

Faculty Executive Committee Annual Report 2025-2026

The Faculty Executive Committee (FEC) would like to begin by expressing its gratitude to the faculty, staff, and administrative colleagues who supported its work throughout the 2025–2026 academic year. In particular, FEC greatly appreciated the collaboration of colleagues on ATC and PC; committee chairs and program directors; the Registrar; Nora Graubard, Debbie Peterson, and the entire Office of the Dean of the Faculty; as well as the many faculty members who participated in governance elections, searches, working groups, and open discussions. We are deeply grateful for their time, expertise, thoughtful engagement, and continued commitment to shared governance, all of which made FEC’s work throughout the year possible.

Overview

In August 2025, FEC chair collaborated with the Appointments and Tenure Committee (ATC) and Promotions Committee (PC) to address inconsistencies between the Faculty Handbook and the Collective Bargaining Agreement. This work contributed to approval of the 2025-2026 Faculty Handbook.

Consistent with past years, FEC met weekly throughout both semesters to manage ongoing governance responsibilities, respond to committee and faculty questions, coordinate elections and appointments, and address issues involving the Faculty Handbook and FEC Operating Code. Much of the year's work focused on faculty governance staffing, committee eligibility and representation, and ensuring that faculty voices were represented on important searches and working groups. The FEC Chair also worked closely with the faculty parliamentarian and the Dean of Faculty to prepare for faculty meetings throughout the academic year and to help ensure that meetings followed appropriate procedures.

In the Fall semester, FEC administered governance elections and appointments, coordinated the election of a faculty representative for the Vice President for Advancement search, and brought forward motions related to parental leave and the faculty governance service cycle. FEC co-hosted a faculty-only meeting with panel of CPDs on December 12, 2025.

In the Spring semester, FEC continued its work on committee staffing and governance reform while also coordinating faculty representation for several searches, screening committees, and working groups. The committee discussed revisions to the FEC Operating Code, solicited feedback on divisional representation, considered a draft proposal concerning a Study Group of Tenure, met with the Registrar regarding the academic calendar, and hosted an FEC open forum on April 17, 2026.

Below, we describe some key parts of our work this year in more detail.

Meetings

FEC held 27 weekly meetings throughout the Fall 2025 and Spring 2026 semesters. These meetings provided the structure for managing elections and appointments, reviewing governance questions, coordinating faculty representation on searches and working groups, and discussing proposals affecting faculty governance. Minutes and committee materials were maintained as part of FEC's regular governance work. During these regular meetings, FEC also met with the President, the Dean of Faculty, the Associate Dean of Faculty for Recruitment and Academic Personnel, and VP for Enrollment, Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid Skidmore College.

During the Spring semester, FEC invited the Registrar to meet with the committee to discuss the academic calendar. FEC also continued regular consultation with other governance committees and faculty leaders as issues arose, including conversations related to committee eligibility, divisional representation, tenure, and faculty service.

Finally, the FEC Chair participated in ad hoc-meetings with members of Skidmore's faculty, staff, and administration to discuss a variety of matters related to shared governance.

Faculty Handbook and FEC Operating Code

A significant part of FEC's Fall work involved the Faculty Handbook. FEC worked with the Associate Dean of Faculty for Recruitment and Academic Personnel, ATC and PC to identify and correct inconsistencies between the Faculty Handbook and the Collective Bargaining Agreement, and the 2025-2026 Faculty Handbook was subsequently approved.

FEC also introduced a motion to incorporate the revised parental leave policy into the Faculty Handbook. In addition, the committee introduced a motion to adopt a revised faculty governance cycle intended to 'smooth the curve' of faculty availability for committee service. The goal of this work was to improve fairness, reduce year-to-year staffing imbalances, and align faculty service opportunities more effectively with committee needs.

During the Spring semester, FEC discussed updates to its Operating Code as part of its continuing effort to keep committee procedures current and aligned with faculty governance practice.

Governance Committee Elections and Staffing

FEC administered governance committee elections and appointments during the Fall semester and completed the principal round of elections for governance service. Remaining appointment work for one committee was carried into the Spring semester.

Committee staffing continued to require substantial attention in the Spring. Because the available ad hoc pool was limited, FEC invited members of Cohorts B, C, and D to self-nominate for early governance service beginning in Fall 2026 rather than Fall 2027. This approach was intended to expand the pool of available faculty while continuing the broader effort to distribute governance service more evenly over time.

FEC continued to consider questions surrounding eligibility for governance service, including the need to clarify and formalize the eligibility of non-tenure-track faculty to serve on governance committees.

Governance Committee Elections and Replacements

FEC held elections to fill 18 positions on 9 governance committees. The following members of the faculty were elected to serve three-year terms, beginning Fall 2026:

- Appointments & Tenure Committee (ATC): Casey Schofield (Psychology), Mason Stokes (English), and Sara Lagalwar (Neuroscience)
- Promotions Committee (PC): Beau Breslin (Political Science) and Lisa Jackson-Schebetta (Theater)
- Faculty Executive Committee (FEC): Joerg Bibow (Economics) and Charlotte D'Evelyn (Music)
- Institutional Policy and Planning Committee (IPPC): Feryaz Ocakli (Political Science) and Silvia Carli (Philosophy)
- Committee on Educational Policies & Planning (CEPP): Yelena Biberman-Ocakli (Political Science), Kim Frederick (Chemistry) and David Howson (Arts Administration)
- Committee on Academic Freedom and Rights (CAFR): June Paul (Social Work) and Michael Ennis-McMillan (Anthropology)
- Curriculum Committee (CC): Rachel Cantave (International Affairs)
- Periclean Honors Forum Council (PHFC): Amy Oh (Classics) and Hassan Lopez (Psychology)
- Athletic Council (AC): Mark Rye (Psychology)

FEC worked with the following committees to secure replacements for AY2026-2027:

- FEC: Aarathi Prasad (for Lucia Hulsether)
- IPPC: Marta Brunner (Spring 2027 for Murat Yildiz)
- PC: Jennifer Delton (Fall 2026 for Beau Breslin)

Governance Committee Appointments

FEC appointed 10 members of the faculty to serve on 6 standing governance committees. Appointments for three-year terms beginning Fall 2026 are as follows:

- Campus Sustainability Committee (CSC): Matthew Hockenos
- Committee on Academic Standing (CAS): Kirsten Hogenson
- Self Determined Majors Committee (SDM): Russell Haight, Aurelie Matheron
- Committee on Intercultural and Global Understanding (CIGU): Amon Emeka
- Faculty Advisory Board (FAB) **volunteers from Cohorts B, C and D**: Jennifer Bonner, Jina Mao, Kurt Smemo, Marketa Wolfe
- CEPP's Goals for Student Learning & Development (GSLD) Subcommittee: Barbara Black

Governance Committee Special Election

FEC ran a special election for the IPPC Subcommittee on Responsible Citizenship (SRC). The following member was elected to serve a three-year term:

- Subcommittee on Responsible Citizenship (SRC): Maggie Greaves Ozgur (English)

FEC would like to express our deep gratitude and sincere appreciation for everyone's support of and participation in shared governance.

Search Committees and Working Groups

FEC coordinated a number of faculty nominations and elections for institutional searches and working groups during 2025-2026. In the Fall, FEC coordinated the nomination and election of a faculty representative for the Vice President for Advancement search.

In the Spring, FEC coordinated the nomination and election of faculty representatives for the Director of Athletics Screening Committee and the Dean of Faculty/Vice President for Academic Affairs Search Committee. FEC also coordinated calls for self-nominations and elections for faculty representatives to two working groups:

- A working group developing recommendations on service compensation, chair and program director compensation, and the number of course releases.
- The Enrollment Opportunity Working Group.

These efforts were part of FEC's continuing responsibility to facilitate transparent faculty participation in institutional searches and time-limited working groups.

Governance System Revision

Building on the governance review begun in 2024-2025, FEC continued to focus on the mismatch between committee staffing needs and the number of faculty available to stand for election or appointment in any given year. Under the existing service cycle, tenure-track faculty generally stood for election or appointment in only one year of a seven-year sabbatical cycle, which often produced small candidate pools and made it difficult to populate some committee ballots robustly.

To address this issue, FEC introduced a motion to modify the governance service cycle. The proposal requires tenure-track faculty to stand for election or appointment in the first, second, and third academic years following a sabbatical, until elected or appointed to a committee. FEC estimated that this change would increase the candidate pool by approximately two to three times while leaving the underlying service obligation unchanged: faculty would still be expected to serve for no more than three years between sabbaticals. The revised cycle is intended to strengthen democratic representation, expand electoral choice, improve the likelihood that faculty are matched with committees they prefer, and make committee staffing more sustainable over time.

The motion also clarified the role of FEC's ad hoc pool and the participation of junior and non-tenure-track faculty in governance. Faculty not elected or appointed after three election years would enter the ad hoc pool for short-term appointments before their next sabbatical. Untenured tenure-track faculty would continue to gain early governance experience through short-term service opportunities, while full-time non-tenure-track faculty on renewable appointments would remain welcome to participate in governance subject to the limitations established in the Collective Bargaining Agreement. This motion was approved by the faculty on February 6th, 2026.

During the Spring semester, the ongoing staffing challenge remained evident. Because the available ad hoc pool was limited, FEC invited members of Cohorts B, C, and D to self-nominate for early service beginning in Fall 2026 rather than Fall 2027.

Faculty Meetings, Forums, and Consultation

FEC continued to support opportunities for faculty discussion outside its regular committee meetings. During the Fall semester, FEC planned a faculty-only meeting for December 12, 2025, featuring a panel of chairs and program directors. During the Spring semester, FEC hosted an open forum on April 17, 2026, providing another opportunity for faculty to discuss governance-related matters and share feedback.

FEC also circulated a draft proposal on divisional representation to the chairs of the five governance committees that require divisional representation, as well as to pre-professional department chairs. The purpose of this consultation was to gather feedback before determining whether and how the proposal should move forward.

Faculty-Only Meeting

On December 12, 2025, FEC hosted a faculty-only meeting to provide faculty with an opportunity to learn more about emerging proposals for reducing Academic Affairs expenditures. The discussion focused on the College's projected need to eliminate approximately 12-15 full-time-equivalent faculty lines over the next several years and on proposals developed in response to the Huron Report and the Summer 2025 Working Group.

One savings strategy under consideration involved reducing course releases currently awarded to chairs and program directors. Two broad approaches had emerged from fall discussions: a divisional dean model, in which divisional deans would assume a substantial portion of work currently performed by chairs and program directors, and a non-divisional dean model that would retain existing department and program leadership structures while seeking other ways to reduce course releases. The Dean of Faculty's Office created two short-term working groups to explore these alternatives during winter break.

Given strong faculty interest in the process, FEC organized the faculty-only meeting around a panel of four chairs/program directors who had participated in the fall discussions: Christine Reilly, Hope Castro, Steve Ives, and Joerg Bibow. Panelists shared their perspectives on the two approaches and then responded to questions from the faculty. The meeting generated substantial interest and a wide range of perspectives, giving faculty an opportunity to raise concerns, ask questions, and provide context as the proposals continued to develop.

FEC Open Forum on Faculty Communication

On April 17, 2026, FEC hosted an open forum to gather faculty input on faculty communication channels and the structure of faculty meetings. The discussion focused in part on concerns about the current faculty listserv, which is largely limited to approved announcements and requires messages to be reviewed and forwarded by administrators. Faculty discussed a range of possible alternatives, including moderated faculty email lists, separate lists for different purposes, opt-in or opt-out communication channels, a code of conduct for faculty-wide messages, and alternative discussion platforms. Participants also noted the need to balance open communication with concerns about email volume, moderation workload, and the potential for inappropriate or harmful messages.

The forum also included a broader discussion of faculty meetings and faculty participation in shared governance. Some participants expressed concern that faculty meetings have increasingly become information-sharing sessions rather than opportunities for substantive discussion. Suggestions included distributing administrative reports in advance, reserving more meeting time for faculty business and discussion, considering whether faculty should have a greater role in chairing meetings, and continuing to evaluate the benefits and limitations of hybrid participation. Faculty also emphasized the importance of creating spaces for meaningful discussion, institutional memory, and engagement across departments and programs.

Possible next steps included consultation with IT about communication options, consideration of multiple faculty communication channels, development of guidelines for faculty-wide communication, exploration of changes to faculty meeting structure, and additional faculty-only forums or discussion spaces when significant issues arise. FEC encouraged faculty to continue providing feedback as this work develops.

Committee of Committees

FEC convened two meetings of the Committee of Committees (CoC), both held in-person in the Murray-Aikins Dining Hall. The first meeting took place on December 11th 2025, and the second meeting took place on May 1st 2026.

2025-2026 FEC Members

- Abel Arango (World Languages and Literatures)
- Jeremy Day-O'Connell (Music)
- Patricia Hilleren (Biology)
- Ting Li (Management and Business, **Chair**)

2026-2027 FEC Members

- Joerg Bibow (Economics)
- Charlotte D'Evelyn (Music)
- Patricia Hilleren (Biology, **Chair**)
- Aarathi Prasad (Computer Science)

Incoming Chairs/Directors of Governance Committees for 2025-2026

- Appointments and Tenure Committee (ATC): Jennifer Mueller
- Promotions Committee (PC): Mimi Hellman
- Faculty Executive Committee (FEC): Patricia Hilleren
- Institutional Policy and Planning Committee (IPPC): Murat Yildiz

- Committee on Educational Policies and Planning (CEPP): Ryan Overbey
- Committee on Academic Freedom and Rights (CAFR): Jamie Parra
- Curriculum Committee (CC): Eunice Ferreira
- Faculty Development Committee (FDC): Eliza Kent
- Periclean Honors Forum Council (PHFC): Joseph Cermatori
- Athletic Council (AC): Karen Kellogg
- Faculty Advisory Board (FAB): Benjamin Bogin
- Committee on Academic Standing (CAS): Denise Evert
- Self-Determined Majors Committee (SDM): Catherine White Berheide
- Committee on Intercultural and Global Understanding (CIGU): Aiwu Zhao

Closing

FEC is grateful to the many faculty colleagues who stood for election, volunteered for appointments, participated in searches and working groups, attended forums, and offered feedback on governance proposals during the year. Shared governance depends on this collective participation, and FEC sincerely appreciates the time and care that colleagues across the College devoted to this work in 2025-2026.