

Minutes of the Faculty Executive Committee
Monday, November 24, 2008
11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Tisch 208

Present: Lisa Aronson, Sue Bender, John Brueggemann (chair), Jennifer Delton, Pat Hillern, Mark Huibregtse, Dan Hurwitz and Natalie Taylor (Scribe), Susan Kress (Vice President of Academic Affairs)

I. Minutes

- The minutes from the November 17 meeting were not available.

II. Conversation with Susan Kress

A. UWW

- Susan Kress received the report on UWW on the previous Friday, November 21, but had not had an opportunity to discuss it with Jeff Segrave. Therefore, she preferred not to speculate on the action that would be taken.
- The report would likely be shared with the president's cabinet, VPAA staff, IPPC, and CEPP. If there were any governance concerns, FEC would be consulted.
- It was noted that the UWW committee would likely change, which would involve FEC.
- CEPP would likely be the central faculty committee, except when questions of process and governance arose.
- John Brueggemann suggested that FEC be advised if changes to the UWW program would involve a systematic shift in the faculty workload.
- Changes to the UWW have the potential for a paradigm shift. For example, departments may be asked to participate in program reviews or to vet candidates and/or courses.
- He also suggested that a series of changes to the UWW program should be presented together so that the faculty could deliberate about the changes as a bundle.

B. Faculty Meetings

- The length and content of the faculty meetings have been a perennial topic. However, FEC has not had a lengthy discussion about the meetings and does not have a position on whether or how the meetings might be shortened or changed.
- It was noted that FEC has already met with the VPAA about these matters.
- It was suggested that a different meeting place might encourage greater discussion (the auditorium establishes a hierarchical structure to the meetings).
- Perhaps, a change in the culture, rather than the structure is required. Susan remarked that last year's discussions concerning UWW and Part VI of the handbook were robust discussions.
- The perception that almost everything that comes to the faculty floor is adopted gives the impression that there is not significant debate at faculty meetings.
- There was a suggestion that FEC should take a greater part in putting the agenda together. In the past, the chair of FEC has been able to see the agenda in advance, but this possibility is determined by the process for collecting agenda items and the demands made on the time of the VPAA administrative support.
- Because the by-laws establish the process of putting the agenda together, the VPAA often does not see the agenda until relatively late in the week of the meeting.

- Ensuring FEC involvement in putting the agenda together would likely require a change to the by-laws.
- The structure of the meetings and the collection of agenda items leave faculty with the sense that they do not control the faculty meetings, but that the administration does.
- In response to this sense, other meetings have been scheduled in order to allow for greater faculty discussion.
- In thinking about how to improve the faculty meetings, Susan asked us to consider the various purposes for the faculty meetings:
 - Both ceremonial and social
 - The venue for passing legislation
 - A means of distributing information

C. The Service/Governance Problem

- John brought Susan up to date on our discussions this semester thus far.
- The focus has been to encourage more faculty to serve.
- A structural problem has emerged. There are more committee spots than there are faculty.
- During the course of the semester we have been persuaded that there must be an effort to prioritize the committees, which are central to faculty governance.
- The organization of the annual report form does not properly convey what service is.
- Early next semester FEC should be prepared to share insights and proposals with the faculty.
- A discussion of how we can and should reward service followed.
- It was proposed that Susan return to meet with FEC again during the winter months.

III. Round Two

- We agreed that in the future that a reminder would be sent 1-2x during the WTS period.
- Dan would mention the oversight during Round II in his announcement of the election results.
- A discussion about sharing the names of those willing to serve with the VPAA and Dean of Faculty followed. Some objection was expressed.
- Dan will share the information for Round II and FEC would revisit the question.

IV. College Budget

- Mike West expressed his willingness to meet with FEC regarding the effects that the national economic crisis are likely to have on Skidmore.
- The FEC 9ers would ensure that information from IPPC was shared with FEC. In the case that the FEC 9ers thought it would be necessary or helpful for Mike West to meet with FEC, we would take him up on his offer.
- Lisa has received only about 10 responses from the department chairs concerning what they advise junior faculty about service. It was decided that another follow up message would not be sent.
- There was some discussion about whether or not junior faculty properly understand the importance of service.

- We agreed to keep our meeting time on Mondays at 11:30-1:00 for the spring semester.

Respectfully submitted,
Natalie Taylor