

**Faculty Executive Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, February 22, 2012  
8:30-9:30**

**Present:** Barbara Black (chair), Joerg Bibow, Natalie Taylor (scribe) , and Susan Walzer (invited guest)

- I.** The minutes from the February 15 meeting will be reviewed and discussed at the February 29 meeting.

**II. Susan Walzer's Visit**

- Susan Walzer presented her findings from her study on faculty culture at Skidmore.
- She began by explaining that it was a qualitative study and that she is reporting the perceptions of the faculty she interviewed. She interviewed randomly selected individuals from each department and subsequently balanced for rank and gender.
- She found that negotiating the Skidmore community and expectations for service were the most stressful elements of the job in this sample. This was true across the ranks of assistant and associate professor.
  - The stress was caused, in large part, by the uncertainty that surrounds what counts toward service at the College and by the sense that faculty must attend many and various events and meetings.
  - The uncertainty did vary by department.
  - Susan also noted the personal and professional toll of chairing a major committee as well as taking on administrative roles.
- Susan found that faculty stress each other out.
  - There is the belief that one must remain quiet in order to be tenured or promoted by colleagues. This shows up in national data as well.
  - In addition some faculty reported that the tone of the faculty meetings becomes adversarial at times.
  - Susan speculated that our e-mail culture informs how we experience the workplace, including the faculty meetings.
- Transparency of expectations could help to put faculty at ease. The reward structures should catch up with the efforts of the faculty.
- There was a brief discussion of the suggestions for changes to the faculty meetings.

**V. Planning for the March 2 Open Forum on Faculty Meeting Structure**

- During the next week, we will think through the agenda for the open forum.
- It would be helpful to begin by offering a context and summary of FEC's work thus far.
- We will try to send out a document in advance of the open forum so that those who attend may consider the proposed changes before the discussion.

**III. Round III WTS Update**

- A question was raised concerning the membership of the intellectual policy working group. It was unclear whether a person from the library should volunteer as a faculty member

through the WTS or be appointed as a member of the administration as the description suggests.

- We would double check on the status of the person.
- In addition to the WTS, the chair announced that the DOF would send the names of the people he considers appropriate for discussion of the tenure searches.
- By way of announcement, the chair indicated that we will soon begin work on the changes to the Faculty Handbook that would be necessary as a consequence of combining the VPAA and the DOF. The changes are pressing due to CAPT's calendar.
- The chair reported that she declined to introduce the motion for adding Article X to the Faculty Handbook. However, FEC would bring subsequent motions that include handbook changes.

Respectfully submitted,  
Natalie Taylor