

Faculty Executive Committee Annual Report 2019-2020

The Faculty Executive Committee (FEC) would not be able to function without the assistance of some key people: Michael Orr, Debbie Peterson, Sue Blair, and Brooke Toma from the Office of the Dean of the Faculty; Adam Reagan, Tony Kowalick, and Aaron Kendall from IT; and Idalia Sepulveda and Jon Volks from the Office of Communications and Marketing. FEC is grateful to all of the faculty and staff who worked with the committee throughout the year.

FEC would also like to express its sincere appreciation to all committee members for their care and dedication to the College. Despite the many and varied challenges and increase workload that arose due to the COVID-19 pandemic, governance committee members conscientiously followed through with their service commitments.

Meetings

FEC met 28 times during the 2019-2020 academic year. Minutes for 25 regular, weekly meetings held by the committee are posted on FEC's website. In addition, FEC met with the President, Dean of the Faculty/Vice President for Academic Affairs (DOF/VPAA), and incoming members of FEC (April 21) to discuss matters related to the fall semester and beyond; FEC met with the Dean of the Faculty (April 28) to discuss matters related to Covid-19 and remote learning; and FEC met with the Academic Planning Working Group (May 24) to discuss concerns raised by the faculty.

The chair of FEC is a member of the Institutional Planning and Policy Committee (IPPC). During the fall semester, the chair of FEC also met monthly with the President and the Vice President for Strategic Planning and Institutional Diversity to discuss concerns and topics related to faculty governance. Throughout the academic year, the chair of FEC met with the Dean of the Faculty monthly to discuss the faculty meeting agenda, and other FEC business.

Governance Committee Elections

FEC held elections to fill 16 membership positions on 11 governance committees. The following members of the faculty were elected to serve three-year terms, beginning Fall 2020:

Appointments and Tenure Committee (ATC)

Winston Grady-Willis,
Ela Lepkowska-White

Promotions Committee (PC)

Mark Huibregtse,
David Peterson

Faculty Executive Committee (FEC)

Xiaoshuo Hou,
Jason Ohlberg

Institutional Policy and Planning Committee (IPPC)	Kurt Smemo
Committee on Educational Policies and Planning (CEPP)	Mahesh Shankar, Leigh Wilton
Committee on Academic Freedom and Rights (CAFR)	Corey Freeman-Gallant, Siobhan Hart
Curriculum Committee (CC)	Sandra Goff, Kate Graney
Faculty Development Committee (FDC)	Sylvia McDevitt
Tenure Review Board (TRB)	Sarah Day-O'Connell
Periclean Honors Forum Council (HFC)	Mary Donovan
Athletic Council (AC)	Jason Breves

The DOF/VPAA consulted with FEC as requests from faculty for exemption from governance service were reviewed.

Throughout the year, FEC worked with Adam Reagan and Tony Kowalick in IT to revise and improve the election software. The chair of FEC developed a user's manual for the election software for future members of FEC to reference.

The current service mandate continues to have drawbacks that should be addressed when the system is formally reviewed in 2023-24.

- FEC continues to face difficulties putting together full slates of candidates for committees with membership restrictions, and was unable to hold an election for one of the open FDC membership spots. Instead, FEC appointed a member to serve a one-year term, and plans to elect a new member for a three-year term in the next round.
- The slates for ATC and PC tend to be somewhat random, since very few faculty members rank these committees highly on their preference sheets.
- Some NTT faculty indicated that, although they are interested in serving on governance committees, the current system makes it difficult to participate. This is, in part, due to membership restrictions.
- Although most faculty who volunteer to serve three-year terms are placed (via election or appointment) on a committee, those who volunteer for a one-year term

are unlikely to be called on to serve. This mainly affects pre-tenure tenure-track faculty, who are only required to serve for one year, and NTT volunteers.

- The functions of certain committees do not seem to correspond to “governance” as it is defined in the faculty handbook. The faculty should discuss the possibility of excluding some committees from the mandate.

Governance Committee Appointments

FEC appointed 9 members of the faculty to serve on eight standing governance committees. Appointments for terms beginning Fall 2020 are as follows:

Institutional Policy and Planning Committee (IPPC)	Mark Rye (1 year)
Campus Sustainability Subcommittee (CSS)	Rik Scarce (3 years)
Committee on Intercultural and Global Understanding (CIGU)	Aurelia Ball (3 years), TBD (Fall 2020)
Subcommittee on Responsible Citizenship (SRC)	June Paul (3 years)
Faculty Development Committee (FDC)	Jennifer Delton (1 year)
Faculty Advisory Board (FAB)	David Domozych (3 years), Anthony Holland (3 years)
Committee on Academic Standing (CAS)	Maryuri Roca (3 years)
Self-Determined Majors Committee (SDM)	Melora Wolff (3 years)

The chair of FEC worked with the Vice President for Strategic Planning and Institutional Diversity on procedures for appointing members of IPPC subcommittees. The faculty handbook states that the “composition of such subcommittees is determined by IPPC in consultation with FEC and with other groups or individuals as appropriate”; however, the exact process for these appointments was not clear. FEC agreed to a process that was followed during Spring 2020 for all IPPC subcommittee appointments. FEC and IPPC plan to codify this process next year.

Ad Hoc Appointments

The chair of CEPP met with FEC to discuss a change in grading policy that was suggested by certain members of SGA. Both CAS and CEPP were asked to consider the suggestion; CEPP requested that FEC make a recommendation regarding which committee was most appropriate to consider the change in grading policy. FEC recommended the assembly of a working group that included one representative each from CAS (Christine Page served as the representative), CEPP (Steve Ives), CC (Chris

Mann), and CAFR (Ben Bogin), and the DOF/VPAA. Two student representatives recommended by SGA also served on the group.

The DOF/VPAA consulted with FEC about appointing faculty to an Academic Planning Working Group that would consider a range of academic options for the fall semester and deliver a recommendation to the Board of Trustees. FEC solicited nominations from the faculty, determined which nominees were willing to serve, and appointed five faculty members to the working group in consultation with the DOF/VPAA.

Committees of the Whole

The Chair of CEPP met with FEC during the fall semester to discuss steps for reporting results of its survey on the Quantitative Student Evaluation of Teaching (qSET), and agreed that CEPP should hold a Committee of the Whole during an upcoming faculty meeting. The chairs of CEPP, FEC, ATC, and PC met to further discuss student evaluations and assessment of teaching effectiveness. A Committee of the Whole discussion on this subject took place during the October 4, 2019 faculty meeting.

FEC worked with ATC and PC to facilitate a Committee of the Whole discussion on coupling promotion to Associate Professor with tenure during the November 1, 2019 faculty meeting. The committees had planned to hold a straw poll to assess support for the motion. Due to internet connectivity issues during the meeting, faculty were not able to use iClickers to vote, and some dissatisfaction was expressed because the voting process (done by show of hands) was not anonymous.

A Committee of the Whole was led by the Grading Policy Working Group during the April 24, 2020 faculty meeting, where the group presented its recommendation to temporarily introduce a third grade option (CR). Following the Committee of the Whole, a motion to temporarily establish the CR grade option was introduced and passed by majority vote.

Faculty Handbook

FEC reviewed the Faculty Handbook for adoption in Fall 2019. The following motions to change the faculty handbook were vetted by FEC during the 2019-2020 academic year.

September 6: The faculty voted to include the Self Determined Majors (SDM) committee as an appointed governance committee. FEC worked with the SDM Director during the 2018-2019 academic year to draft the motion, which was introduced during the May 15, 2019 faculty meeting.

November 1: The faculty voted to officially make the Dean of the Faculty/Vice President for Academic Affairs the presiding officer of faculty meetings. The President had temporarily delegated the Chair to the DoF/VPAA during the November 2018 faculty meeting, as suggested during a Committee of the Whole discussion (in October 2018) concerning the structure of faculty meetings.

December 6: The faculty voted to adopt a motion brought by ATC and the PC to couple promotion to Associate Professor with tenure. The motion was first introduced during the October 4, 2019 faculty meeting, and was referred back to the committees during the November 1, 2019 faculty meeting

April 24: CEPP introduced a motion to modify faculty handbook language related to the all-college student ratings form. The vote on the motion has been postponed until the fall.

May 15: The faculty voted to change faculty handbook language to clarify the function and membership of the Promotions Committee.

Throughout the year, FEC worked with FDC to develop a plan to change FDC's membership restrictions. FEC helped draft a motion to revise faculty handbook language related to FDC membership that FDC will introduce in the fall.

Committee of Committees

FEC convened two meetings of the Committee of Committees.

The first meeting was held December 12, 2019, and a discussion of the report occurred during the February 28, 2020 faculty meeting. Concerns were raised about IPPC in the report and in the subsequent discussion at the faculty meeting— specifically, how well it functions and the need for more faculty, staff, and student participation in decision-making processes.

FEC discussed possible ways of addressing recurring concerns about IPPC, and planned to bring together a group of faculty who have 1) previous administrative experience, 2) were former vice chairs of IPPC, 3) were former chairs of FEC, and/or 4) have the institutional memory to know the history of shared governance and how it has changed to discuss ways to improve the functionality of IPPC. The goal is to present ideas for the President to consider. Due to COVID-19, FEC decided to postpone discussions until the fall.

The second Committee of Committees meeting was held April 30, 2020. FEC plans to provide an opportunity for the faculty to discuss the report on that meeting during the September 2020 faculty meeting.

Consultations and Other Business

FEC had a conversation with a member of the faculty about ways the governance mandate makes it difficult for NTT faculty to participate in service.

FEC worked with Jon Volks and Idalia Sepulveda in Communications and Marketing and Sue Blair in the Office of the DOF/VPAA to develop a new website that consolidates all committee information in one location (www.skidmore.edu/committees/). FEC thanks

Jon Volks and Idalia Sepulveda for investing a substantial amount of time and effort to create the new website.

Members of FEC met with two candidates for President of Skidmore College and submitted feedback to the co-chairs of the Presidential Search Committee.

FEC organized a talk by Peter von Allmen, Professor of Economics, on “Health, Healthcare, and Health Insurance” in March 2020.

In response to faculty concerns during the COVID-19 pandemic, FEC, IPPC, and CAFR requested temporary moderation of listservs, and asked for online discussion boards to be made available as a substitute for unmoderated listservs. Both requests were accepted by the DOF/VPAA, and Beth Dupont (IT) set up a faculty discussion board on skidmore.forumbee.com.

The FEC chair consulted with the DOF/VPAA on transitioning to online faculty meetings. FEC considered the challenges of holding faculty meetings over Zoom and, in particular, how to ensure anonymous voting by eligible members of community. A Blackboard course that was available only to eligible voters was set up by Aaron Kendall (IT) so that voting could be done via Blackboard surveys.

FEC had conversations about ways to recognize and celebrate faculty service while simultaneously introducing newer faculty to the role and importance of shared governance before elections take place.

In addition to the above, much of FEC's routine work each year includes responding to faculty and committee inquiries about various governance-related topics.

2019-2020 FEC Members:

Katie Hauser (Art History)
Kendrah Murphy (Physics, Chair)
Juan Navea (Chemistry)
Casey Schofield (Psychology)

2020-2021 FEC Members:

Katie Hauser (Art History)
Xiaoshuo Hou (Sociology and Asian Studies)
Jason Ohlberg (Dance)
Casey Schofield (Psychology, Chair)

Incoming Chairs/Directors of Governance Committees for 2020-2021

Appointments and Tenure Committee (ATC)	Mary Crone-Odekon
Promotions Committee (PC)	Barbara Black
Faculty Executive Committee (FEC)	Casey Schofield
Institutional Policy and Planning Committee (IPPC)	Joerg Bibow
Committee on Educational Policies and Planning (CEPP)	Feryaz Ocakli
Committee on Academic Freedom and Rights (CAFR)	Jess Sullivan
Curriculum Committee (CC)	Corinne Moss-Racusin
Faculty Development Committee (FDC)	Silvia Carli
Tenure Review Board (TRB)	Mao Chen
Periclean Honors Forum Council (PHFC)	Flagg Taylor
Athletic Council (AC)	T. H. Reynolds
Faculty Advisory Board (FAB)	Chris Kopec
Committee on Academic Standing (CAS)	Hassan Lopez
Self-Determined Majors Committee (SDM)	Barbara Norelli
Committee on Intercultural and Global Understanding (CIGU)	Marta Brunner