

FEC report on the 5/2/19 Committee of Committees Meeting

Representatives from the following committees present: IPPC, ATC, PC, CAFR, CEPP, CC, FDC, CIGU, FEC. The Committee of Committees thanks the Dean's office for snacks.

Overall all committees reported excellent working relationships with other committees and with the administration.

Institutional Policy and Planning Committee (IPPC)

Committee representatives report a busy semester and frequent meetings. The committee has been more productive and effective this past spring (than the fall), with the administration taking intentional steps to improve committee communication.

Work has focused on CIS planning and on healthcare planning.

- A. Many and long conversations have addressed the healthcare cost challenges in particular (costs are likely to increase for a number of years). Institutional timelines sometimes present challenges in terms of all stakeholders feeling as though they have had the opportunity to sufficiently weigh in on the decisions. The recent decision (post-CoC meeting) by the President's Cabinet to make no changes to healthcare costs for 2020 may reflect some concerns expressed by committee members (and others) and is a welcome reprieve that should allow more time to consider best responses to rising costs.
- B. Faculty do not always feel that they are sufficiently empowered (nor do they feel they necessarily have the expertise) to impact these decisions, nor do they feel that they are encouraged to ask questions, though they do recognize that the committee feels more collaborative than it did in the fall of 2018. There remains a feeling that the committee is so large it feels more like a forum than a committee.
- C. Administration (and DOF) have made commitment to host forums with larger community about these issues.

Appointments and Tenure Committee (ATC)

ATC has been working well as a committee and with the administration, with which it has experienced strong and respectful communication.

ATC and PC worked together to draft a new policy that will be presented to the faculty in the fall. It would allow faculty members to count up to two years of prior, full-time service in teaching positions at other institutions toward tenure at Skidmore, thereby becoming eligible to stand for tenure as early as their fourth year. Under this policy, candidacy for promotion to Associate Professor would be re-coupled with candidacy for tenure, and ATC would review all such cases. PC would review only candidates for promotion to Full Professor. Such a change would probably increase ATC's caseload and the number of course release credits given to ATC

members, which could present challenges regarding curricular coverage in some departments. The DOF was thoughtful, constructive, and open to ideas during this process.

Promotions Committee (PC)

Reports similar experience as ATC with administrators and terrific working relationship with ATC. Both ATC and PC report feeling that the ATC/PC reconfiguration has been working well.

Committee on Academic Freedom and Rights (CAFR)

Reports a busy semester with work proceeding well. Interactions with the administration have been positive and respectful.

CAFR has spent some time discussing the committee's operating code and role in the community (particularly in light of situations in which there are not violations of academic freedoms and rights perpetrated by individuals but instead structural problems in the college that infringe upon those freedoms and rights). Discussions into how this committee may be able to provide insights into (and feedback to the Skidmore community about) such structural concerns that demand attention, without violating confidentiality, are ongoing (currently unresolved). CAFR is still deliberating whether or not to include general (not confidential) information about their work in an end-of-the-year report.

Committee on Educational Policies and Planning (CEPP)

Reports significant collaboration with Curriculum Committee to prepare for new curriculum.

- A. Anticipates a director appointment to be announced in order to prepare for the Bridge experience.
- B. In addition there is some question about the process by which interdisciplinary minor programs (without departments) are both created and/or removed.

Discussion of the academic calendar regarding inconsistency in whether, or not, we celebrate particular holidays (and acknowledging that our current calendar is Judeo-Christian). Currently considering a holiday list so that faculty are aware of them (e.g., to avoid scheduling exams on those days).

Significant attention has been paid this year to student evaluations form assessment and will continue into next year, likely involving conversations with ATC and PC. Interactions with administration have been productive and positive.

Curriculum Committee (CC)

The requirements for a Bridge course are rather complicated, and CC anticipates needing approximately 40 of these courses a year in order to meet the demands of the new curriculum. These demands are presenting serious concerns about feasibility because the course expectations

are particular (and likely fall disproportionately on some departments compared to others), and there is no mandate in place for departments to deliver these courses, potentially undermining development and implementation of courses. CC and CEPP plan to issue a formal call to all departments for Bridge courses.

There is a workload concern in terms of managing the regular workload of the CC while simultaneously managing the expected increase in workload in preparation for new curriculum.

CC has not yet received any course proposals for new Gen Ed courses.

Has worked with Idea Lab Steering Committee in order to streamline the course approval and scheduling process for those courses (IL designation for now, but should eventually become departmental courses).

Faculty Development Committee (FDC)

Reports efforts to get information from Dean's Office about the FDC budget (by program) and has received these estimates (although some lack of clarity about what funds need to be used immediately versus what can roll over). Reports no drop in summer collaborative budget, but with a 200% increase in applications (total of ~85 applications). Raises questions for FDC about the purpose of summer collaborative work (i.e., prioritizing supporting students versus supporting faculty research). Also some discussion about how to increase participation in summer collaborative from disciplines outside the natural sciences.

There was a small cut (~5%) in sabbatical enhancement budget; we are currently not consistent with many of our peers (i.e., we're under-funding relative to peer and aspirants).

Discussion of whether there are ways to streamline the nomination and application processes for awards to incentivize robust nomination pools.

Reports good working relationship with the administration.

Committee on Intercultural and Global Understanding (CIGU)

Committee met with the President in the fall to discuss a range of topics including retention of underrepresented individuals (both in terms of faculty, but also particularly staff positions) and training for people serving on hiring committees. Headed up the HEDS survey this year, and are thinking about how to take inventory of the findings from that project and use that data to inform planning and execution of action steps.

Reports strong relationships with various campus members (Office of Institutional Research, Student and Academic Affairs, Office of Communications and Marketing). Have been working on coordinating next steps for the social justice space, and addressing outstanding questions related to design and managing different campus needs. Student Government representatives

have been engaged and contributing members of the committee and CIGU is thinking seriously about ways to develop greater reciprocity.

Faculty Executive Committee (FEC)

Presented modification of language for the FEC operating code around the Committee of Committees procedures; small editorial changes were proposed but no concerns raised.

Suggested administrative change such that committee chairs become responsible for managing committee webpages, with one webpage per committee. Universal support for this change.

Recognized that FEC probably has a role in helping new committee members and chairs in acclimating to committee work (although FEC members themselves are often struggling with similar learning curves).