

CAS Annual Report, 2009-2010

Members of CAS, 2009-2010

Kate Graney, Government, Chair
Rachel Roe-Dale, Mathematics and Computer Science
Daniel Swift, English
Michael Kellar '10, SGA Student Representative
Elizabeth Karp '11, SGA Student Representative
Michael Ennis-McMillan, Associate Dean of the Faculty for Academic Advising¹
Ann Henderson, Registrar and Director of Institutional Research

Regular Visitors (non-voting)

Laurie Baker, Academic Advising Office
David DeConno, Associate Registrar
Tina Breakell, Program Coordinator, Office of Off-Campus Study and Exchange

Summary of Activities

The Committee on Academic Standing (CAS) met weekly during the academic year, and held two Academic Review sessions, one on January 13, 2010 and a second on June 8, 2010. In addition the committee held a separate end-of-the-year Academic Review session for graduating seniors on May 18, 2010. The Chair of the CAS also participated with the ADOFFAA and the Registrar in appeal hearing meetings in January 2010 and June 2010.

During its weekly meetings, the CAS heard petitions and requests from the offices of the Office of Academic Advising (OAA), the Registrar, and Off-Campus Study and Exchange (OCSE). In each case, the petitions brought before CAS involved deviations from the college's established academic standards, and it was the committee's obligation to determine whether or not the petitions could be accommodated without compromising Skidmore's commitment to academic excellence.

In addition to the above responsibilities, this year's CAS addressed a number of important policy issues, including the following: the provision of academic services and CAS functioning during Skidmore's summer sessions; the CAS's policies regarding a potential serious outbreak of H1N1 during the AY 2009-2010; the policy regarding first-year students who leave Skidmore during the first semester on either a personal or medical leave; a request from colleagues in the Jewish Life Office and OCSE that the college revisit its policy on not accepting credits from study abroad programs undertaken in countries with Department of State Travel warnings while on personal leave; the college's policy on withdrawals (W) and leaves, both personal and medical; a joint effort

¹ The name of the Dean of Studies Office and the title of the Dean of Studies were changed to the Office of Academic Advising and the Associate Dean of the Faculty for Academic Advising, respectively, in Fall 2009.

with CEPP to develop a grade appeal policy; the conferral of Skidmore degrees during January of every year along with May and August; the revision of standards for all-College (Latin) honors and semester Dean's List honors; and finally, a joint effort with CEPP to clarify the meaning of the faculty vote on graduates at the annual May and December faculty meetings, with particular emphasis on the relationship of academic requirements to concerns about social and academic integrity. Each of these issues is described in more detail below.

***The CAS's policies regarding a potential serious outbreak of H1N1 :** At the request of the Dean of the Faculty, the CAS discussed and developed a statement on a potential H1N1 outbreak at the college, which the committee reviewed and endorsed at its September 16, 2009 meeting. This statement was discussed at the October 2009 faculty meeting. The committee continued to monitor the H1N1 situation carefully throughout fall 2009 and no significant suspension or revision of normal CAS policies proved necessary.

***Policy regarding first-year students who leave Skidmore during the first semester on either a personal or medical leave:** At the request of the Registrar's Office and the Office of Academic Advising, the CAS discussed the rather larger number of first-year students who were leaving the college during their first semester (potentially returning the following semester) and also the increasing number of students who transfer to Skidmore at the beginning of their second-semester. There were two questions regarding this group of students. The first regarded the possibility of allowing those students who had left during the first semester to return for the second semester. The committee counseled that only those students who could prove their medical issues had been adequately resolved could return for the second semester of the first-year. The second question regards the extent to which these returning students and second-semester transfer students had a true "first-year" experience at Skidmore (or somewhere else), and what solution might be found to accommodate those who did not have a full first-year experience the first semester. The committee endorsed the idea that the FYE Director work with the ADOFFAA to devise a second semester, one-credit ID-151 seminar that might substitute for the missed first semester Scribner Seminar for this small group of students.

***Policy on accepting credits from study abroad programs undertaken in countries with Department of State Travel warnings while on personal leave :** The CAS was approached by the Office of Jewish Life and the OCSE to take up the question of the college's policy towards accepting credits from students who study abroad in countries that have Department of State Travel warnings while on personal leave from Skidmore. The college traditionally has not allowed students to study abroad in such countries, nor has it accepted any transfer credits from such experiences. This is a concern for students who seek to study in these countries, particularly in Israel. The CAS held substantial discussions about this issue, which included the participation of the OSCE representatives and the college's legal counsel. Ultimately, the CAS decided to allow students who take a personal leave from Skidmore to study abroad in a country with a Department of State Travel Warning to potentially transfer up to 11 credits back to Skidmore upon their

return. The CAS operating code and OSCE internal policy documents were both amended to reflect this policy change, including the limitations and restrictions on this policy.

*** Policy on withdrawals (Ws) and leaves, both personal and medical:** During the AY 2009-2010 the CAS took up the question of clarifying the college's policies regarding withdrawals (Ws), and both personal and medical leaves. The chair of the CAS consulted with colleagues from CEPP and CAFR on these policies and the CAS eventually developed a statement on this issue that was read and discussed by the faculty at the December 2009 faculty meeting. These discussions led the CAS to develop a motion which supported but clarified the college's existing policy on "Ws" and leaves and also introduced a new grade of "L" into the college catalog, which would be awarded to students who are granted a medical or personal leave during an academic semester. The introduction of the "L" grade will make it easier for the Registrar's office and others to distinguish between situations where a student withdrew from a course and situations where a student went on personal or medical leave. The faculty approved this motion at its April 29, 2010 faculty meeting. The appropriate changes regarding the new policy and the new "L" grade were made in the CAS Operating Code and in the College Catalog.

***Joint effort with CEPP to develop a grade appeal policy:** The CAS was pleased to work with CEPP to bring the new Grade Appeal Policy to the faculty during AY 2009-2010. Members of the CAS took part in the public forum about the Grade Appeal Policy that was held in February 2010, and helped craft the motion about the Grade Appeal Policy that was presented to the faculty in Spring 2010 and eventually passed by the faculty at its April 29, 2010 meeting. We also consulted with FEC about the role of the CAS in the new Grade Appeal Policy (namely, that the CAS would remain an elected committee but that any CAS member who wanted to recuse themselves from a grade appeal case would be able to do so, and would be replaced by FEC in these instances). The CAS amended its operating code to reflect the new Grade Appeal and the committee's specific role in the new Grade Appeal Policy.

***Conferral of Skidmore degrees during January of every year:** The CAS discussed and approved a proposal brought to the CAS by the Registrar's Office that Skidmore degrees also be awarded in January of every year. This will help expedite job searches and graduate school applications for those Skidmore graduates who finish their degree requirements and are approved by the faculty at the December faculty meeting of the previous year. Now they will not have to wait until the following May to have their degrees finalized, but will have them in hand by the end of January.

***Revision of standards for all-College (Latin) honors and semester Dean's List honors:** At the May 2009 faculty meeting, the CAS was asked to revisit the college's policy on the awarding of Latin honors, as the percentage of Skidmore students receiving all-college honors had risen to over 50%. The CAS took up this issue and drafted a policy to revise upwards the GPA requirements for cum laude, magna cum laude, and summa cum laude honors, and for semester Dean's List Honors as well. The policy was

presented to the faculty as motion at the April 2, 2010 faculty meeting and approved by the faculty at the April 29, 2010 meeting.

***Joint effort with CEPP to clarify the meaning of the faculty vote on graduates at the annual May and December faculty meetings, with particular emphasis on the relationship of academic requirements to concerns about social and academic integrity:** At the request of the VPAA and CEPP, the CAS helped to craft and sponsor a resolution clarifying the role and meaning of the faculty vote on graduates at the annual May and December faculty meetings. This resolution grew out of the CAS report on social integrity issues that had been presented to the faculty in May 2008. The new resolution, which was passed by the faculty at the April 29, 2010 faculty meeting, indicates that the faculty vote on graduate reflects the fact that students have met all the academic requirements for their Skidmore degrees, but that they may still have their degree withheld for the failure to resolve academic integrity, financial or social integrity issues. This clarification will also be included in the annual Skidmore College Commencement Bulletin. The text of the resolution was added as an appendix to the CAS Operating Code.

AY 2010-2011 Upcoming Agenda Items

The CAS already has a few items for its Fall 2010 agenda. We will be taking up the policy regarding the implementation of the new policy on transferring credits from study abroad in countries with a Department of State Warning while on personal leave. We will also take up the question of intensive, short-term, summer laboratory science classes counting for Skidmore credit.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kate Graney
Chair of CAS