

Fall 2021 Committee of Committees Report
Dec. 13, 2021, 10:30am-12pm

Present: FEC members Jason Ohlberg (Chair), Xiaoshuo Hou (scribe), Oscar Perez Hernandez (scribe), and Casey Schofield (scribe) along with representatives from ATC, PC, IPPC, CAFR, CC, FDC, AC, and CIGU. The meeting was hosted via Zoom.

The FEC chair welcomed everyone and thanked committee members for their work this semester. The FEC chair reviewed the purpose of the meeting; this is an opportunity to share the important work that committees have been doing over the past semester. Further, committees are invited to report on the quality of intra-committee and inter-committee interactions, as well as the working relationship with college administrators.

Appointment and Tenure Committee (ATC)

- Began their work this semester with bias mitigation training
- Have had regular meetings, both internal and with the DOF/VPAA to discuss the 10 candidates up for tenure
- The work related to tenure cases is nearly complete
- Provided feedback to President Conner on the faculty position for the V.P. of Communication and Marketing Search Committee
- Anticipate a full agenda for the spring semester
- Regular work with DOF office, which has been responsive and flexible with scheduling
- Minimal but healthy relationship with President Conner

Promotions Committee (PC)

- Participated in bias mitigation training
- Had one promotion case submitted in early December; hope to wrap it up by mid-March
- Working on the white paper from last spring and considering the feedback received. This may include the addition of the CEPP proposal for inclusive teaching to inform teaching effectiveness in personnel decisions. PC has recently communicated with FEC about how to proceed
- Consulted with DOF office on potential honorary degrees and endowed chairs
- Connections and relationships with other committees (CEPP, FEC) and administration (primarily Associate Dean Fehling) have been healthy

Institutional Policy and Planning Committee (IPPC)

- At outset of semester, an external facilitator worked with the committee to identify ways to ensure productive and constructive intra-committee relationships
- Primary focus has been related to Campus Master Planning
- In addition, concerns related to student engagement, transphobia, Title IX issues, budget and finance, staff compensation, flexible and remote work, COVID-19 booster have been considered and discussed
- Relations on IPPC have been very good

Committee on Academic Freedom and Rights (CAFR)

- Reports healthy relationships with other committees
 - In particular IPPC re. COVID vaccine/booster mandate, ATC's anti-bias training
- Have discussed the importance of guidance surrounding NTT faculty contracts (e.g., guidelines, review process) and have been trying to get some language regarding faculty with terminal contracts in the Faculty Handbook. In this process CAFR has worked with both the DOF/VPAA and Associate Dean Casey; both have been very responsive
- Considering both formal and informal individual cases.
- CAFR has no comment on the outcome of recommendations to the President at this time

Curriculum Committee (CC)

- Have reviewed 30 new courses; 12 of these are Bridge Experience courses. Even though there are concerns about the number of Bridge courses available, 19 Bridge Experience courses will be offered in the spring and some still have seats available.
 - Observing that numerous proposed courses are stalled at the revision stage
- System for reviewing courses is working smoothly
- Limited communication with other committees, though productive discussion with CEPP about the mandate that Bridge Experiences courses be completed at Skidmore College instead of allowing students to transfer such credits from off-campus courses.

Faculty Development Committee (FDC)

- Completed their workload—reviewed and awarded Roth Distinguished Service award and Faculty Development grants
- Awarded Emeritus faculty grants
- Reviewed full-year sabbatical leaves and awarded sabbatical enhancements
- Reviewed commencement speakers
- Will review Moseley materials over the break
- Currently crafting New Initiatives proposal that will be submitted for consideration
- Relationship with Associate Dean Casey have been positive

Athletic Council (AC)

- Conducted the physical activity instructor teaching evaluations and submitted to the Athletic Director
- Reviewed changes in policy in the NCAA and how they would affect Division III schools
- Student representatives working on improving nutrition options in the Athletic Center, and improving athlete/non-athlete student relations
- Will receive update in spring on academic status of students
- Working relationship with Athletic Director and DOF representatives (typically Associate Dean Fehling) have been good

Committee on Intercultural Global Understanding (CIGU)

- Some items on this semester's docket were sidelined as CIGU attended to the Abolish Transphobia Demands and Title IX/SGBM concerns on campus

- Met with Donna Ng and Tim Munroe regarding campus safety review
- CIGU will help to implement the NACCC staff survey in Spring 2022; results from the student survey administered in Spring 2021 have been received and will be analyzed by a working group that will likely include several CIGU members
- Grappling with the loss of Kristie Ford and Mariel Martin who have incredible institutional memory regarding CIGU's work over the last 15+ years. CIGU is incredibly grateful for their service

Faculty Executive Committee (FEC)

- FEC has maintained an exceptionally positive internal working environment as well as positive intra-committee working relationships
- Reports consistently positive experiences with the administration on key agenda items:
 - Worked with the DOF/VPAA and IT to facilitate the spring 2021 initiative to support hybrid all-faculty meetings
 - Worked with the DOF/VPAA & IT regarding moderated listservs
 - The DOF/VPAA consulted and tasked FEC with the creation of The Faculty Advisory Group
 - FEC sought nominations and facilitated elections for this process
 - The DOF/VPAA consulted and tasked FEC with the creation of The Faculty Compensation Study Working Group
 - FEC sought nominations and facilitated elections for this process
- Worked with President Conner and ATC in soliciting nominations/self-nominations and holding elections for a faculty representative to serve on the V.P. of Communications and Marketing Search Committee
- Hosted two Committee of the Whole discussions this fall:
 - 10/1/21: Discussion on the formation of a Faculty Advisory Group. FEC conducted a brief follow-up faculty survey before soliciting nominations
 - 12/3/21: Discussion on making candidate ranking of committees transparent on all ballots during college governance elections. FEC conducted a brief follow-up faculty survey, which confirmed faculty support for the measure.
- Worked with IT on solutions to recurring software issues regarding governance elections
- Completed the faculty governance election cycle
 - Once again this year, there were two elections where only one candidate met eligibility criteria—in one case, the Chair 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 workforce size. 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.) As a reminder, the current governance system is up for review in AY 2023/2024
 - FEC is continuing to work with chairs of certain committees who will require appointments beginning fall of 2022

Larger discussion:

FEC highlighted requests received for transparency about committee meeting times and course release information. No concerns were raised about making this information transparent on election software and members shared the following established process:

- PC, IPPC, and ATC have fixed meeting times, which are available on their webpages
 - ATC: T/TH 9am–12pm
 - IPPC: F 10:30–12pm (biweekly)
- CIGU: Tries to meet at 9am on the same day that IPPC meets (biweekly on Fridays)
- ATC: for every 3 cases, every committee member receives a 1-credit release. Chair receives an additional 3-credit course release
- PC: for every 3 candidates, every committee member receives a 1-credit release (has not been available in recent years in light of dearth of candidates for promotion). Chair receives one course release
- FEC: Chair receives one 4-credit course release
- CAFR: The chair receives one course release
- CIGU: Two faculty representatives at any given moment. One is the faculty co-chair, who also sits on IPPC. There is no course release

The FEC Chair asked meeting members to consider what the implication(s) might be for their committee if the governance election system allowed for people to stand for elections when they are only available for two years of service as opposed to the current mandate of three years. This is raised as a result of two recurring issues: (1) the shrinking faculty makes it difficult to populate ballots, thus some elections become appointments; (2) some full-time non-tenure-track faculty want to participate in service work but cannot because of the mandated 3-year governance cycle

- Discussed the historical motivation for developing our current governance model and the problems it solved (e.g., equity in governance service load), acknowledging the current and expected challenges meeting the service needs. Suggested that we need a close look at committees and committee structure, including considering what committees qualify as governance and how that is defined. Noted that the upcoming review is unlikely to be able to solve problems that are connected to larger institutional context and the important larger question of what service (more broadly) means at Skidmore
- The current situation is exacerbated as we come out of the pandemic hiring freeze (with many TT positions being temporarily filled with NTT faculty who are not required and not eligible for several committees that require either TT or tenured status) and face 10% reduction of faculty
- Discussed the possibility of a collective committee chair message to the administration
- Most committees shared that a 3-year appointment is necessary given that there is a steep learning curve. More senior committee members advise and mentor newer committee members and this would be disadvantaged
 - Discussed the tensions between expanding eligibility to 2-year roles (and thus, increasingly NTT faculty)

- Discussed the value of NTT colleagues in the service system, but highlighted concern about addressing the service needs by (even unintentionally) creating an expectation from NTT colleagues for more work. Shrinking faculty and the tensions created need to be addressed by the administration
- A few committees indicated that a 2-year service commitment could work; particularly committees where business happens within the functional unit of one year
- Discussed where there may be the ability to reduce committee membership