

The Faculty Workload Working Group (FWWG) has requested a Committee of the Whole discussion at the November 1 Faculty Meeting to discuss possible changes to Part One, Section VI of the faculty handbook. We plan to send a draft to the faculty on October 28 in preparation for this discussion.

One of the themes that has arisen repeatedly from different sources (including CAPT) is a desire for more detail and clarity regarding criteria for promotion and, to a lesser degree, for tenure. A particular issue is the wide range of faculty activities (e.g. advising and participating in campus events) that are valued by the College but not clearly recognized for promotion and tenure. Indeed, faculty handbooks at many other colleges include both more detail and more inspirational language on criteria for promotion and tenure. This draft draws on these sources.

One particular question we hope to discuss at the Committee of the Whole is whether it is adequately clear that lists of examples are not meant to be prescriptive or exhaustive. That is, we do not want to make it sound as though we are creating long checklists of activities that all faculty must engage in, or that other activities cannot "count."

We are also in the process of drafting a revised version of Part One, Section XI (Promotion) that we hope to share with CAPT, FEC, and the faculty as a whole in the next few weeks.

**Proposed language for Faculty Handbook, Part One, Section VI
Faculty Workload Working Group
October 23, 2013**

VI. EVALUATIVE CRITERIA FOR CONTINUED SERVICE AND ADVANCEMENT IN RANK

A. Preamble

Learning—learning that will enable students to become wise, responsible, thriving citizens—is Skidmore’s fundamental enterprise. The College’s Mission Statement notes that “[u]nderpinning the entire enterprise are faculty members’ scholarly and creative interests, which inform their teaching and contribute, in the largest sense, to the advancement of learning.” The Faculty certainly is distinguished by its philosophical commitment to lifelong inquiry, the discovery of knowledge, and the fostering of creativity. This commitment informs our work in the classroom, lab, and studio. But the Faculty also distinguishes itself by its commitment to the Academy and to society; the Faculty contributes to a community of scholars broadly conceived and prepares students to play their role in the husbandry of the human community. This dual commitment is what it means to be a teacher-scholar.

Skidmore College is an undergraduate institution, and as teacher-scholars the Faculty not only serves students as exemplars of lifelong learning, but also guides them in acquiring the knowledge and skills an individual needs to pursue his or her life’s path creatively and productively, and to develop along the way the wisdom required to meet life’s often

unforeseeable challenges. Lifelong learning does not end within the confines of the Academy, but must stretch throughout its members' lives, and, importantly, into the community and its destiny.

The College has a commitment to the teacher-scholar and responsibility for coordinating, guiding, and enabling the members of the Faculty to carry out the College's fundamental enterprise. When evaluating faculty for continuation of service and promotion in rank, the teacher-scholar is what the College has in view. The excellence characteristic of the teacher-scholar will be evident through professional productivity, through engaging students in developing their learning, and by sharing in the work that is an indispensable part of academic life. These are often referred to, respectively, as "research," "teaching," and "service." While the nature of a faculty member's professional work may, in most cases, be relatively easily circumscribed, the faculty member as a teacher and engaged citizen of the community can involve more fluid parameters. The classroom, laboratory, and studio are the primary, though not exclusive, sites where teaching occurs; and College governance and Departmental activities are among the most obvious, though certainly not exclusive, channels through which a faculty member may help to shape the curricular and extra-curricular life of Skidmore. Just as professional excellence is what informs and provides the basis for excellent teaching, so professional and teaching excellence informs the quality and character of one's service to the life of the Academy.

B. Tenure-Track Faculty

Skidmore College seeks to hire, retain, tenure, and promote faculty members who, in addition to successfully performing their duties, bring intellectual acumen, commitment to Skidmore's mission, integrity, and energy to their work on behalf of their students, their discipline, their department or program, and Skidmore College as a whole. In pursuing these goals, Skidmore prizes the diversity of its faculty. Our academic community is enriched through the broad range of academic backgrounds, interests, and perspectives a diverse faculty brings to its work. This diversity is reflected in the variety of ways faculty roles and responsibilities are structured. Moreover, Skidmore recognizes that the balance of an individual faculty member's commitments and responsibilities will vary according to his or her individual strengths and interests; the needs of departments, programs, and the college; as well as the development of the individual's career.

Decisions to reappoint, **tenure, or** promote faculty members at Skidmore are based on the quality of their credentials in three areas: performance as teachers, achievement as scholars or artists, and contribution to the welfare of the college community beyond the classroom. Teaching of high quality is paramount, the primary criterion for retention or advancement; no degree of excellence in scholarship or artistic achievement, no record of unusual productivity will compensate for unsatisfactory teaching. Yet high-quality teaching is but one of three criteria, and alone will not suffice. Skidmore seeks to develop and retain first-rate teacher-scholars whose professional achievements beyond teaching demonstrate a will and capacity to make significant contributions to **their fields**. Skidmore also expects faculty members to assume responsibility for the common life of the institution in ways that are commensurate with their interests and roles and with the institution's purpose.

Just as there is no single mold into which all Skidmore faculty must fit, so there is no single way in which all faculty are expected to attain excellence. Nonetheless, it behooves the College to articulate general criteria identifying areas of performance that form the basis of faculty review and advancement. The College must also establish standards that clarify expectations regarding the qualitative levels of performance with respect to these criteria that must be reached in order to receive positive reviews needed for contract renewal, tenure, and promotion.

This section of the Handbook sets out the criteria and standards that ground judgments regarding reappointment, tenure, and promotion in academic rank. It also discusses the kinds of evidence to be used by CAPT, the Dean of the Faculty/Vice President for Academic Affairs, the President, and, ultimately, the Board of Trustees in making those judgments through the process of faculty review.

Definitions of terms relative to Reappointment, Tenure, and Promotion in Rank. For purposes of this Handbook:

- *criteria identifies areas of performance upon which evaluative judgments are based;*
- *standards are qualitative descriptions of performance that establish levels at which criteria must be satisfied in order to warrant favorable personnel judgments;*
- *judgments are personnel recommendations and decisions made by responsible groups (such as CAPT) and individuals (such as the Dean of the Faculty/Vice President for Academic Affairs);*
- *evidence comprises documents and other supportive materials submitted as part of the dossier that are used by those charged with making judgments in the faculty review process to determine whether a candidate for review has satisfied the applicable standards for the personnel decision at issue; and*
- *sustained performance is performance that establishes a clear pattern over time (over the period of time considered in a review). Such a pattern could be a trend (a trend toward improvement), and it could admit a small number of instances that are inconsistent with the overall direction (the odd class that does not work well for identifiable reasons).*

The criteria used to evaluate faculty for contract renewal, promotion in rank, and tenure emphasize fulfillment of faculty duties and responsibilities as described in this Handbook through

- *successful teaching,*
- *maintaining an ongoing program of research or creative activity, and*
- *providing effective service and engagement in the community.*

as each of these is described in this Handbook.

Evaluation criteria also include

- *performance of other mutually agreed upon duties and responsibilities, as specified in a faculty member's letter of initial appointment or as modified in subsequent correspondence, and*
- *professional conduct consistent with the standards described in this Handbook.*

TEACHING: Whereas the primary importance given to teaching follows from Skidmore's mission as an undergraduate institution, the College recognizes that effective teaching takes many forms, is probably inseparable from the instructor's personality, and may be more an art than a science at its core. Hence it defies summary or categorical attempts to describe it. Generally speaking, however, successful instruction exemplifies a sustained interest in teaching as a vocation that cuts across courses irrespective of their disciplinary or interdisciplinary content. *It* encompasses skills *in* course management and design; *effective* classroom manner, modes of presentation and delivery of course materials; and knowledge and mastery of one's subject. *These will be addressed below.*

Defining itself first and foremost as a community of teachers and learners, Skidmore invites faculty to share their passion for their disciplines and their understanding of connections between their disciplines and others with colleagues and, most of all, with our students. This commitment to student learning stands at the heart of our mission.

The College expects faculty to fulfill their responsibilities as teachers by facilitating the intellectual or artistic development of their students in scheduled courses and in other curricular and co-curricular contexts (e.g., through independent studies and advising) in which instruction occurs. More broadly, the College expects faculty to retain a career-long commitment to teaching and supports their professional development with a number of resources that can assist them in meeting this challenge.

It follows that the quality of a faculty member's contribution to student learning – his or her success as a teacher – is the most important criterion for evaluating the performance of teaching faculty. To receive contract renewal, tenure, or promotion, a member of the teaching faculty must provide evidence of continued success in teaching at a level of accomplishment satisfying the applicable standards. No matter how significant they may be, achievements in other areas of faculty work cannot counterbalance ineffective teaching.

Evidence of effective modes of delivery *might* include organized presentations; a contagious enthusiasm for one's subject; an ability to foster creativity; skill in generating discussions leading to central insights or in funneling impromptu comments toward the same end; imaginative, on-the-spot formulations of provocative contexts for crystallizing enduring questions and experiences relevant to the human condition beyond the limits of a single discipline; receptivity to the expression of student views both as contributions and as a source of discovering points of confusion.

Any evaluation of the teaching of Skidmore faculty should take into account the following features of successful teaching:

- *Motivation and Mentoring.* Through their commitment to and enthusiasm for their subject matter, successful teachers stimulate their students' intellectual curiosity or artistic vision and cultivate intellectual humility. They model for their students the high standards of performance and professionalism appropriate to their disciplines, provide them guideposts toward attaining those standards, and hold them consistently accountable. Successful teaching inspires, guides, and supports students in their courses as well as in their self-directed research, independent study, and senior projects.
- *Expertise.* Representing the current state of a discipline or field is crucial to successful teaching. Knowledge informs not only the range and depth of course materials, but also pedagogical methods and goals. Knowledge nourishes the imagination and deepens the appreciation for the complexity and interconnectedness of materials. In short, knowledge makes comprehensiveness and rigor in teaching possible, and by acknowledging the limits to their own expertise, faculty members model academic integrity and demonstrate the need for life-long learning.
- *Course design and delivery.* Courses should be designed with well-structured content that reflects disciplinary standards and Skidmore's standards and expectations for learning. The relevant elements of course design may include integration of course components, laboratory exercises, assignments, and examinations. The development of these elements, and the generation of new courses, is itself a feature of successful teaching.
- *Fostering student learning.* Successful teaching brings students to engage course materials in a manner that broadens and deepens their intellectual horizons, and may do so employing a variety of strategies and techniques, such as lectures, discussion, group activities, writing, etc. But all successful teaching creates an environment that leads to the students' successful mastery of the course materials and furthers them as independent learners. Successful teachers continue to develop materials and pedagogical techniques that further this end. Part of the successful presentation of course materials includes responsiveness to student participation; this includes, among other things, providing timely and helpful feedback on assignments and examinations, making themselves available to students outside of class, offering advice and counsel about students' education paths forward in the near and long term. Ultimately, the litmus test of successful teaching is a faculty member's ability to enable his or her students to develop as self-guided, critically engaged scholars or artists. Such success will be marked primarily by students' active engagement with the discipline and the quality of their resulting work. It is true that students must do their part as well, but a faculty member's fundamental job is to encourage and help them do so. No amount of expertise or attention to the individual activities that go into teaching can compensate for an overall lack of success in fostering student learning.

Informed judgments about a colleague's teaching should be based on evidence relating to the preceding features of successful teaching that takes into consideration the arc of a candidate's career and development, and work done at the various levels of the curriculum. Such evidence

may be obtained in a variety of ways, including but not limited to reviews of syllabi, class visits, observations of colleagues, discussions of pedagogy, and careful readings of student course evaluations.

This scarcely exhausts the ways effective teaching might manifest itself, of course, and candidates may wish to present other evidence.

SCHOLARSHIP: Activities leading to the advancement of knowledge and/or the enhancement of the arts on the Faculty's part redound favorably on Skidmore as an institution of higher learning. *Skidmore expects members of the faculty to remain actively engaged – as participants and not just as observers – with the continuing conversations and innovations that constitute the lifeblood of an academic career. Specifically, Skidmore expects its faculty to cultivate, over the course of their careers, the scholarly or artistic independence sufficient to define problems and issues in their areas of expertise, which they then engage in their own work. Developing such a mature perspective on one's discipline enables one to integrate and evaluate the elements that constitute both its history and its present developments.* What is more, insofar as its results are normally published or exhibited, scholarship in particular invites the critical scrutiny of peers, who are in the best position to assess its worth, and ensures the College of the Faculty's continuing involvement in the ongoing, self-critical discourse of the profession. Similarly, recitals, performances, and exhibitions afford teachers in the performing and visual arts opportunities to demonstrate their creativity and are the equivalent of scholarly publications and research. Effective teaching and sound scholarship are mutually reinforcing; in other words, Skidmore expects its faculty to be *teacher-scholars: to be* active in the profession because scholarly *and artistic* pursuits revitalize teaching even as teaching points scholars *and artists* in new directions.

For purposes of evaluation and in keeping with Skidmore's respect for diversity in the professional aims and accomplishments of faculty members, scholarship is to be defined broadly. It denotes, *for instance*, not only original research, that is, investigatory analyses of primary data leading to discoveries in one's specialization, but also work that crosses disciplinary boundaries toward integrating knowledge, studies that bridge theory and practice in applied fields, and work that reorganizes existing information in creative ways or interprets it for students and non-specialists, be they colleagues or laypersons. *Without intending to be comprehensive, exhaustive, or categorical, the following are offered as broadly descriptive of types of scholarly and artistic activity:*

- *Discovery encompasses traditional research that creates new knowledge through original investigation that may be theoretical or empirical, disciplinary or interdisciplinary, or some combinations of these. Construed broadly, this dimension of professional development also encompasses the creation of new works of art or musical composition and writing works of fiction, poetry, or creative nonfiction.*
- *Integration involves the critical evaluation, synthesis, analysis, integration, or interpretation of the research or creative work produced by others. It may be disciplinary, interdisciplinary, or multidisciplinary in nature and includes the varieties of artistic interpretation and performance.*

- *Application involves applying disciplinary expertise or the results of existing scholarship (produced by oneself or others) to the investigation or solution of intellectual, social, or institutional problems. In the arts it can involve mastering a new performance repertory or exploring a style of creative activity (e.g., a style of painting) developed by someone else. Such work involves activities that make use of one's special areas of knowledge or expertise, and it demands the same levels of rigor and accountability traditionally associated with the scholarship of discovery or the scholarship of integration. Application may also include a scholarly focus on the nature and best practices of delivering the materials of one's discipline to student and other audiences.*

Evidence indicative of significant achievement includes but is not limited to books, monographs, and articles published in recognized peer-reviewed scholarly journals and by reputable presses; performances; exhibitions; funded grants; and conference presentations and invited lectures.

In the end, the expectations, challenges, styles of presentation, and standards for research or creative activity can vary considerably by discipline. Accordingly, the judgments of the members of CAPT and academic administrators regarding a faculty member's research or creative activity should be informed by the advice of departmental colleagues and other knowledgeable peers (as expressed in letters of evaluation), especially regarding such factors as disciplinary norms, the effect on research productivity of doing work with undergraduate research students (e.g., students involved in summer research), and other relevant conditions within the discipline or the Skidmore department. Such advice is particularly important in setting expectations for the quantity of scholarly or artistic productivity in different disciplines.

COMMUNITY SERVICE: Service to the college community goes beyond tasks the fulfillment of which Skidmore assumes rather than rewards — attending department and Faculty Meetings, for example, advising students (which includes the whole range of student-faculty relationships outside the classroom), holding office hours, taking part in recruiting and evaluating personnel, etc. (see Part One [Faculty Rights and Responsibilities], Article VII [Rights, Obligations, and Responsibilities of All Faculty]). Service presupposes a sense of responsible citizenship, or collegiality, and is essential at a residential *liberal arts college*. Community service, in a word, expresses the extent of one's commitment to the institution, *a commitment that transcends parochial interests*.

Yet flexibility is needed in determining the quality of a faculty member's *community* service because the term *includes* an array of activities. *Participation in faculty* and *shared governance is an especially important option requiring skills and commitment* that *answer the needs* of the *College*. Other common and *clear* examples *of service* are contributions that directly stimulate the intellectual atmosphere of the College or sustain conditions for stimulating it – arranging field trips and symposia, presenting *and attending* public readings or lectures, sitting on panels, and, on a less formal day-to-day basis, exchanging ideas and debating issues of common concern. *Community service also includes the various ways one renders service to one's discipline or profession such as reviewing manuscripts, serving as an external reviewer, or holding professional office*. Although reappointment, tenure, or promotion should not be considered as a reward for

administrative or committee work, the skills, counsel, or vision so demonstrated may answer real needs. These and other special aptitudes or achievements **will** strengthen a candidate's case.

For the purposes of evaluation, effective service is defined as applying one's time, talents, and energy to perform or assist others in performing the necessary work of advising, faculty governance, departmental or programmatic administration, oversight of adjunct faculty and other personnel, development and oversight of curriculum, and other extra-curricular activities, such as attending community events. As citizens of an academic community, faculty are responsible for performing their fair share of this labor, which must be accomplished if departments and Skidmore are to function effectively and students are to be well served. Because of the importance of service to the educational mission of the College, satisfying the appropriate standard relating to this criterion is a necessary condition for contract renewal, tenure, or promotion.

Any evaluation of the work of Skidmore's faculty according to the criterion of effective community service should consider the following relevant areas:

The broad categories described below encompass the range of professional activities that faculty members can undertake in order to fulfill their responsibilities in service. Faculty members are not expected to perform active service in all of these categories in any one review period or even across an entire career. However, they are expected to demonstrate that they are effectively performing their fair share of this important faculty work.

Service to students. Advising includes such activities as assisting students in planning academic programs, helping students make career plans and decisions, providing feedback to advisees regarding their overall academic performance and progress, writing letters of recommendation, making referrals to Skidmore's support services (both academic and non-academic), assisting students in working through and resolving academic problems. The concern for the personal and academic well-being of students that this work requires is expressed in the time and care that faculty invest in the advising process. In performing this work, faculty need to attain and draw upon knowledge of programmatic and general education curricula and academic policies. Effective advisors encourage students to complete their academic programs and support the learning process by providing accurate and timely academic information and advice.

Service to departments or academic programs. This area of service encompasses the various forms of shared work that are particular to academic departments and programs. This includes developing, vetting, and delivering a department's or program's discipline. The effectiveness of this work is guided by a faculty member's knowledge of disciplinary practices on a national level, the particular goals of a department at Skidmore, and the contribution of a department to the general curriculum at Skidmore. Such work can be ongoing (e.g., attending department meetings, managing an endowed fund, sponsoring a student organization, directing student honors projects and independent studies/research) or episodic (e.g., assisting in a departmental review, participating as a member of a search committee, or other standing or ad hoc groups formed to accomplish the goals of the

department or program, advising students and writing letters of recommendation). Effective faculty help to advance this important shared work.

Service to the College. Faculty participates in governance by attending college assemblies and the Faculty Meeting, as well as meetings of their departments or programs. Faculty can serve the College as a whole by taking on formal responsibilities such as serving on governance committees, task forces or work groups, or taking on administrative duties, such as chairing a department, directing a program, or assuming some other administrative post. Service includes informal activities such as assisting at Admissions events, directing a student research symposium, performing or speaking at an alumni event or at an event on campus, or advising student organizations. Faculty may also serve Skidmore by undertaking activities with external groups that increase the visibility of Skidmore or otherwise advance Skidmore's mission.

Service to the academic profession. This area of professional service includes, but is not limited to, holding office or some other position of responsibility in a state, regional, or national professional or disciplinary organization; serving as an evaluator, officer, or consultant for an accrediting body or as a member of a departmental evaluation team at another institution; serving as a member of a program committee or conference planning committee; refereeing manuscripts for publication; or engaging in other forms of consulting in the service of one's discipline or professional community.

C. Pre-Tenure-Track Faculty

Criteria for pre-tenure-track faculty are (1) teaching excellence, as defined above for tenure-track faculty, and (2) progress toward the terminal degree (see Part One, Article V [Appointments to the Faculty], Section D [Pre-Tenure-Track Appointments]).

D. Non-Tenure-Track Faculty

1. *Library Faculty*

Decisions to reappoint or promote Library faculty members at Skidmore are based on the quality of their credentials in three areas: librarianship, achievement as scholars and members of the profession, and contributions to the welfare of the college community. Librarianship of a high quality is paramount, the primary criterion for retention or advancement; but Library faculty must demonstrate an ability to make significant contributions to the profession through scholarship and professional activities. In addition, Skidmore expects faculty members to assume responsibility for the communal life of the institution in ways that are commensurate with their interests and roles and with the institution's purpose.

Librarianship: The mission of Library faculty is to enhance, further, and support learning and research activities at Skidmore College. This mission is realized in many ways:

developing collections which support the curriculum; organizing the collections for physical and intellectual access according to standards of the Library profession; facilitating access to information resources beyond the Library walls; and interpreting the Library's collections and wider information universe through reference service, printed guides, and bibliographic instruction. This mission requires that Library faculty be both educators/scholars and administrators.

The following criteria encompass both the scholarly and administrative nature of librarianship and provide the basis for the evaluation of candidates for reappointment and promotion.

Library faculty must demonstrate mastery, creativity and initiative in all of the following areas which apply to their assigned responsibilities: (1) developing library collections to support Skidmore's educational mission; (2) organizing and analyzing library collections to provide ease of both intellectual and physical access; (3) identifying and meeting users' needs by applying knowledge of information retrieval techniques, research strategies and subject disciplines; (4) collaborating with students and faculty to support their educational and research activities; (5) promoting effective use of information through individual and classroom instruction; and (6) planning, implementing and managing services and programs which support the library's mission.

2. *Artists- and Writers-in-Residence*

Decisions to reappoint or promote Artists- and Writers-in-Residence are based on their credentials in three areas: performance as teachers, achievement as artists/scholars, and contributions to the welfare of the college community beyond the classroom.

3. *Teaching Associates*

The criteria for reappointment and for promotion are: (1) excellence in teaching; (2) professional growth that maintains currency and enhances effectiveness in the classroom, studio, or laboratory; and (3) service to the department/program and College.