

Motion to modify the governance service cycle

Summary

FEC seeks to strengthen democratic representation in shared governance by modifying the terms of tenure-track faculty's "governance service cycle" so as to augment our election pools.

Rationale

Faculty participation in shared governance is enabled by elections and appointments to committees overseen by FEC, with candidate pools determined by a cyclic schedule of faculty service cohorts—the "service cycle."

Last year FEC began its review of the governance system and of the service cycle, in order to evaluate and improve our mechanics of faculty representation. We confirmed what has been obvious for years: our current system limits our ability to robustly populate committee ballots, especially for certain cohorts in the service cycle. The problem is a mathematical one and is related to the service cycle itself: faculty are required to stand for elections in only one year during their seven-year sabbatical cycle, and indeed most faculty do exactly that (producing, on average, an election pool of roughly $1/7$ of the faculty for whom service is expected).

We propose to require faculty to stand for election in up to three years, a change that will increase the candidate pool by approximately 2-3 times. Naturally, this will also increase the chances that motivated faculty—faculty who rank a particular committee highly—will find their way onto a ballot. Importantly, **the actual service *requirement* will not change at all: faculty are still only required to serve for at most three years between sabbaticals. What changes is the degree of electoral choice in each year.**

The motion

We propose to revise the following passage from *Faculty Handbook* (Part Two. II. F. 1. “The Service Cycle”) as indicated (deletions in red, additions in green, unchanged text in black):

~~Skidmore faculty is expected to participate in the faculty governance committees whose functions are the ultimate responsibility of the faculty (i.e., tenure, promotion, curriculum, academic standards, and academic freedom). These committees of the faculty are currently listed in Part Two, Section II, F(2)(a-o). The Service Cycle establishes a rotation structure primarily for service on these committees and on the IPPC. For all college committees, ad hoc committees, working groups, task forces, or student government committees, FEC will appoint faculty from the ad hoc pool according to their preference. The ad hoc pool is constituted by faculty who are in their service cycle but not serving on a committee and by junior faculty in their second or third year.~~

~~The cycle establishes a college-wide seven-year rotation cycle for faculty governance service. Faculty will rotate in and out of service based on a governance service cycle that reflects their individual sabbatical cycles: three years in, four years out. Each faculty member can choose any three consecutive years of his/her sabbatical cycle to serve (i.e., years 1-2-3 or 2-3-4 or 3-4-5 or 4-5-6). This gives maximum freedom to the faculty in determining the time of their service while maintaining a key advantage of the cycle: continuity of service on our core committees.~~

Tenure-track faculty are expected to participate in the faculty governance system, which staffs faculty committees by election and appointment in a process implemented by the Faculty Executive Committee (FEC). These committees, which are listed in Part Two, Section II, F(2)(a-o), oversee and fulfill functions that are the proper responsibility of the faculty (including functions related to tenure, promotion, curriculum, academic standards, and academic freedom). The requirements of such service for individual faculty are determined by the seven-year sabbatical cycle of each faculty member. Tenure-track faculty are required to stand for elections/appointments in the first, second, and third academic year after each sabbatical, until and unless elected/appointed to a committee. Additionally, any of these faculty not having been elected/appointed to a committee after three election years will enter into FEC’s *ad hoc* pool for short-term appointments in the years remaining before their next sabbatical.

One year of ~~faculty governance committee service~~ entry into FEC’s *ad hoc* appointments pool will be expected from untenured tenure-track faculty in either their second or third year. For instance, untenured tenure-track faculty may serve on ad hoc committees, task forces, or working groups, or as replacements for short-term committee vacancies. This experience will introduce them to faculty committee work and will provide an opportunity to forge relations with their new colleagues. ~~Junior faculty will then come up for their first full three-year service cycle in years 5-6-7 or 6-7-8 or 7-8-9 or 8-9-10.~~

Full-time non-tenure-track faculty on renewable appointments have the right, and are welcome, to participate in faculty governance, except that members of the NTT bargaining unit may not serve on committees that the College deems to have a managerial function, including but not

limited to: Appointments and Tenure Committee, Promotions Committee, Institutional Policy and Planning Committee, the Faculty Executive Committee, and the Committee on Educational Policies and Planning (CBA, Article XIX, 1B). They will express their service preferences at the appropriate time as part of the process that establishes the pool of faculty who are available for service in the following year.

The cycle determines who is available for service in any particular year. Faculty at large will still determine, by way of election, who serves on any particular committee. There will be, however, only one election per year. The year prior to their service, faculty will fill out their individual "Service Preference List," ranking the various committees, from which a ballot will be determined. All eligible faculty members will then vote to establish committee membership. In general, faculty members will not serve on more than one faculty committee at any one time. Faculty who are willing to serve more are welcome to serve beyond the minimum three years.

Exemption to the cycle will be determined by the Dean of the Faculty/Vice President for Academic Affairs in consultation with FEC.