

## **FEC annual report, 2012-2013**

The 2012-2013 academic year was a smooth and productive year for the Faculty Executive Committee (FEC). Based on an assessment of our own work, our involvement in various collaborations throughout the academic year (both with other committees and the administration), and what we have learned from the two Committee of Committees meetings this year, we conclude that faculty governance in general was an effective force during the 2012-2013 academic year. What follows is a report of our committee work, presented in additional detail, beginning with a quick enumeration of routine matters that FEC oversees.

### **Routine Work:**

--FEC held four rounds of elections, at their regular times, and one special WTS this year.\*

Round I, 10/1-10/12 (run by Paul Sattler)

Round II, 11/26-12/7 (run by April Bernard)

Round III, 2/25-3/8 (run by Jörg Bibow)

Round IV, 4/15-4/26 (run by Mehmet Odekon)

Special WTS, September, for Faculty Leadership for Integrative Liberal Learning and, due to what Admissions calls "summer melt," some depopulated slots on CEPP, CC, FDC, and CIGU (run by Barbara Black)

*\*FEC wishes to thank Sue Blair in the Dean's Office and Jeff Clark in IT for their indispensable assistance in making these important elections happen.*

Counting all elected and appointed positions, elections for the year filled a total of 52+ slots on committees, subcommittees, and working groups. The updated committee membership lists for 2013-2014 are here:

<http://cms.skidmore.edu/dof/committees/13-14/index.cfm>

--FEC observed three Board of Trustee meetings: October 25-26, February 21-22, and May 16-17. The observer notes for all three have been sent to the faculty and are also posted on the governance website.

--Per the recently codified new arrangement, the FEC chair attended IPPC meetings this year, in order to build a bridge of communication between the two committees. When pertinent, she raised FEC-related concerns in the context of IPPC meetings, and she brought back to FEC questions or matters that required further deliberation. This arrangement seems to have strengthened what is surely a keystone of effective governance: communication.

--The FEC chair attended the Academic Affairs retreats hosted by the DOF/VPAA.

--At the September 7 Faculty Meeting, FEC presented the Faculty with the 2012-2013 *Faculty Handbook* (FHB) for adoption at the October 2012 Faculty Meeting.

--The FEC chair participated in the Shared Governance meeting (9/24/12) that has now become an annual event to launch the academic year. At this meeting, committee chairs and administrators share their agenda for the year, aiming for strong communication from the start of the new year.

--FEC held two Committee of Committees meetings: December 13, 2012 and May 2, 2013—to which all committee chairs as specified in our operating code, and in addition faculty from CIGU (IPPC/Committee on Intercultural and Global Understanding) and SRC (IPPC/Subcommittee on Responsible Citizenship), were invited. Generally speaking, committees reported effective internal operations and collegial, collaborative interactions with one another and with the administration as well.

--By early June 2013, FEC sent in housekeeping changes for the *FHB* to Debbie Peterson in the Dean's Office, which will be reviewed and approved by the Faculty in the fall. Several of these housekeeping changes were compiled by FEC as they were brought to our attention by faculty members and/or committees throughout the year. And, at the end of the year, FEC members reviewed the entire *Handbook* themselves for additional housekeeping corrections.

--FEC has reviewed and approved the Faculty Meeting dates for academic year 2013-2014, with a particular eye to any scheduling conflicts due to religious holidays.

--FEC's web author, Paul Sattler, has maintained updated information on the governance website overseen by FEC.

### **Year-Specific Work:**

--A top agenda item of FEC this year was to make certain to honor the motion passed last spring that made strategic, targeted changes to the by-laws that structure our Faculty Meetings. This year, FEC worked closely with Beau Breslin to ensure that faculty voice shaped the agenda and to follow the amended by-laws as well as the recommendations outlined in FEC's April 2012 motion. FEC hopes that the Faculty have noticed fewer and shorter reports upfront, that Old and New Business always come after the President's and DOF/VPAA's remarks (if more reports are necessary, they are placed later on the agenda), and that a more regular commitment to Committee of the Whole discussions has helped to make Faculty Meetings a space for more extensive dialogue and deliberation. This year's Committee of the Whole discussions included the revised Dean's Card, on November 2; e-learning, on December 7; governance, late-April. For this last Committee of the Whole, FEC produced a "thought experiment" that imagined other ways of doing governance at Skidmore, in the hopes that the document would guide and prompt our discussion. That document, along with information regarding faculty governance at five other colleges, accompanies this report. Both are integral to this annual report.

--Drafting this “thought experiment” was a top agenda item for FEC this year. When it comes to faculty governance, we are concerned about fairness and visibility. Do we as a Faculty share this work equally, and is this work visible and valuable to the College? Is this work excessive? Could it be streamlined? Could we rethink how we do governance at Skidmore?

--FEC co-sponsored with the President and the DOF/VPAA the Academic Summit on January 18, 2013. The themes of the Summit (such as faculty work lives, technology, and so on) were determined by suggestions from members of the community.

--The FEC chair had two early fall meetings with Beau Breslin and others about two crucial agenda items: clear language and guidance concerning (1) promotion decisions for tenured and tenure-track faculty and (2) advancement opportunities for non-tenure-track faculty (NTT). In conferring with others, FEC felt strongly that no one standing committee could take up these critical matters. Regarding #2, FEC assisted Dean Breslin in developing a charge and membership roster for the Faculty Workload Working Group (FWWG), comprising past CAPT members, past or current members of CFG/FEC, and faculty at large. FEC chair Barbara Black and former FEC member/chair Reg Lilly are serving on the group, which will be working this summer and through fall 2013. At the time of this report, the group has met four times. Concerning #1, in the fall, Beau gathered a group of chairs from departments that historically rely heavily on NTT, in order to begin the groundwork that will inform a white paper issued by ADOF Rubio, which will then guide any necessary *FHB* language changes. Though both of these issues are beyond the scope of FEC alone, they do involve *FHB* language and, hence, are of concern to FEC.

--In the fall, FEC weighed in as two groups—the Assessment Steering Committee (formerly a CEPP subcommittee) and the Space Planning Working Group (ad hoc)—figured out their futures, including their future homes. Both groups moved under the aegis of IPPC. The ASC is now the AS (Assessment Subcommittee).

--FEC took great pleasure in working with new Board Chair Linda Toohey to strengthen interactions between Trustees and Faculty. This year, in order to develop a deeper understanding of Faculty work and concerns, Chair Toohey attended Faculty Meetings. And several Board sessions, which are themselves aiming to be more deliberative, invited participation from the FEC observers as well as IPPC members who were invited. The Skidmore tradition of Board/Faculty dinners was resuscitated, and the recommendation of renewing Board visits to classes was also offered to Ms. Toohey.

--FEC was invited to the luncheons for the finalists in the fall DOF/VPAA search. We were pleased to see chairs of committees involved in the search for our new Chief Academic Officer.

--A small but seemingly useful task of the FEC chair was to stand at the October Faculty Meeting and speak briefly about faculty governance. Then committee chairs stood and

introduced themselves. This gesture was appreciated by all, but particularly by new members of our community. FEC recommends that this happen each year.

### **Motions from the Year:**

--December 7, 2012: motion presented to add new section XX in Part One of *FHB*, titled “Establishment or Elimination of a Minor,” and renumber subsequent sections as XXI and XXII (in collaboration with CC).

--December 7, 2012: motion presented to regularize the pilot arrangement from last year, in which the FEC chair attends IPPC meetings. This motion updated language regarding the FEC chair’s *ex officio* membership on IPPC (see *FHB* Part Two, II.F.1 and related changes in Part Three, I.B.1).

--February 1, 2013: motion presented regarding changes to CC membership language, in light of the Self-Determined Majors (SDM) subcommittee decoupling from the CC and becoming a program with an Advisory Board (see *FHB* Part Two, II.F.5).

-- April 15, 2013: motion is passed altering the timing for sabbatical applications (see *FHB* Part One, Article XII, Section A, Subsection 3, Subpart a, Number iv) (in collaboration with FDC).

--May 15, 2013: a motion is passed codifying electronic polling for votes at Faculty Meetings (see *FHB* Part Two, I. Article VI). FEC wishes to thank both IT and our Parliamentarian, Tillman Nechtman, for their able assistance on this matter.

### **Some Brief Governance Updates:**

The “Policy on the Modification and Development of Policies” was presented by the FEC chair, on behalf of the Policy Working Group (of which she was a member), at the November 2, 2012 Faculty Meeting. FEC member April Bernard presided over the ensuing discussion.

In line with the new process as outlined by the “Policy on the Modification and Development of Policies,” FEC and DOF/VPAA Breslin conferred on how best to gather faculty reactions to the Standards of Business Conduct Policy. For this policy, the regularization of the development and vetting process for policies, as mapped out by the “Policy on...Policies,” seemed to run smoothly. This was a first (and successful) test of the newly instituted “Policy on...Policies.”

In keeping with the new process piloted last year, FEC assisted DOF/VPAA Breslin in determining the Chairs Advisory Group to consult with him regarding tenure searches allocation.

ADOF for Academic Policy Corey Freeman-Gallant has been working with FEC about possible language changes as he and others develop new and necessary guidelines for when Faculty bring harassment cases against students.

DOF/VPAA Breslin brought to FEC a query about the matter of Open Access Information. In short, there is ongoing and developing interest at Skidmore's peer and aspirant schools—indeed, across the country—in providing open access to publications. In effect, folks still publish wherever they want, in whatever journal they choose, but, additionally, the school posts the complete article on its website or repository. This matter has obvious faculty implications. The DOF's question to FEC was who—or which committee—should take up this issue at Skidmore? FEC's response was CAFR and/or the FDC; additionally, FEC sees some overlap here with the specific charge of the Intellectual Property Policy working group, though FEC acknowledges that they will soon be finished with their work.

A question came to FEC about how to amend the Division of Disciplines, specifically how one goes about adding an area (in this case, Arts Administration) to the schema in the Preamble to Part Two of the *FHB*. This issue is still under discussion with FEC and the DOF/VPAA.

A query came to FEC regarding the possible merit of having minutes at the Community Meetings. FEC spoke with President Glotzbach about this matter, and both the President and FEC were persuaded that the absence of minutes allows for freer discussion, which is the central function of these broader meetings.

FEC added the Palamountain Prose Committee to Round III, as appointed positions. This pilot arrangement seemed to work well and will likely be continued in subsequent years.

There were some difficult exchanges between CEPP and FEC regarding the merit of forming a summer working group to begin the project of reviewing the all-college curriculum. Though FEC was sympathetic to CEPP's wish to get this important work under way and to utilize the focused time summer can provide, FEC felt that a working group should not be used to do work that was central to the charge of an elected standing committee, CEPP itself. Despite the difference of opinion between these two committees regarding this matter, relations remain cordial.

ADOF for Infrastructure, Sustainability, and Civic Engagement Karen Kellogg informed FEC on 4/22/13 that the Science Facility Task Force (SFTF) has completed its work and would be sunseting at the end of this academic year. FEC expressed its gratitude for the important work this group finished expertly and efficiently.

New FAB members have this month (June 2013) received their training in Skidmore's complaints process and Part Six of the *FHB* in preparation for next year.

Two members of FEC—April Bernard and Barbara Black, both from the Department of English—have finished their terms of service, while two new members—Silvia Carli

from the Department of Philosophy and Religion and Ting Li from Management and Business—will be joining FEC in the fall. Jörg Bibow of Economics has agreed to be chair this year.

In closing, the members of the Faculty Executive Committee wish to thank all their colleagues who participated this year in shared governance. The committee reports excellent work relations with both the President and the DOF/VPAA, with whom FEC works most regularly. It has indeed been a good year. FEC continues to have its worries, of course: Sometimes that worry is the number of resignations from committees in a given year, or the low number of volunteers for a particular WTS; often it is the number of “task forces,” working groups, ad hocs that can fly under the radar of service and threaten to sap energy from traditional service. In many instances, we are wont to raise the by-now classic FEC question (and it can take several forms): “where can this work be done?” “where should this work already be taking place?” “do we really need more people to work on this?”—or...“is this group too large?” We muse over what might be construed to be our meta-question: *What are the distinctive but important roles of the faculty and administration?* We worry, as do many of you (and as, sometimes, prompted by your comments to us), about faculty work lives and faculty happiness. Because we are the governance oversight committee, we tend to zoom in on the service portion of those work lives. FEC hopes that we as a faculty will continue to (re)-examine how we do governance at Skidmore, and FEC believes we have begun some important conversations this year. We are eager to hear what the FWWG discovers in its examination of faculty work lives, and next year’s FEC will resume its work. Until then, we thank you again for your commitment to the College and for being the passionate, smart, and energetic colleagues that make our work lives, indeed, rewarding.

Respectfully submitted,

April Bernard  
Jörg Bibow  
Barbara Black (chair)  
Mehmet Odekon  
Paul Sattler