

Faculty Executive Committee (FEC)

Annual Report 2005-2006

The Faculty Executive Committee met 31 times in regular session during the academic year 2005-2006. In addition, FEC convened two faculty-only meetings, convened the Committee of Committees on two occasions, had a joint meeting with CAPT to discuss the VPAA search, and participated in meetings with Academic Staff, with the Middle States outside review team, and with Tobie Van der Vorm, consultant for the VPAA search.

The routine business of the committee was heavy this year. Major changes to the College's administrative structure, to College and Faculty governance, and to the SGA constitution, meant substantial revisions to parts one through five of the Faculty Handbook. FEC also received and discussed bi-weekly reports from the three IPPC representatives. In addition to regular committee elections and appointments, FEC also ran willingness-to-serve forms for searches for the Culture-Centered Inquiry Task Force, for Associate Dean, and for VPAA. FEC also assumed the duties of the Board of Trustees observers, and ironed-out procedures for administrative review of the Observer reports prior to their distribution. (It did the same for Committee of Committee minutes and report.) Finally, FEC moved from a six to nine person committee, with the three new members serving as IPPC representatives, and so the committee needed to revise its operating code substantially.

FEC dealt with numerous other issues, among which were the following:

THE DOS/DOSA SPLIT AND THE CREATION OF STUDENT ACADEMIC SERVICES

After meeting with the President and VPAA, and reviewing the Report of the Retention Study Group and the Report and minutes of the DOS/DOSA Study Group, FEC determined that the recommendation of the Study Group Report of December 2004---that the Report be submitted to CAPT and to IPC for study and comment---had not been followed, and that CEPP should have been given a copy of the Report by the administration before any decisions were taken. With decisions already made, office space already under construction, new positions already advertised, and personnel decisions already made, FEC and the administration recommended that the best course of action was to have CEPP review the changes and report its findings in December.

CEPP reported that when it received from the DoSA the plan and rationale, it would be able to make recommendations on any remaining changes in the administrative structure, and would monitor the success of the new structure and offices over the next few years.

Administrators involved in this decision were invited to address this issue at a faculty-only meeting in September, the minutes of which (including their remarks) are available at the FEC website.

Results:

1. The President announced at the faculty-only meeting that if and when the DoSA and the DoF find themselves in unresolvable disagreement, the matter would hereafter be resolved by the VPAA.
2. The administration pledged to work in close consultation with appropriate faculty committees in the future.
3. FEC moved to revise the Faculty Handbook so that ad hoc committees would send copies of their final reports to FEC to ensure that the reports are distributed to the appropriate faculty committees in a timely manner. The revision was approved by the faculty.

FEC OPERATING CODE AND THE STRUCTURE OF FEC

The new FEC operating code can be found at the following site:
<http://www.skidmore.edu/academics/governance/Committees/FEC/FEC%20operating%20code.htm>. The new operating code reflects the changes in the responsibilities and procedures of the committee.

FACULTY MEETINGS

Concerns about the length and content of the monthly faculty meetings were brought to FEC's attention early in the fall. In discussions with the VPAA, it was decided that the following guidelines should be observed.

1. Every effort would be made to keep the length of meetings to one and a half hours, with the recognition that matters of concern to the faculty sometimes require lengthy discussion.
2. Preliminary copies of the agenda should be sent by the VPAA to the chair of FEC as they develop, followed by consultation when needed.
3. Materials needed for informed faculty discussion of issues should be distributed a week in advance of each meeting, to ensure that faculty have the opportunity to examine them.

OPTIMIZATION TASK FORCE

FEC received and commented on updates from the Optimization Task Force, and made recommendations to the task force on consultation with the appropriate faculty committees. The recommendations were accepted.

COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

In response to concerns raised by faculty at the Committee of Committees meetings about the dearth of expressions of willingness to serve, FEC decided to adopt three changes in election procedures.

1. We will move back to a format of four rounds of willingness-to-serve (three regular rounds and one omnibus round for appointments and replacements).
2. Preliminary slates of candidates will be published on an ongoing basis, each day, during the willingness-to-serve rounds.
3. Both one-semester and one-year replacements on committees will be handled by FEC appointments. (This required and received approval to revise the Faculty Handbook.)

In addition, FEC decided to run willingness-to-serve forms for appointments to the new IPPC subcommittees.

FACULTY-ONLY MEETINGS

FEC organized two Faculty-Only meetings during the academic year. As mentioned above, the first took up the issue of the lack of faculty consultation on the DOS/DOSA split. The second took up the issue of faculty and staff compensation. Minutes of both meetings are available at the FEC web site.

As the new operating code indicates, the name of the faculty-only meetings has been changed to “Faculty Caucus” meetings, the better to reflect the nature of the meetings.

COMMITTEE ISSUES

1. Study Days

FEC was asked by the Dean of Studies to advise the Dean of Student Affairs on a concern about the scheduling of IB committee meetings on College study days. FEC found that College Regulations require that study days be kept free of extra-curricular events, and hence found that committees with student representatives should not hold meetings on study days.

2. Self-determined Majors Subcommittee of Curriculum Committee

In response to queries from Curriculum Committee, FEC advised the Curriculum Committee to draft an operating code for its standing subcommittee, the Self-Determined Majors Subcommittee, stipulating its function, membership, and length of service. Curriculum Committee drafted and adopted an operating code for the subcommittee.

3. IRC

In response to queries from committee members about the locus of decision-making on the committee, FEC, in consultation with the Associate Dean of the Faculty and the VPAA, recommended that the Committee be chaired by the VPAA. The recommendation was endorsed by the administration, and a (Part Three) Handbook revision was approved by IPPC, SGA, and FEC.

4. Athletic Council

The move of Athletics from Academic Affairs to Student Affairs meant that oversight of faculty appointments to Athletics, and review of its curricular offerings, were no longer under the auspices of Academic Affairs. Concern about these issues was brought to the attention of FEC by the NCAA representative on Athletic Council, and at the Committee of Committees meeting. Athletic Council adopted a set of procedures through which it will serve the role of an academic department in such matters.

Athletic Council also brought a motion to FEC to revise the Faculty Handbook to include a provision for a standing membership for an NCAA representative on the committee, appointed by the President. The motion was passed by the faculty, and the Handbook revised accordingly.

5. CEPP

At the request of CEPP, FEC made a recommendation on the issue of CEPP membership: FEC recommended that the Dean of the Faculty replace the VPAA on CEPP. CEPP accepted this recommendation, and the faculty approved a Handbook revision to reflect it.

6. OIP

In response to faculty concerns, FEC struck a subcommittee to examine the reporting structure of the Office of International Programs, with a view to academic oversight of programs. The subcommittee found the present structure sound.

The DOF office sought FEC's advice on putting in abeyance the Directorship of the Skidmore London Program Directorship for a year. FEC recommended in favor of doing so, and of the review of the Directorship position by the appropriate committees next year.

7. VPAA Review, VPAA Search

In conformity with an agreement struck between CAPT and the VPAA, FEC sent out a willingness-to-serve form for a review of the VPAA, and the review committee was struck. The announcement that VPAA Chuck Joseph would be stepping down obviated the need for this review. In response to concerns expressed by faculty about the need to sort out clearly the VPAA's place in the new administrative structure, however, and after consultation with CAPT, FEC recommended that the VPAA search committee be

charged with assessing the new administrative structure as part of its efforts to draft an appropriate job description.

FEC met with the VPAA Search consultant, Toby Van der Vorm, and offered suggestions to her about the search.

8. CAPT

FEC accepted the request of CAPT that both its one-semester replacements and its full year replacements for next year be filled through a willingness-to-serve form.

9. SGA

a. The abolition of the All-College Council left SGA without a committee through which it could voice its particular concerns directly. It had been hoped that IPPC would provide such a committee. But the long agenda and large membership of IPPC seemed to leave SGA with insufficient opportunity to articulate its concerns on that committee. FEC recommended that, in addition to bringing concerns to the new IPPC subcommittee on Student Affairs, the SGA President request a standing slot on the IPPC agenda. This request was made to and accepted by the IPPC co-chairs.

b. SGA also sought to create positions for one or two faculty advisors to SGA, who would meet regularly with the SGA executive committee and attend SGA Senate meetings. FEC recommended that the matter be taken up by the Student Affairs subcommittee of IPPC.

c. SGA suggested a motion to revise the Faculty Handbook to reflect the current practice of having an SGA member sit on Honors Council. With the approval of the Honors Forum Director, FEC accepted this suggestion, and the motion to revise the Handbook accordingly was approved by the faculty.

d. SGA adopted a resolution in April that spelled out concerns that it has about the Integrity Board, the one Student Committee that is spelled out in the Faculty Handbook. The resolution called for a task force to examine the “philosophy” and procedures of the IB and their relation to the Skidmore Honor Code, and the training of IB members. FEC was asked by the SGA President to ensure a place on the IPPC May meeting agenda to explain this resolution and the task force.

STANDARDIZING COURSE RELEASE POLICIES

In response to concerns expressed by faculty about the equity and lack of standardized, transparent procedures for course releases, FEC and the Dean of the Faculty struck a subcommittee to examine current practice and recommend changes. The subcommittee’s work, originally scheduled to conclude in June, will continue into the 2006-2007 academic year.

RESOLUTIONS

The committee proposed four resolutions for adoption by the faculty, all of which eventually were passed unanimously:

1. Resolution against Racism
2. Resolution on the need for substantial increases in Faculty and Staff Compensation
3. Resolution expressing gratitude to Chuck Joseph for his administrative service
4. Resolution expressing gratitude for work on Compensation and Optimization

REMAINING ISSUES AND THE YEAR AHEAD

Some of the issues that FEC will be examining in the 2006-2007 academic year:

Review of the effectiveness of the new governance structure, with special attention to the relationship of IPPC and FEC, and determination of the best means for IPPC to report to the faculty.

Review of the status and protocols for “Community Meetings”

Review of Faculty Meeting attendance and participation by-laws.

I want to thank all of this year’s FEC members for their ever frank, ever friendly, and ever helpful deliberations on important and sometimes tough governance issues.

Special thanks to Gove Effinger for his work on the Faculty Handbook and for maintaining the FEC website.

FEC 2005-2006 MEMBERSHIP

Tim Burns, Government, Chair

Dan Curley, Classics

Gove Effinger, Math and CS

Mark Huibregtse, Math and CS, IPPC

Dan Hurwitz, Math and CS

Bill Lewis, Philosophy, IPPC (Spring)

Roy Rotheim, Economics, IPPC (Fall)

Paty Rubio, Foreign Languages and Literatures

Denise Smith, Exercise Science, IPPC Vice-chair

Mary Stange (Fall)

Joanna Zangrando, American Studies (Spring)

FEC 2006-2007 MEMBERSHIP

Lisa Aronson, Art and Art History

Tim Burns, Government

Dan Curley, Classics, Chair

Jennifer Delton, History

Mark Huibregtse, Math and CS, IPPC Vice-chair

Dan Hurwitz, Math and CS

Bill Lewis, Philosophy, IPPC

Mehmet Odekon, Economics, IPPC

Paty Rubio, Foreign Languages and Literatures

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Burns, Chair

