

Faculty Executive Committee
Meeting Minutes
December 2, 2011
8:30am

Present: Jörg Bibow, Barbara Black (chair), Ben Givan (scribe), Natalie Taylor, Paul Sattler, Susan Kress (Vice President for Academic Affairs; invited guest). (The FEC chair left the meeting at its scheduled time of conclusion; others in attendance continued their discussion for another fifteen minutes.)

I. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the November 18 meeting were held over for approval at the next meeting.

II. Discussion with Vice President for Academic Affairs Regarding the Science Facilities Task Force

The FEC welcomed the VPAA, who had offered to meet with the FEC in her email of October 30, wherein she notified the FEC chair that the Science Working Group recommends the establishment of a Science Facilities Task Force (SFTF). The following proposals have been made with respect to the membership of the SFTF:

1. That the membership of the SFTF be appointed because expertise of various kinds is required for the most effective discharge of the SFTF's duties
2. That there be significant overlap between the leadership of the SWG and the SFTF
3. That the faculty members appointed have some expertise in science facilities
4. That one faculty member be selected from outside the sciences and have expertise in buildings other than science facilities or in the teaching of scientific literacy
5. That a member of the office of the DOF be appointed as a representative from Academic Affairs
6. That representatives from Facilities and Advancement be seated on the SFTF

The VPAA's email identified a number of named individuals that are being recommended for appointment to the SFTF.

The VPPA began the discussion by outlining this issue's history. At some point since 2005, when the college's strategic plan was passed, a Science Working Group (SWG) was created. This fall, the VPAA and Interim Dean of the Faculty decided to reassemble the SWG, which currently consists of faculty members from science departments (nominated by their department chairs) and several other individuals. The SWG has lately been discussing how to realize the college's Science Vision by cultivating new pedagogical, curricular, and research initiatives across all departments.

The VPAA expects the SWG to complete its work by early next spring and to then hand its work off to the SFTF, which will formulate a proposal, to be presented to the college's Board of Trustees in May 2012, reimagining the college's science facilities for the future. Such a proposal may include the renovation or remodeling of existing facilities and/or plans for a new facility. (Last year, the Board of Trustees heard a presentation on this topic from a representative of an external planning firm; see Faculty Meeting minutes of 3/4/11.)

The FEC and VPAA discussed various procedural questions. The FEC chair drew the committee's attention to the consultation process for committee and subcommittee appointments described in section IV.A.C.1 of the FEC operating code, which describes the annual Round IV "Willingness-to-Serve" process; she also shared some further email communication between herself and the VPAA.

The VPAA would like the SFTF to begin its work in the near future. Since the FEC has not yet received a written charge for the SFTF, the VPAA described, in broad strokes, a provisional charge, envisioning that the SFTF would sunset after presenting its proposal to the trustees next May. It was noted that significant renovations or additions to the college's physical plant are always a major institutional step; lessons, both positive and salutary, were learned during the recent construction of the music building, and renovation of the art building and the Filene building. Science faculty have the greatest stake in the SFTF initiative, but it is inevitable that members of other departments will also be affected. A variety of ad hoc groups are currently working on science-related initiatives; many of them include personnel also slated for the SFTF.

The FEC and VPAA agreed to approve the SFTF as proposed, with the proviso that a special WTS be held next for the single faculty representative from outside the sciences, and that the VPAA send a written charge to the FEC so that the WTS can include a description of the SFTF.

III. Discussion with Vice President for Academic Affairs Regarding the Restructuring of Faculty Meetings

As a courtesy to the VPPA, no minutes were taken during this portion of the meeting, so that she had an opportunity to speak and listen off-the-record.

IV. WTS for CEPP Science Literacy Subcommittee

Josh Ness, the CEPP chair, informed the FEC chair in a November 30 email that CEPP wishes to create a sub-committee "to explore science literacy as an emerging strategic theme for the college." A charge for the subcommittee is available on the CEPP webpage. CEPP wishes to appoint faculty members who are not on CEPP to the subcommittee, and would like FEC to issue a WTS on CEPP's behalf. Owing to time

constraints, the FEC was not able to discuss this issue but agreed to continue their discussion by email, because CEPP would like to constitute this sub-committee in the near future.

V. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:45am

Respectfully submitted,
Ben Givan