

Faculty Executive Committee Annual Report 2021-2022

The Faculty Executive Committee (FEC) would like to begin by expressing gratitude to some key people with whom FEC has worked closely this academic year: Michael Orr, Debbie Peterson and the entire Office of the Dean of the Faculty; Adam Reagan, Jesse Rock, and Tony Kowalick from IT; and Idalia Sepulveda from the Office of Communications and Marketing. We are so grateful to these colleagues for their energy and support of FEC's work throughout this year.

FEC began work in July in consultation with the DOF/VPAA regarding vaccination mandates for faculty and staff. Our work then moved to considerations for holding faculty meetings in a hybrid format (as per Committee of the Whole discussion and survey conducted in spring 2021) including several planning meetings with the DOF office and practice sessions with IT. Though prepared to proceed with a hybrid format, COVID logistics kept meetings remote for much of the year; the final two meetings of spring 2022 have managed to proceed in a hybrid format as planned. Additionally, FEC worked with the DOF/VPAA, IT, the chair of CEPP, and the co-chair of IPPC on the implementation of a moderated listserv for all-faculty communications. Under the current system, the chairs of FEC, CEPP, and the co-chair of IPPC serve as moderators. Any communication in question is distributed for consultation between the three moderators; a majority approval is then required for distribution. Finally, FEC worked closely over the summer with Adam Regan in IT to help make election software more efficient. Since Adam's departure from Skidmore, we have continued this work with Jesse Rock and Tony Kowalick who have taken over the responsibility of managing the faculty governance software.

Consistent with past years, FEC's work during the academic year included responding to faculty and committee inquiries about governance-related topics as well as several faculty discussions involving various faculty/administration relations. Other routine work for FEC included reviewing the Faculty Handbook for adoption in fall 2021, updating the FEC operating code and faculty governance service primer, and convening the Committee of Committees at the end of the fall and spring semesters (as well as writing and distributing the Committee of Committees report). In addition, FEC oversaw elections and appointments to governance committees for service beginning in AY 22–23. As overseeing elections occupies the bulk of FEC's time during the fall semester, the addition of forming of two faculty working groups and holding a voting process for a faculty position on the V.P. of Marketing and Communications search committee (detailed below) stretched the committee quite thin this fall. FEC also had to contend with multiple issues (detailed below) regarding populating elections for the governance process, which have become a routine concern over the past few years.

Meetings

FEC met several times over the summer of 2021 (detailed above) and 25 times during the 21–22 academic year; all meetings took place remotely. Minutes for these regular, weekly meetings held by the committee are posted on FEC's website.

The chair of FEC is a member of the Institutional Planning and Policy Committee (IPPC) and attended all scheduled meetings. Throughout the academic year, the chair of FEC also met with the DOF/VPAA monthly to discuss the faculty meeting agenda and other FEC-related business.

In addition, the FEC chair participated in numerous meetings with members of the faculty and IT, and FEC participated in additional meetings with the Dean of the Faculty, the President, and other committees.

Governance Committee Elections

FEC held elections to fill 14 positions on 10 governance committees. The following members of the faculty were elected to serve three-year terms, beginning Fall 2022:

Appointments & Tenure Committee (ATC): John Brueggemann, Marketa Wolfe

Promotions Committee (PC): Adrienne Zuerner

Faculty Executive Committee (FEC): Dominique Vuvan

Institutional Policy & Planning Committee (IPPC): Rodrigo Schneider

Committee on Educational Policies & Planning (CEPP): Lisa Jackson-Schebetta, Nick Junkerman

Committee on Academic Freedom & Rights (CAFR): A.J. Schneller

Curriculum Committee (CC): Maggie Greaves Ozgur

Faculty Development Committee (FDC): Pushi Prasad, Tim Wientzen

Periclean Honors Forum Council (HFC): Madushi Raththagala

Athletic Council (AC): Paul Arciero, Lucy Oremland

In addition, FEC worked with the following committees to secure one-year replacements for AY 22–23:

Appointments & Tenure Committee (ATC): Reg Lilly, Leigh Wilton

Committee on Educational Policies & Planning (CEPP): Bob Turner

Curriculum Committee (CC): Jessica Somerville-Braun

The current service mandate continues to have drawbacks that will be important to consider when the system is formally reviewed in AY 23–24. These concerns have become a regular occurrence in recent years. In particular:

- There were two elections where only one candidate met eligibility criteria—in one case, the Chair of FEC recruited a candidate from the Pre-Professional division so that there could be an election
- Elections this year raised ongoing concerns about the imbalance between service needs and the size of the college workforce. This problem transcends whatever “system” FEC employs to populate committees and will need to be addressed in some way (e.g., trim membership size/membership constraints and reconsider which committees constitute the core of faculty governance)
- FEC will have to begin pulling faculty from the ad hoc pool—who are not available for the full three-year-term—for elections where there are too few candidates to meet the required number of positions

FEC anticipates that these concerns will continue to increase given that the college hiring freeze has not brought new faculty into the service cycle to account for retirements and other departures from the college. While departments are beginning to receive permission to search for tenure-track positions, the process is slow going and it will take a number of years for those hired to enter into the service cycle. While the service cycle will not be up for formal review

until AY23–24, FEC anticipates hosting various meetings and discussions in AY 22–23 to begin the conversation about reviewing the governance system.

Governance Committee Appointments

FEC appointed 5 members of the faculty to serve on 4 standing governance Committees (one consultative appointment is still in the process of being filled). Appointments for terms beginning Fall 2022 are as follows:

Committee on Intercultural & Global Understanding (CIGU): (In process)

Faculty Advisory Board (FAB): Lucia Hulsether, Christopher Mann

Committee on Academic Standing (CAS): Kyle Nichols

Self-Determined Majors Committee (SDM): Michael Paulmeno

Subcommittee on Responsible Citizenship: Sarah Day-O’Connell

Committees of the Whole

During fall of 2021, FEC hosted two Committee of the Whole discussions. The first, held during the October 21 faculty meeting, facilitated discussion on the formation of a Faculty Advisory Committee concerned with reviewing the process of approving/declining requests for tenure lines from departments and programs (more detail below under Consultations/Advisory Groups/Search Committees). FEC followed the conversation with a brief survey that showed faculty support for the formation of the committee during the fall semester with a strong preference for ensuring divisional representation on the committee. The second Committee of the Whole, held during the December 3 faculty meeting, was a discussion on making candidate ranking of committees transparent on all ballots during college governance elections. FEC followed up this discussion with a brief faculty survey, which confirmed faculty support. The change will begin fall of 2022.

In the spring of 2022, FEC hosted a Committee of the Whole during the March 4 faculty meeting regarding faculty having the option to teach remotely when in-person classes are cancelled due to inclement weather. Once again, FEC followed up this discussion with a brief faculty survey, which showed faculty support for the measure to be evenly divided. FEC heard concern that the split may have been deceptive given that NTT faculty were under-represented in this vote, and there may actually be less support for teaching remotely during inclement weather.

Committee of Committees

FEC convened two meetings of the Committee of Committees. The first meeting was on December 13, 2021. FEC presented this report and provided an opportunity for faculty discussion during the faculty meeting on February 4, 2022. The second Committee of Committees meeting was held on May 6, 2022. FEC plans to present the report and provide an opportunity for faculty discussion during one of the first two faculty meetings of Fall 2022.

Consultations/Advisory Groups/Search Committees

During the fall semester of 2021, FEC was active in the formation of several ad hoc service groups. The DOF/VPAA consulted with and tasked FEC with the creation of a Faculty Advisory Committee, the purpose of which was to (1) recommend criteria for evaluating requests from departments and programs for new or replacement of continuing faculty lines; and (2) to advise

the DOF/VPAA on applying those criteria to determine which requests should be approved. As stated above, FEC held a Committee of the Whole and followed up with a brief faculty survey in advance of seeking nominations/self-nominations and facilitating a vote for this committee.

Additionally, the DOF/VPAA consulted and tasked FEC with the creation of a Faculty Compensation Study Working Group, the purpose of which was to provide recommendations and advice to the DOF/VPAA on faculty compensation including selecting the peer group of institutions used as market comparators for benchmarking faculty salaries, determining criteria for considering internal salary equity, and establishing targets for external benchmarking of faculty salaries.

During the fall semester, FEC also worked with President Conner and ATC in soliciting nominations/self-nominations and holding a vote for a faculty representative to serve on the V.P. of Communications and Marketing Search Committee

Finally, during the spring semester of 2022, FEC worked with President Conner and ATC in soliciting nominations/self-nominations and holding a vote to assist the President and ATC in selecting four faculty representatives to serve on the Dean of the Faculty/V.P. of Academic Affairs Search Committee.

Other Business

Lastly, FEC met with the Chairs of both CAFR and ATC to discuss a proposal FEC received regarding potential tenure process modification for faculty members whose scholarly work is interdisciplinary in nature and thus whose scholarly work may be more appropriately evaluated by an ad hoc committee across departments/programs rather than exclusively within their home departments. Recent public letters from faculty who left the institution prior to tenure over such concerns were cited. The chair of ATC offered that issues of faculty at disciplinary intersections had been discussed in ATC, and ATC proposed that current practices of evaluation for tenure (i.e., internal letters) may be utilized for faculty in this position until further changes are implemented. While this conversation is in early stages of development, it was resolved that FEC, ATC, and CAFR should meet again for further discussion in AY 22–23

2021-2022 FEC Members:

Jason Ohlberg (Dance, **Chair**)
Xiaoshuo Hou (Sociology and Asian Studies)
Oscar Perez-Hernandez (World Languages and Literature)
Casey Schofield (Psychology)

2022-2023 FEC Members:

Xiaoshuo Hou (Sociology and Asian Studies, **Chair**)
Jason Ohlberg (Dance)
Oscar Perez-Hernandez (World Languages and Literature)
Dominique Vuvan (Psychology)

Incoming Chairs/Directors of Governance Committees for 2022-2023

Appointments and Tenure Committee (ATC): Winston Grady-Willis
Promotions Committee (PC): Andrew Lindner

Faculty Executive Committee (FEC): Xiaoshuo Hou
Institutional Policy and Planning Committee (IPPC): Kurt Smemo
Committee on Educational Policies and Planning (CEPP): Leigh Wilton
Committee on Academic Freedom and Rights (CAFR): Siobhan Hart
Curriculum Committee (CC): Chris Vecsey
Faculty Development Committee (FDC): Flagg Taylor
Periclean Honors Forum Council (PHFC): Flagg Taylor
Athletic Council (AC): Jason Breves
Faculty Advisory Board (FAB): (Pending)
Committee on Academic Standing (CAS): David Cohen
Self-Determined Majors Committee (SDM): Catherine Berheide
Committee on Intercultural and Global Understanding (CIGU): Aurelia Ball