

REPORT ON THE COMMITTEE OF COMMITTEES MEETINGS
AY 2006-2007

Read at the Faculty Meeting, May 16, 2007

The Faculty Executive Committee is charged with convening the Committee of Committees (or CoC), which comprises faculty members of the Faculty Executive Committee; the Institutional Policy and Planning Committee; the Committee on Appointments, Promotion, and Tenure; the Committee on Academic Freedom and Rights; the Committee on Educational Policy and Planning; the Curriculum Committee; the Faculty Development Committee;

early May, to assess the operation of Skidmore's shared governance system from the perspective of our committee structure.

At both CoC meetings this year FEC heard many reports of effective and successful-

CEPP has been extraordinarily busy this year, with seven successful motions brought to the faculty floor, among them the writing proposal, as well as proposals for tenure-track ID and proportional lines, on which the committee worked closely with CAPT and the Dean of the Faculty. The presence of the DoF and the Dean of Student Affairs on the committee has proven beneficial. CEPP has noted that the Vice President for Academic Affairs would like to be seated on the committee, but at this point in time CEPP finds the presence of the DoF more logical. FEC recognizes that this discussion has been ongoing and that it will likely continue; indeed, the VPAA herself, to judge from her written response to the December CoC minutes, is prepared to offer a rationale as to why both the VPAA and the DoF should be seated on CEPP.

CAFR reported improved communication with the Administration of late, after what it has described as “difficult moments.” Most recently CAFR has been involved in a dispute with Human Resources over the release of a document that CAFR had deemed necessary for one of its investigations. The dispute was subsequently resolved at a meeting between CAFR, the President, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the Director of Human Resources; concerning this meeting CAFR reported that it has accepted the Administration’s rationale for keeping the document sealed. Nevertheless, FEC shares concerns raised at the spring CoC meeting about the effectiveness of CAFR should a similar dispute arise in the future, and should the committee once again be denied access to what it believes is crucial information. At the same time, we recognize that such disputes have not only impli

increased. But we are particularly concerned, since the faculty are entitled to cite work on ad hoc groups as examples of service to the College, about what we perceive to be a tension between service on these committees and service on our standing committees. This is not to say that work on ad hoc groups should not constitute service; of course it should. Nor is it to say that the work is neither necessary nor worthwhile; of course it is. But FEC notes that this has been a frustrating year in terms of finding faculty willing to serve on our standing committees. A case in point is the Curriculum Committee, which starting in the fall will be short a faculty representative, because we had two slots available but in the end only one faculty member willing to serve. We find this particular development disturbing, since if there is one area of the College over which the Faculty has definitive ownership, it is the curriculum. This term FEC laid the foundation for what we are currently calling our “Service Project,” which we hope will shed light on the vagaries of faculty service at Skidmore. In our project we hope to work closely with the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Dean of the Faculty; indeed, we have already begun to do so. More information on the Project will be forthcoming in the fall.

One point more on faculty service. In general, FEC approves of the measures taken to streamline our governance system. We note, however, that there is a pressing need for a new standing committee, which we advertised several months ago, namely the so-called “Space Allocation Committee.” In late January FEC reviewed a proposal for this committee, on which we suggested three faculty members should serve; we forwarded our recommendations to the Associate Dean of the Faculty, who (we believe) forwarded them on to the President’s Cabinet. Since that time we have heard nothing about whether or not the committee will be constituted. We would like to take this opportunity to urge both the Cabinet and IPPC to move forward with the Space Allocation Committee with all possible speed, and to constitute it with substantial faculty representation. Our recommendation is not only a matter of good governance in general; it also comes at a time when FEC has learned that a study was conducted on the Art Building at considerable expense, and that the report from this study has yet to be released to the Studio Art faculty. We exhort the Administration to partner with the Faculty in making key decisions about the College’s spatial resources. The inclusion of a faculty representative on the recently-formed Scribner Village Study Group is an example of such a partnership. FEC would like to see this kind of work continuing on a larger institutional scale.

Finally, faculty-only meetings and shared governance. FEC notes that the Vice-President for Academic Affairs had asked that she and the Dean of the Faculty be invited to the Faculty Caucus in March; and the attendance of administrators is something we provide for in the FEC operating code. In this instance, however, our committee ultimately decided that the interests of CAFR were better served at that moment by a faculty-only meeting;

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