Committee of Committees Meeting
May 8, 2008
Murray-Aikins Dining Hall
10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

The Faculty Executive Committee is charged with convening the Committee of Committees (CoC), which comprises faculty members of the Faculty Executive Committee (FEC), the Institutional Policy and Planning Committee (IPPC), the Committee on Appointments, Promotion, and Tenure (CAPT), the Committee on Academic Freedom and Rights (CAFR), the Committee on Educational Policy and Planning (CEPP), the Curriculum Committee (CC), the Faculty Development Committee (FDC), Athletic Council (AC), and any current ad hoc committees whose presence FEC believes would be helpful. The CoC convenes at least twice a year to assess the interactions among committees and between committees and the administration, and to discuss ongoing issues (problems or successes) in committee operations.

The second CoC meeting of AY 2007/8 took place on Thursday, May 8, from 10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Faculty members from all of the above named committees were present.

What follow are notes on the meeting. A condensed version of a committee’s report is given first, followed by a synopsis of reactions to and discussion of that report, where applicable. The order of reports is the order in which they were actually given. The purpose of these minutes is to make the Faculty and the Administration aware of concerns within the governance structure, and of observations on college operations by members of standing committees.

Furthermore, FEC will share these minutes with appropriate members of the Administration as a courtesy. The Administration has the option to respond in a separate document, which will be made available on the FEC website.

1. Committee on Appointments, Promotions, and Tenure (CAPT).

   Report. Relations with the Administration were both amiable and procedurally correct. All of CAPT’s recommendations were heard and adopted. The Chair of CAPT joined the chairs of FEC and CAFR in a very lengthy series of meetings with the Administration, eventually reaching a thoughtful consensus on changes necessary to Part VI of the Faculty Handbook.

2. Committee on Educational Policies and Planning (CEPP).

   Report. CEPP has been busy working on several matters (assessment, UWW motion, proposed academic grievance policy [see the CAFR report, below], status of Periclean Society, Dean of Studies restructuring report, ACIS, etc.) and has had excellent interactions with the Administration. Deans Pat Oles and Muriel Poston have served on CEPP with distinction: the committee acknowledges and honors their contributions and
will miss their perspectives, knowledge, and leadership. The committee was pleased that the Faculty voted unanimously to modify CEPP’s membership, replacing the DOF with the Vice President for Academic Affairs. CEPP’s work this semester on the UWW matter has underscored the importance of having the VPAA on CEPP: for the remainder of this year Susan Kress has attended meetings regularly at the committee’s invitation and has offered invaluable insights. CEPP has also worked productively with several other administrators this semester: Registrar & Director of Institutional Research Ann Henderson, Interim Dean of Special Programs Jeff Segrave, Interim UWW Director Jim Kennelly, and Dean of Studies Michael Ennis-McMillan. CEPP’s work this semester has revealed how well the Administration works together and with others.

3. Committee on Academic Freedom and Rights (CAFR).

Report. In the face of often difficult conversations, CAFR was pleased with the amicable atmosphere and responsiveness of the Administration. CAFR was engaged in discussions by email and in person on two more public issues. The first centered on the re-writing of Part 6 of the Faculty Handbook. The CAFR Chair represented the committee on the “working group” (faculty and administrative members) for this task, which met many times since August ’07. The new language was adopted by faculty vote at the February 29 Faculty Meeting. The second issue was raised by CAFR in the spring of 2007 and was brought to the attention of Michael Ennis-McMillan, Dean of Studies. CAFR was concerned last year about the increasing number of students looking to CAFR as the place to settle grade disputes. Early in March ’08 the Dean of Studies issued a report to CAS, and later to CEPP with recommendations for developing an academic grievance policy to address these disputes. CAFR submitted the a letter to the Dean of Studies regarding the report, and it is the committee’s understanding that CEPP will be addressing this issue in the near future.

4. Faculty Development Committee (FDC).

Report. FDC submitted a proposal to the DOF recommending an increase in the level of support for Travel to Read. Although the increase included in the DOF’s budget request for the coming year is less than the amount requested, the level of support will be increased to $1,250 for the coming academic year (pending Board approval). FDC has appreciated the DOF’s and VPAA’s inclusion of FDC in discussions regarding sabbatical funding. Although sabbatical proposals have been reviewed by FDC for many years, involvement in funding decisions began two years ago. FDC’s involvement has served to make more transparent the process of requesting sabbatical funding. The DOF joined FDC for a few additional meetings as FDC reviewed proposals, discussed policies, etc. FDC submitted a proposal for sabbatical support recommending the establishment of a new budget line in the DOF Operating Budget for additional sabbatical funding. This recommendation was not included in the DOF’s budget requests for the coming academic year. FDC recommends resuming discussion about this proposal with the DOF next year, with a plan to resubmit the proposal next fall. In the meantime, before the end of the current academic year, FDC plans to send a memo to the DOF and VPAA recommending
that the level of sabbatical support available (by way of discretionary funds) for the next round of sabbatical applications be at a level at least equivalent to the level available for this year’s applicants. Notification about the level of funding should be announced before the deadline for the next round of sabbatical proposals. Beginning academic year 2008/9, the funding allocated for the Summer Technological Grants will be folded into the general Faculty Development Grant funds. The kind of projects funded through this category may still be funded by submitting a proposal to one of the four review cycles occurring each year (two per semester). This year FDC invited Bill Tomlinson (BT, Sponsored Research Officer) to join in discussions of FDC proposals, which allows him to learn quickly about faculty projects involving research and teaching innovations. This is a productive partnership, and FDC extends the invitation to BT to join these discussion sessions in the coming year. FDC expresses appreciation to Mark Hoffman for his guidance and support in his work as Associate Dean with members of FDC.

Discussion. A member of CAPT noted that the original Mellon grant for enhancing sabbatical funding focused not just on scholarship but also on rewards for service. A member of FEC noted that the current Service Survey was, among other things, intended to help bring clarity to the issue of being compensated for service. FEC expects to submit the results of the survey and a brief report to the VPAA and to FDC.

5. Curriculum Committee (CC).

Report. As in the fall, CC enjoyed good relations with the Administration this spring semester. Dean of Studies Michael Ennis-McMillan regularly attends meetings and has been joined by Laurie Baker, the new Academic Advisor in the office of the Dean of Studies; the presence of the DOS has been especially helpful for decisions related to all-College requirements. Associate Dean of the Faculty Mark Hoffman also sits on the Committee, and did an excellent job of promptly making preliminary reviews related to staffing and budgets of curriculum proposals. Finally, Ann Henderson, Registrar, has been an invaluable resource throughout the year, especially in responding to the myriad of questions that surround the final editing of the new college catalog each spring. CC’s major tasks this spring were reviewing and approving the revisions to the Environmental Studies major and minor; and reviewing the new Fall 2008 Scribner Seminars (all but one being approved). In the latter effort the committee consulted regularly with FYE Director Beau Breslin. This was, however, the first year in which the Scribner Seminars were not screened by a subcommittee before coming to CC. Given the number of revisions requested and given the volume of work that CC must complete in the spring for the upcoming catalog, the committee strongly encourages the FYE Director to reconsider the process for submitting proposals for new seminars, especially an expansion of the submission timetable and the reinstatement of a preliminary review process (perhaps by a subcommittee of the FYE advisory board). The Chair of CEPP discussed with the CC Chair the possibility of restarting the exchange of minutes between the two committees: such an exchange is in the CEPP operating code but not in the CC code. Although neither chair foresaw any problem with this arrangement, no formal resolution was reached.
Committee of Committees, Spring 2008

Discussion. It was asked whether CC has any firm deadlines for instituting the writing requirement. The answer was no, the committee has received no word from the Administration; chairs should ask for clarification at the upcoming Department Chair/Program Director’s retreat. In response to the notion of a subcommittee of the FYE advisory board screening FYE seminar proposals, a FEC member cited the trend (exemplified by membership on IPPC) of signing up for one committee and finding oneself on three committees.

6. Institutional Policy and Planning Committee (IPPC).

Report. From a certain point of view this was a good year, though not all agenda items were completed. Major items this year included retiree health care, the budget, several Campus Environmental Committee issues, proposal of the IGUTF successor committee and the Responsible Citizenship Task Force, and the Student Employee Handbook. The possibility of implementing the third leg of optimization (examining the costs/benefits of increasing net fiscal enrollment by 100 students) was raised. The creation of the two new committees is controversial: on the one hand, the work is valuable, but on the other hand, there is concern about creating more committees.

7. Athletic Council (AC).

Report. Enjoying a strong sense of esprit de corps, AC advanced several of its agenda items this semester and worked well with the Administration, in particular with Athletic Director Gail Cummings-Danson, Dean of Studies Michael Ennis-McMillan, and Dean of Student Affairs Pat Oles, all of whom sit on AC (Ennis-McMillan as the Dean of the Faculty’s designee) and have been exemplary colleagues. Next year AC will miss Dean Oles’s leadership, wisdom, and commitment to Skidmore athletics. In April, AC met with Cathy DeLorenzo from Admissions to discuss the College’s athletics-related admissions policies and procedures. AC welcomed President Phil Glotzbach to its last meeting of the year so that he could respond to an AC report about the College’s athletic facilities, specifically the boathouse and the stables, which are, in AC’s view, in need of dramatic and urgent improvement. The meeting was collegial and productive. AC plans to have ongoing conversations about this matter and to continue to advocate for action.

9. Faculty Executive Committee (FEC).

Report. Relations with the Administration have been productive. FEC has honored requests for ad hoc and other committees, though the continuing proliferation of committee work, especially after the ostensible streamlining of several years ago, continues to give FEC pause, and the committee should continue to be vigilant. The Chair of FEC worked productively with members of the Administration and the Chairs of CAPT and CAFR on Part Six of the Faculty Handbook, and will reunite with them for a meeting on Part One, Article X later this month. The Chair also sat on the DOS/DOSA
Restructuring Review Committee, whose report is now in the hands of CEPP. FEC and CEPP met jointly to discuss the proposal to close UWW; the two committees listened to each other’s views. Unfinished issues that will involve consultation with the Administration include possible changes to the organization of Faculty Meetings and changes to the process of making revisions to the Faculty Handbook.

Discussion. A member of CAPT suggested that, now that the new governance structure was three years old, a review might be in order. FEC noted that such a review, at least as far as the logistics between FEC and IPPC are concerned, is being considered for next year.

Meeting adjourned at 11:48 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dan Curley
Chair, Faculty Executive Committee
dcurley@skidmore.edu