowne Monthly Meeting
 - k. Melissa Rycroft, *Ex Officio* - Presiding Clerk, Pennsdale Monthly Meeting
3. The Initial Charge to the Committee is to:
 - a. Evaluate the current governance structure that has been in place since 2015
 - b. Recommend procedural and structural changes to strengthen PYM's governance function.
 - c. Assess whether the councils are completing annual self-evaluations, review findings from evaluations, and take steps to ensure a robust ongoing evaluation process.
 - d. Communicate with the councils regularly on its work.

Evaluative Concerns

1. The reality of a shrinking pool of Friends who are interested in or available for council service and clerkship, and orderly succession and knowledge transfer between Friends serving the Yearly Meeting, compared to the number of required spots in the three councils.

2. Concern raised about effectiveness of orientation and training for new council members.
3. The low level of engagement by some Friends and the departure by some council members before the end of their terms.
4. The complexity of communications among the current three-councils and the burdens on staff to support and participate with three separate bodies.
5. Recruiting and nominating challenges voiced by Nominating Council.
6. Concerns voiced by some members of the Quaker Life Council who were unclear about their roles and job descriptions.
7. The challenge of participation by Friends at a geographic distance by some Quarterly Meetings are not nominating members to Nominating Council as intended.

Continuing Evolution

1. **The structure has evolved over time**, based on the evaluative concerns raised previously and to the reformed Governance Advisory Committee.
2. Councils and staff have made changes as challenges became evident.
3. The evolution has been healthy and dynamic. Governance Advisory Committee is supportive of this approach.

Examples of Dynamic Change

1. The PYM Clerks and Council Clerks formed a Clerks Group several years ago to coordinate communications and joint areas of work across councils. It meets monthly.
2. The Governance Advisory Committee was reformed to support all councils.
3. A Policy for Naming Assistant Clerks for Councils and Committee
4. Governance Advisory supported the prompt completion of the Clerks' Group plan for a joint council orientation/reorientation day in the fall of 2022.
5. An updated self-evaluation form that was used by all three councils this Spring.
6. The Committee Reviewed the data and comments from each council's self-evaluations to support its work, but agreed each Council and its Clerk is responsible for taking their own responsive action.
7. Administrative Council appointed three of its members to serve as At-Large members of Nominating Council on an interim basis starting in March 2023. This has provided more "hands and hearts" for the work, brought new ideas, has deepened the Admin. Members' understanding of nominating challenges and provides Nominating with a first-hand understanding of the strengths the Administrative Council needs.
8. The Council Clerks created a new schedule for "Council Saturdays" so the three Admin. Council Members shared with Nominating could serve both councils.
9. The Administrative Council now contacts Quarterly Meetings to build connections.
10. Starting in August, the councils will use a new schedule to reduce the total number of council meetings and better align their schedule with Continuing and Annual Yearly Meeting Sessions.

Ideas Subject to Further Discernment

1. How might we better align the number of Friends available and their individual gifts with the needs of the Yearly Meeting, while maintaining reasonable time commitments?
2. Can there be reduction in the frequency of council meetings?
3. Can more work shift to committees, sprints, etc. that meet between council meetings?
4. What are the opportunities for increased collaboration between Administrative Council and Quaker Life Council?
5. Would the nominating function work better if it were more closely linked to Admin and Quaker Life Councils?

Recommendations

1. Governance supports **continual discernment and adaptive changes over time**, with the goal of increasing structural simplicity and more productive alignment of structure and community.
2. To this end we will:
 - a. Share what we have learned more broadly and seek input.
 - b. Recommend continued incremental changes for the foreseeable future.
 - c. Keep evaluating and assessing progress.

Queries for Friends

1. What would be the impact of:
 - a. Councils further reducing the frequency of their meetings and shifting more of the work to committees that will meet in between council meetings?
 - b. Increasing collaboration between Administrative Council and Quaker Life Council?
 - c. Combining Administrative Council and Quaker Life Council into a single council?
 - d. Moving Nominating function into a committee of the unified Councils?
2. What further outreach can be recommended to share with Friends to encourage participation in councils and committees?