

Faculty Governance Minutes

A Compilation for 1868–2008

online version

(22Sep1868 thru 8Dec2010)
Compiled by J. Robert Cooke
on 19Mar2011

Introduction

Faculty governance has a long and distinguished history at Cornell University – having been initiated when the first faculty was assembled in 1868 – and has remained active continuously to the present (2011). During the early years the faculty met weekly, but more recently, monthly meetings have been the norm. As the faculty grew, so has the number of faculty who actively participate in governance.

This report contains the written minutes for 2,090 meetings during the past 140 years and has resulted in a lengthy record of 16,049 pages (minutes plus addenda). The scope of the faculty's attention has varied widely over the years, reflecting changing customs and interests. This compilation is a rich snapshot of Cornell University's history and hopefully will be utilized as a resource by university historians. This resource will be useful also as background in the ongoing process of governance. Many topics persist over the years and are revisited. For example, in the minutes of November 11, 1925, "The Professor of Latin, Professor Durham, moved that the President be requested to appoint a committee to investigate the matter of absences before and after the Thanksgiving Recess."

The Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections <http://rmc.library.cornell.edu/> preserved these historical records and made the necessary repairs to the older, aging bound volumes before they could be scanned.

Most of these volumes, 1957 to present, were provided by the Office of the Dean of the University Faculty <http://www.theuniversityfaculty.cornell.edu/>

The scanning and optical character recognition (OCR) tasks were managed by the Cornell University Library's Digital Consulting and Production Services <http://dcaps.library.cornell.edu/> Fiona Patrick's competent and always helpful role is gratefully acknowledged. The project involved a combination of outsourced and in-house scanning and post processing tasks.

Contents

Minutes: All of the minutes for the academic years from 1868 to the present are contained on this DVD as Portable Document Files (PDFs).

During the pre-typewriter era these minutes were handwritten in laboratory notebooks. The pages in these were numbered consecutively within each of these early books (1868-1883). Then from 1883 the pages

are numbered consecutively across the successive bound volumes (through 2006). The minutes from 2006 forward have not been bound yet so these pages do not contain consecutively numbered pages. Instead, we resort to internally generated page numbers that are displayed (only) by the reader software. That is, the eventual page numbers, when these more recent minutes are formally bound (for the years from 2006 through December 2010) will necessarily differ from the page numbers used herein.

From the initial meeting in 1868 and for the next twenty-seven years the minutes were hand-written (by a number of historically noteworthy faculty). 1895 was the first year that the minutes were typewritten, although some printed materials, such as resolutions were inserted into the minutes of the immediately previous years. A second technological transition occurred when the computer and word processor arrived on the scene. For consistency with the page numbering, the scanned volumes (with OCR) were used for the years 1996-1998, 1998-2000, 2000-2002, 2002-2004 and 2004-2006, rather than the machine-readable files that were available for those years. From September 2006 forward only the machine-readable minutes (without absolute page numbers typed onto the pages) were available and were used. (These minutes are in the Supplementary Resources folders on the DVD.)

The minutes for the two most recent academic years intentionally will not be included in the open access repository, eCommons.

Each PDF file of minutes includes a bookmark for each meeting to facilitate quick access. These file may be read, and text may be extracted. However, any modification would disable the full-text index that's described next.

Searches

Full-text searches are the most powerful and useful means for locating content pertaining to a specific topic of interest and this has been implemented for all the years for which *typewritten* minutes were available (1895+). However, a handwritten index for the years 1868-1883 (but *not* for 1883-1895) is included, but it includes only names, not the topics discussed. A more complete index for the early years (1868-1896) is needed because these years are *not* included in the full-text index for the years 1896-2010.

Full-Text Searches (1896-2008): Either double-click the link (in blue) or open the “Faculty Minutes INDEX.pdx” file to initiate a search. The index named “Faculty Minutes INDEX.pdx” will have been already selected when the “Search” (not “Find”) command is selected on the Edit menu. (Fig 1). Provide a search string or “Use Advanced Search Options” at the bottom of the dialog for more complex searches. After a search using the index has been completed (Fig. 2), the “hits” are presented in a scrollable list. Use the disclosure triangle to display the selections for a particular file. The “hits” are displayed. Hover the mouse over an entry to see the page number for the found text that contains the embedded search string.

Click on a found entry to open the relevant file with the found string highlighted. By default the found strings are displayed in relevance order. A chronological listing is displayed if the “Sort by” drop-down menu below the list (Fig. 2) is set to “filename.” To make another search, choose the “New Search” button.

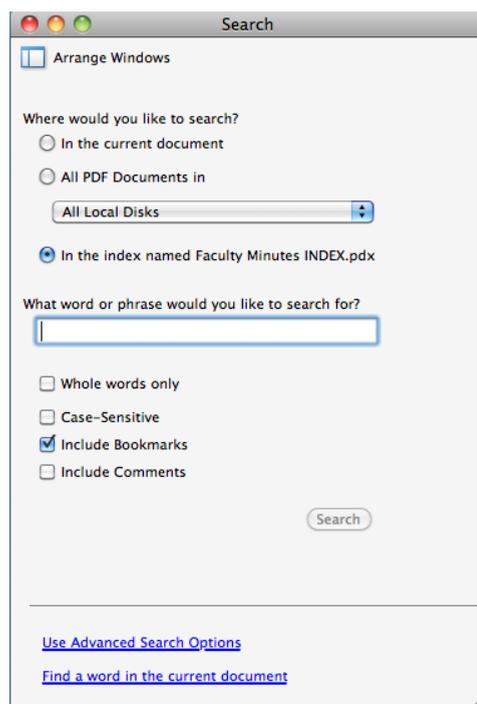


Fig. 1

Four supplementary search tools are provided:

a) A traditional index: Many of the archived bound volumes contained indexes. The several indexes from these volumes were retrieved from the OCR text and corrected. Minimalist indexes for the remaining years (1942-1979; 2006-2010) were created and added. The “1896-2010 Merged Index of Faculty Minutes.pdf” is on the DVD. This was created by alphabetizing the individual indexes, but *without* combining the individual, similar terms, so some extra effort is needed to use this index. Furthermore, the individual files were created by various persons at various points in time so there’s an inherent lack of consistency. (The early years of handwritten minutes (1868–1895) are not included in this index. See item c) below.

b) Agendas, as posted on the Dean of Faculty website, were converted into full-text searchable PDF directories for recent years (1990-2010) to provide an additional topical search and connecting thread.

c) A handwritten index for 1868-1883 (not covering 1883-1895) provides a cross-reference to the individuals mentioned in those minutes.

d) Faculty Meeting Dates are listed with starting page numbers. Two versions (16 pages each) are provided:

1. Reverse-chronological order (with the recent, most frequently consulted years first).
2. Chronological, more easily searched, version.

These lists provide hyperlinks to the minutes. The reverse-chronology list provides a hyperlink for each meeting since 1986 and when clicked, opens the minutes for that date. Double-clicking the year-dividers (in larger font) opens the associated PDF to its first page.

For the chronological listing, double-clicking opens the relevant PDF file to its first page, but with the bookmarks panel displayed (Fig. 3). Then, use the bookmarks to navigate to the specific meeting date of interest.

To display a lower level in the structure, click a disclosure triangle. Click on a month-year bookmark to open the minutes for that meeting. The traditional index for that bound volume, if available, is always displayed at the bottom of the bookmark list with section dividers.

Note: If after viewing a particular set of minutes you wish to locate another meeting, remember to use the “previous page view” to return to this listing.

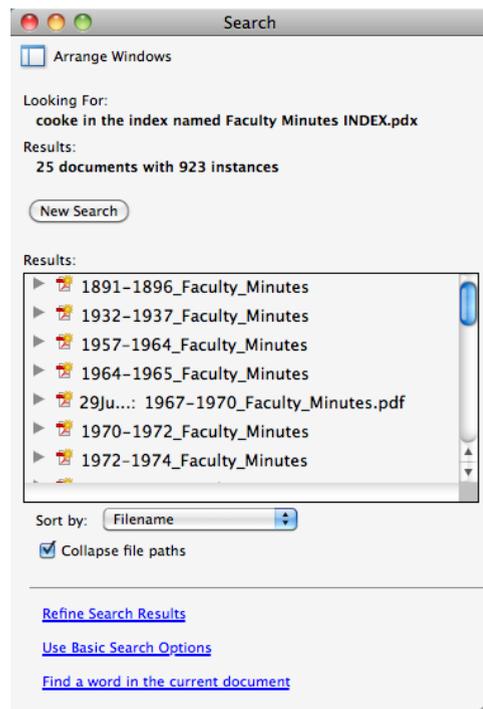


Fig. 2

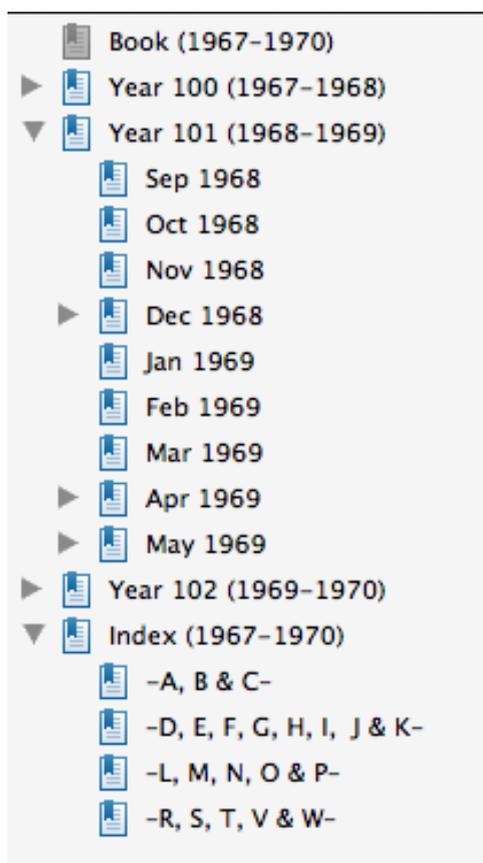


Fig. 3

Discussion

The most direct, brute force search process is simply browse the text, but that really isn't a viable approach with 16,766 pages. Nevertheless, the individual files in the folder "Cornell Faculty Governance Minutes" may be opened individually if desired. (If these are moved to a hard disk, do not tamper with them – as that would disable the full-text index.)

The more powerful, full-text search, described above, searches across all the files (without opening them individually) and does so very quickly using an index. (*Note:* Do not tamper with the folder, "Faculty Minutes INDEX" and do not modify or relocate the files of minutes or the ".PDX" file. If you wish to transfer the files onto your hard disk for greater speed or convenience, move the entire contents of this DVD (excluding the Supplementary Resources) being careful to preserve the hierarchy of the files and folders.

The text of the typed minutes was recovered using optical character recognition. Due to the uneven quality of the originals and the limitations imposed by the narrow margins and the resulting non-flat pages, some text was imperfectly retrieved. Hence, a full-text search may fail to retrieve all text being sought.

For a more exhaustive, redundant search, we've provided a merged set of the indexes (copied from most of the PDFs), plus newly created indexes to cover some of the years when the minutes were typewritten, but contained no index. These bound volume indexes were created by many different individuals over a span of more than a century. Hence an unevenness in consistency and thoroughness will be obvious. There entries were sorted alphabetically into a common list, but without combining similar terms or otherwise simplifying them. In addition to manual searches, the resulting index is full-text searchable because the PDF was created from a machine readable file.

When thoroughness matters, we suggest performing a full-text search using this manually created index to augment a full-text search of the collection of minutes. This merged index provides the page numbers for topics of interest. To then quickly locate the pages of interest, use the Meeting Dates files which include the page ranges for each volume. Use the page numbers and bookmarks to locate and to open the desired files. The dates of the meetings in the reverse-chronology listing (only for 1896-2010) are linked to the actual minutes. However, The remaining dates (1868-1896) and all the entries in the chronological listing merely link to and open the correct PDF file; you must then use the bookmarks (always displayed when the file is opened) to turn to the specific minutes. Hyperlinks to these resources are provided in the next section.

Many of the resources and intermediate files used to create this compilation are included on the DVD for the verification purposes and for making future updates.

Links

- [00\) Introduction \(top of this file\)](#)
- [01\) Full-Text Search of Minutes \(1896-2008\)](#)
- [02\) Merged Traditional Index \(1896-2010\)](#)
- [03\) Handwritten Index \(1868-1883\)](#)
- [04\) Agenda Search \(1999-2010\)](#)
- [05a\) Meeting Dates \(reverse-chronological\)](#)
- [05b\) Meeting Dates \(chronological\)](#)
- [05c\) Academic Year vs Beginning Page Number](#)

Sponsorship

This project was sponsored by The Cornell Association of Professors Emeriti (C.A.P.E.)

http://www.emeritus.cornell.edu/activities_events/events_home.html

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Online version note: The transcripts for the 18 meetings of the immediate past two years (17 Sep 2008 thru 8 Dec 2010) have been intentionally excluded in this online, open access version.

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