

Report: Faculty Governance
Faculty Meeting, May 18, 2011

The Faculty Executive Committee convened members of the CAPT, CEPP, CC, CAFR, IPPC, and the FDC on April 29th to discuss internal committee workings, inter-committee workings, and the relationship of faculty governance with the administrations. The FEC is required to report on issues raised in these discussions, and it will do so. However, issues arose in the meeting that require taking a broader temporal perspective. Therefore, this year's report on faculty governance will take a broader view. The FEC believes this is warranted by its charge.

On a routine level, all committees reported their working with administrators and their internal workings as satisfactory, although continuity of membership surfaced as a problem in two committees. Efforts will be made to make faculty expressing a willingness to serve mindful of the importance of planning to serve entire terms. Membership in committees was also identified as a concern by two committees: consultations with administrators can easily lead to 'permanent' or 'quasi-permanent guest administrators' at the committee table, leading to an imbalance of voices. Faculty efforts to reduce committee size was also reviewed, and it was noted that reducing administrative representation on some committees might be desirable, and if faculty reductions were to be possible, it might even be necessary. Where relevant, inter-committee collaboration went well. The "Transition and Transformation" (T&T) initiative occasioned some confusion about the faculty's appropriate involvement and some difficulties between CEPP and FEC, but the two committees met and were able to work things out.

FEC reported on its efforts to regularize and make transparent the system of administrative support for faculty governance. The 2006 report of the Course Reduction Task Force, available on the DOF's website, was distributed in lieu of a more recent document detailing support. FEC subsequently received a more recent document, and there are some notable differences.

All committees reported that their interactions with the administration were generally of a very satisfactory nature, that their voices were being heard and were believed to be generally effective. The IPPC representatives announced that at its last meeting the Committee on Responsible Citizenship (CRC) was formed as a subcommittee of the IPPC. This was of concern to the FEC since it had recently had discussions with the administration requirements for establishing ad hoc committees, which were not being met by this action.

There were discussions surrounding various issues of broader faculty concern with which faculty governance seems not well prepared to deal. Notably, the gradual increase from the previous normal load of 36 credits over two years has been changed to 18-20 credits per year so that 40 credits over two years no longer is considered an overload, an increase of one 4-credit course over two years. Similarly, Curriculum Committee reports that the administration routinely insists on the upper range on class size caps, increasing overall the number of students in each section. Still another voiced concerns that the Strategic Plan's commitment to hire 15 new faculty lines seems to have fallen by the wayside.

In the train of this conversation several voiced skepticisms about whether the faculty had among the members of President's Cabinet an earnest and effective advocate for its interests. This conversation led to one of FEC's concerns, namely, the administration's pursuit of initiatives requiring substantial faculty collaboration without seeking and obtaining that in the prescribed manner. The FEC queried whether any faculty committee had been notified or consulted regarding the Arthur Vining Davis Foundation proposal that had led to a grant of \$250,000. The CEPP had recently been made aware of its existence, but had not been consulted about it. Representatives from the IPPC noted that the newly created subcommittee, the Committee on Responsible Citizenship, stipulates one of its members as being the Arthur Vining Davis Program Director. No properly constituted faculty committee had been involved in this grant in any form.

The Committee of Committee meeting confirmed what FEC had come to see as a critical juncture in faculty governance, that initiatives of broad and deep faculty concern – matters of educational policy and more – were being generated and put in place with little or no proper faculty collaboration. The FEC told the Committee of Committees it had requested a meeting with President Glotzbach to discuss exigent matters of faculty governance.

At this juncture it's necessary to shift to a broader perspective than the Committee of Committees. Some background:

In its role as Faculty Observers of the February Board of Trustees meeting, the FEC learned of the "Transition and Transformation" (T&T) initiative and judged that this seemingly far-advanced initiative constituted substantial policy. The FEC believed that the entity and process by which that initiative was generated and advanced did not give the CEPP or the faculty proper control over it. In conversations with the administration the suggestion was made that T&T didn't constitute a policy change and needn't be formally brought before the faculty for a vote, a viewed which the FEC contested. The FEC and the CEPP held an open forum on the topic in April, and among other things, it became clear that T&T was broadly viewed by faculty as a significant policy development.

FEC's view was that the faculty, both at the level of properly formed committees and on the faculty floor, needed to have disposition of this initiative if it was to advance properly. When the FEC learned from its IPPC representatives that there were T&T-related lines in next year's budget and projected into future budgets, it seemed to the FEC that this initiative was heading for implementation without having received the endorsement from the faculty that it should properly carry. The FEC wrote the Acting President indicating that, if it were to make budgetary commitments to T&T, the Board of Trustees should know that it lacked this endorsement.

Subsequently the FEC had discussions with administrators promoting T&T about procedural concerns, specifically, how the entity and procedure for advancing T&T lacked legitimacy. The requirements for properly constituting an ad hoc committee (which is what the Transition and Transformation Working Group was) were discussed in detail. The administration insisted that the process for the T&T was virtually flawless, that the T&T was only a draft and not written in

stone, but the Acting VPAA did agree that, if the administration wanted to formulate and advance an initiative that bore on faculty issues as did the T&T, that it would write a charge, including a purpose, scope and timetable, and consult with the FEC, as required by the *Faculty Handbook*. The FEC reported on this and on the open forum at the following faculty meeting.

Just before convening the Committee of Committees on April 29, the FEC learned about the Arthur Vining Davis Foundation grant the College had received in early 2011. One of the purposes of the grant is, as the Foundation website states, to “help launch a major initiative that doubles the number of courses in traditional liberal arts majors with a civic engagement component.” There are other major policy commitments and statements made in the proposal. The College was awarded \$250,000. The educational goals in this initiative were set without any faculty committee involvement; notably, CEPP was not consulted, nor did this policy initiative come before any other faculty committee, nor to the faculty floor. This grant, as well as the T&T, appeal to President’s Glotzbach’s “Strategic Renewal” for guidance and authorization, a document that promises educational and professional innovations but thus far has not been presented to the faculty for debate or endorsement.

If the T&T seemed to be flawed process, FEC viewed the AVD proposal as violating a basic principle of shared governance, namely, that the faculty determines educational policy. The FEC felt compelled to request a meeting with President Glotzbach, who was just returning from sabbatical, to express its concerns about the foundering of collaborative governance and of the faculty floor as the place for conducting faculty debate as well as the site where educational and professional policy needed to be brought for approval or declension.

The T&T initiative, the AVD grant, and the CRC were cited as examples of administrative initiatives that should have involved faculty governance in very clear and stipulated ways, but which had, in fact, substantially failed to do so. The AVD grant was cited as particularly problematic inasmuch as the College received significant funds on the basis of a promise to implement educational policy that, in fact, the faculty might well decline to embrace, but in any case had never discussed.

FEC found President Glotzbach exemplarily receptive to FEC’s concerns. FEC averred that both the letter and the spirit of collaborative governance requires faculty be formally involved in the formulation of initiatives that bear on educational policy, and such initiatives must come to the faculty floor when substantive. FEC averred and he agreed that the administration had been insufficiently mindful of its need to engage faculty governance both in the formation of initiatives as well as bringing them to the faculty floor, and that this lack of attention to proper governance led to the serious error in making the AVD grant application without the required faculty participation. President Glotzbach concurred with FEC’s special concern that the administration’s inviting of selected faculty to represent the faculty on initiatives of College-wide significance is contrary to requirements in the *Faculty Handbook* and an inappropriate substitute for properly engaging faculty governance -- indeed it undermines collaborative governance. The T&T initiative was errant in this and other procedural regards. President Glotzbach agreed that there is an illogic in the apparent status of the T&T as a draft proposal when, in fact, much if not most of the substantial educational policy proposed by the T&T had

already been committed to by the AVD grant proposal. He suggested it was necessary to revisit the documents involved and review how we got to this point.

He took responsibility for his administration's actions with a *mea culpa*. It is FEC's understanding that he expressed a commitment to 'stopping the train,' so to speak, on these initiatives and to go far enough back in the process that had generated these initiatives so as to start over and do things correctly. This includes bringing "Strategic Renewal" to appropriate faculty committees and the faculty as a whole for debate and, where appropriate, faculty action. President Glotzbach voiced his determination to convene a meeting with FEC and other committee chairs before the beginning of the fall semester to work on how the administration and faculty governance can work more collaboratively and successfully, and he sought advice for how to deal with the difficult circumstance the College finds itself in due to those who pursued the AVD grant application.

I would have to say that the meeting with President Glotzbach was an excellent moment in faculty governance, one in which the faculty floor was affirmed as the *terminus ad quem* of faculty governance. President Glotzbach exemplified real leadership in acknowledging that a failure had occurred, taking responsibility for it, and committing to 'make things right.' Good conversations are great, but follow through is better. FEC will remain interested in what is done regarding the AVD grant, the scion of T&T, the budget, and CRC, and particularly the faculty's and faculty governance's role in the disposition of these matters. FEC looks forward to College-wide recommitment to collaborative government. FEC's conversations with the President lead it to be optimistic that a genuinely collaborative way forward on these and future issues may be found.