

Committee of Committees Meeting Spring 2012 Report

The spring Committee of Committees meeting was held on Monday, May 7, from 12-1:30. Faculty representatives—mainly the chairs—of the following committees and subcommittees were present: IPPC, CAPT, CEPP, FDC, CAFR, CAS, CC, AC, CIGU and SRC (two subcommittees of IPPC). All members of FEC attended. Committees report robust operations this semester, largely effective collaboration among committees,** and excellent relationships with the administration. Highlights from specific committees follow:

*(“largely” is justified here by the claims marked with ** below)*

The IPPC representative reports that, despite the rather large size of the committee, IPPC functions very well in his estimation. He describes relations with administration, who have a sizable presence on IPPC, to be good. This semester, the budget was the primary concern of IPPC, and currently IPPC’s focus is managing the admission season.

CAPT’s work is largely confidential, but they are able to report a very busy semester. Interactions with the VPAA and the DOF were quite cordial. CAPT will be meeting with the board at the May BOT meetings, as is standard practice. This year’s CAPT has worked with the new tenure cohort to explain how the recombination of the DOF and VPAA will affect CAPT procedures. Mark Hofmann will be the new CAPT chair.

CEPP reports a year of vigorous and productive discussion with the administrators on CEPP. According to the CEPP chair, Dean Rochelle Calhoun and VPAA Susan Kress are consultative and respectful of the faculty voice. A CEPP/CAPT joint subcommittee has been working on a possible new Dean’s Card evaluation; a CEPP/CC joint subcommittee has been reviewing course caps, and this work will continue over the summer. And, as the faculty at large knows, CEPP has been working on the Culture Centered Inquiry motion. A member of CEPP did mention at the C of C gathering that the new initiative requests from Academic Affairs was shared with CEPP and wondered if this is standard practice. A brief discussion ensued regarding the advantages and disadvantages of mixing, even to a small degree, discussions of curriculum with finances.* Michael Arnush will be the new CEPP chair.

**It is FEC practice to send this report to the President and the VPAA as a matter of courtesy. Here is the VPAA’s response:*

“I have typically shared the new initiative requests from Academic Affairs with CEPP, all of which, of course, have to do with long and short range academic planning, CEPP’s purview. Frequently CEPP has asked for more time to discuss. The chair of CEPP is seated on IPPC, where broader conversations about budget take place, and I believe part of the reason for the CEPP chair’s presence on that committee is the relation of CEPP’s work to the institutional work of budget and planning. In these times it is very difficult to insulate curricular initiatives and choices from questions of resources. I will ask for some time to take this up at the CEPP retreat...”

FDC reports a good year with business as usual. They determined the winners of the Moseley, the Ciancio, and the Distinguished Service Award and awarded faculty development grants. Interactions with the *ex officio* members Paty Rubio and Bill Tomlinson are good, and these members are very helpful to the work of FDC. The question was asked whether, with the new administrative restructuring, Associate Dean Rubio would continue to sit on FDC.

Another committee whose work is confidential, CAFR reports they have worked on a few cases this year. The CAFR chair is pleased to note that policies are increasingly coming CAFR's way for CAFR review and input. The FEC chair is also gratified to hear this, since a top governance priority this year was to regularize and make more visible how policies get developed and vetted at the college. The committee's relationship with the administration is good.

CAS reports regular weekly meetings; the presence of Associate Dean Corey Freeman-Gallant and Registrar Dave DeConno at these meetings is very helpful. The committee has changed policy concerning exemptions to the foreign language requirement; the Disabilities Coordinator now handles these student cases. CAS has worked with FEC to draft a motion to "change" its membership—a change that is, in fact, a move to clarify and reflect current practice. This motion is up for discussion and a vote at the next faculty meeting. A question was asked of the CAS chair regarding the role of administrators as "advocates" for students whose standing at Skidmore is in jeopardy. Going forward, CAS hopes that its work with CEPP can be more productive, with CEPP being more responsive to its queries.**

The CC reports business as usual. It had been their hope to digitize the process for submitting courses for CC approval; the committee made progress and then hit an impasse. The goal remains to reduce the paperwork, and the committee will continue its efforts to find a way to move in this direction. Discussion about the sequencing of the IGR minor and the Handbook guidelines concerning minors at Skidmore occurred. Several in the room expressed their concern that the guidelines, since they were ready as a motion, should have come first—and that those guidelines would help any minor to be vetted and "owned" by the faculty. The CC chair informed the gathering that the Self-Determined Major subcommittee of the CC may become an independent program. This was news to most in the room; the FEC chair had been informed of this only recently. The CC wishes it had seen the latest iteration of the CEPP Culture Centered Inquiry motion before it had gone to the faculty as a whole.**

The AC experienced some membership hurdles this year, and the committee wonders which ADOF will join their committee. Kate Berheide is stepping down as the NCAA representative; this position-holder is appointed by the President. The AC is involved in two projects currently: They are reviewing practice time/class time conflicts for student-athletes, and they are assisting Gail Cummings-Danson in developing procedures for adding or dropping a sport at Skidmore—procedures that Skidmore should have in place but does not. The new AC chair will be Linda Hall.

CIGU had a good year and reports positive interactions with the administration. It has reviewed its charge and membership, making a few changes that, in the end, reduced its membership by one (from 15 to 14). The ADOF whose purview includes diversity will join its membership. Without a DIR, CIGU recognizes that this year has been a transition year for this subcommittee.

CIGU announces that it may have a small budget to pursue initiatives next year. The question was asked how the student presence on this subcommittee—and it could be a question for any committee—works and what is perceived as the value of students on committees.

The SRC is a new subcommittee of IPPC and began its work mid-year following a WTS to identify its faculty representatives. Its main project has been to clarify nomenclature in terms that are meaningful within our institutional culture. They hope to develop clear definitions for such terms as “civic engagement,” “service learning,” and “experiential learning.” With clear definitions in place, it is the eventual aim to designate courses that provide these experiences for students.

FEC reports a semester filled with some of its typical work: two spring elections and BOT observations (in May; for the February off-campus retreat, FEC reviewed the Board Book). FEC also assisted in two pilots: one for the Dean of Faculty, to help him assemble a Chairs Advisory Board that would weigh in on tenure line allocations decisions; the second was to have the FEC chair sit on IPPC, as a way of improving communication between the two committees and, thereby, strengthen FEC’s role as communicator of important initiatives to the faculty. The two committees will confer on their sense of the success of this pilot and whether it should be regularized. FEC ran a special WTS on behalf of the President, to help him and the CAPT chair to assemble a DOF/VPAA Search Committee. FEC has been involved in five motions this semester: a motion concerning faculty meeting by-laws; a motion on behalf of CAS regarding their membership; a motion for CC regarding new Handbook language for the adding and eliminating of minors at the college (this has been postponed until the fall); a motion for Handbook changes, largely concerning the administrative restructuring; and the set of related motions for new Handbook language when Article X passed. We held a faculty forum on March 2. We note there was no Shared Governance meeting convened this semester (one was scheduled for March 20 but then cancelled and never rescheduled). And FEC collaborated on the developing of the new Article X, the review of Part VI of the Handbook, and the drafting of a Policy on Policies (which looks to be ready for presentation this fall). FEC was consulted on how best to proceed with (and get faculty input on) the Political Activity Policy and Business Conduct Policy. There was some preliminary conferral on the future of the Assessment Subcommittee of CEPP. All these collaborations with different committee chairs, groups, and administrators were very collegial and productive.

In conclusion, based on both this semester’s and last’s Committee of Committees meeting, FEC sees the academic year of 2011-2012 as a year of effective governance. Only occasionally do committees feel that consultation and work with others can slow matters down (see **). Surely this is due to very full committee agendas as well as the fact that governance is only part of our professional lives—and not the central part at that. But the atmosphere remains collegial, and committees continue to be committed to working well together.

We must thank the Dean of the Faculty for providing lunch at the C of C meeting, which nourished some rather tired committee chairs and members. We express our gratitude to all of our colleagues who work hard to make Skidmore an effective, productive, functioning institution of higher learning. FEC hopes that people will keep putting their names forward on those WTS’s!

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