

Revised, 9/28/ 2004

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Skidmore's faculty governance system is large and unwieldy. Currently CFG oversees the election and appointment of faculty members to about 75 elective slots and 20 appointive slots on a wide variety of committees, some of which carry very heavy workload, others of which involve only a modest time commitment, and most of which fall somewhere in between. These 95 slots are drawn from a "CFG-eligible-list" of about 240 faculty members. At any given time about one-third of the eligible (i.e., full-time regular) faculty are serving on committees, a system increasingly perceived as a drain on faculty time.

Beyond the sheer numbers, however, is the significant problem that the effort and time spent may not "pay off" when recommendations of a committee seem to have little or no effect on the final decision-making process. Such complaints have been especially aimed at FPPC for years, but various other committees also suffer from the same structural problem. It is frustrating and demoralizing for faculty to be willing to labor in the committee system and then feel that their work has been ignored when decisions are actually made.

Skidmore faculty enjoy a strong tradition of involvement in most institutional planning and decision-making, and it is not at all clear that the faculty really wants this to change in any dramatic way. Indeed, parts of the faculty governance system work quite well. In the broadest sense, CFG believes that the main fault line lies between those committees whose functions are the faculty's primary responsibility and those whose functions are not the faculty's primary responsibility. In general, committees in the former category seem to function quite well, whereas committees in the latter seem more prone to the "hard work to no avail" complaint. Accordingly CFG proposes a reorganization of the governance system that will clarify these two types of functions, leaves the former category of committees as is and substantially revises the latter category. We believe that in so doing we can streamline the system, eliminating a reasonable percentage of elective slots (22 slots out of 75, just over 29%), retaining the best of what we currently have, and improving other parts by bringing the deliberations closer to the real locus of decision-making.

II. ~~Key~~

- x Faculty committees are defined in this proposal as those committees whose functions are the primary responsibility of the faculty (e.g., CAPT, CEPP, Faculty Development Committee, etc.). Such committees will not in general be altered under this reorganization. Committees whose functions are broader (financial issues, admissions issues, student affairs issues, etc.) are in this proposal defined as “all-college” committees. See Section III.
- x The all-college component of the governance system needs a central deliberative body. The reorganization will change the IPC (currently a faculty committee) to the Institutional Policy and Planning Committee (IPPC), an all-college committee which will act as the central deliberative body for all policies and issues that are not the primary responsibility of the faculty. It will be chaired by the President, vice-chaired by an elected member of the faculty, and will be broadly representative. See Section IV.
- x The primary link between the faculty and the all-college committees will be provided by a new committee, the Faculty Executive Committee (FEC), which will replace CFG but have responsibilities beyond those now overseen by CFG. FEC will oversee faculty involvement in all-college governance, will have strong representation on the new IPPC, will oversee faculty governance and will observe the on-campus meetings of the Board of Trustees. See Section V.

Please see the Overview at the end of this report.

III. ~~Find~~

A. ~~Faculty~~

Committees in the current governance system whose functions are the primary responsibility of the faculty will not, in general, be altered. CFG believes that all of the following committees fall in that category, that each of them performs an important function that requires substantial faculty involvement, and finally that each of them functions quite well:

- Committee on Appointments, Promotion & Tenure (CAPT)
- Tenure Review Board (TRB) & Tenure Appeal Committee (TAC)
- Committee on Educational Policy and Planning (CEPP)
- Curriculum Committee
- Honors Council
- Committee on Academic Freedom and Rights (CAFR)
- Faculty Development Committee (FDC)
- Athletic Council
- University Without Walls Committee (UWWC, elected faculty reduced to 4)
- External Master of Arts Committee (EMAC – elected faculty reduced to 4)
- Committee on Academic Standing (CAS- appointed)

B. Faculty

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Some committees currently designated as faculty committees do not seem to CFG to fall in the “primary responsibility of the faculty” category (or will be subsumed in the reorganization). We therefore propose removing those committees from the category of faculty committees. These are listed below with their proposed fates in parentheses:

CFG (Subsumed by FEC – see Section V)

The IPPC will meet on a regular basis and at a designated time known to all members before their appointment to the committee. It will be chaired by the President, and, in the President's absence, by its faculty Vice-Chair. The agenda

VII. ~~Faculty~~ ~~Appointments~~

The current annual system of four rounds of elections followed by an “omnibus” round of appointments can range from confusing at best to totally baffling or intimidating at worst. The proposed reorganization enables a significant simplification of this process to two election rounds, one held late in the fall and the other in the early spring, when faculty are beginning to plan their next academic year. Here is a possible

A Possible Timetable for Governance Reorganization

Summer 2004:

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