

Minutes of the Faculty Executive Committee

FEC-6

Monday, October 13, 2008

11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Tisch 208

Present: Lisa Aronson, John Brugermann (chair), Jennifer Delton, Pat Hillern, Mark Huibregtse, Dan Hurwitz, and Natalie Taylor (Scribe)

- The results from “SurveyMonkey” were distributed for our consideration during our ongoing discussion of the service/governance problem.

I. Minutes

- The minutes from September 29 and October 6, 2008 meetings were approved.
- Pat is close to being able to post the minutes from FEC meetings on the website, but needs to resolve a problem with the password protection.

II. Round One WTS

- The suggestion that FEC would accept additional names for the ballot past the deadline on Friday at 5:00 resulted in a third volunteer to run for CAPT, ensuring a proper election for this committee.
- In the past, FEC has extended the willingness-to-serve deadline for various reasons and has extended it in various ways. This extension is consistent with FEC’s recent practices.
- However, it is inconsistent with FEC’s new decision not to “beat the bushes” or to extend deadlines for the WTS round.
- FEC’s decision to allow an election to go forward was complicated by the incomplete slate for CAPT, a committee that is particularly and uniquely within the purview of the faculty.
- In the future members of FEC agreed that to consult with other members of FEC where there is compelling reason to extend the deadline of an election or to defer an election. When it is necessary to extend a deadline, the person running the election should make clear to the faculty that the deadline for specific committees has been extended and for which specific reasons.
- Mohammad R. Moeini expressed willingness to serve on the review committee of the Dean of Admissions & Financial Aid. Because he holds a one year position at the college, FEC will advise CAPT against this appointment.
- CAPT should continue to recruit another faculty member for the review committee. FEC will consider the names of others, who are willing to serve and will offer further recommendations to CAPT.
- The chair of CAPT will inform those who expressed their willingness to serve of the committee’s appointments.
- It was noted that the untenured faculty did not put their names forward in Round One WTS
- The ballot is expected to be up on Tuesday and will remain up until Friday.

III. FEC’s Role in Constituting Committees that Focus on Non-Faculty Business

- FEC received requests to help identify a faculty member to serve on the search committee for the college's new chaplain and to identify faculty members for a selection committee to review proposals for the Davis Projects for Peace grants. This led the committee to consider its role in constituting such committees.
- The trend has been toward FEC's greater participation in constituting these committees. Taking part allows FEC greater oversight on all of the work that faculty does on task forces, temporary committees, etc.
- It was suggested that FEC should not decide its role at the moment, but to do so after FEC has deliberated more fully on the service/governance problem.
- It was suggested that FEC's involvement would allow for greater coordination and consistency among the new committees, making it more likely that all faculty members are aware of new opportunities for service.
- There was some concern that FEC should limit itself to faculty business so that the committee does not take on additional work and it does not convey that the committees outside of the faculty governance structure have the same stature as faculty committees with respect to service.
- It was determined that FEC would send out an announcement concerning these opportunities for service, but would ask those leading each effort to assume responsibility for the selection of their respective committees.
- FEC will continue to consider its role in constituting committees that are outside the faculty governance structure.

IV. The Service/Governance Problem

- Following the October 6 meeting members of FEC asked their colleagues about their perceptions of service at Skidmore.
- One junior faculty member said that people are reluctant to run for a committee for which no one has expressed a willingness to serve.
- Another member of the faculty thought that junior faculty have been let off the hook. It is important to encourage their participation in faculty governance so that they can be socialized into committee work.
- Others disagreed, arguing that junior faculty participate for the sake of tenure, but then discontinue committee work once they have been granted tenure.
- The committee considered ways in which junior faculty could be socialized into faculty governance in a more regimented manner. There was a suggestion that junior faculty be asked to fill one year appointments, giving them an opportunity to learn the governance structure.
- Others agreed that some committee work is particularly appropriate and useful for junior faculty and greater effort to identify those committees should be made.
- One member of the faculty cautioned that in the new financial context, the solutions to the problem should be inexpensive or free.
- There is a general sense of concern that there were so few willing to serve on CAPT. One reason so few may have been willing could be the uncertainty about what CAPT does.

Respectfully submitted,
Natalie Taylor