

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 was involved in a dispute with Human Resources over the release of a document that the committee 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 implications for academic freedom, but legal implications as well, and we urge both the Administration and CAFR to work together to resolve future disputes not on the basis of precedent, but rather on the basis of principles that protect the rights of all parties involved.

Having just concluded the second semester of its second year, IPPC appears to be settling into a productive groove. The committee reported that its fall schedule was truncated, with some meetings cancelled to accommodate the VPAA search; nevertheless, important work on the Strategic Action Agenda, the Campus Master Plan, and the stewardship of the North Woods was carried out last term. FEC is particularly encouraged to learn that IPPC has written and refined its operating code, and has increased its efficiency through the advance distribution of agendas. We also note that the three FEC members who sit on IPPC have been both thorough and diligent in reporting the work of IPPC to the other six members of FEC, and in reporting those members’ questions and comments back to IPPC. In last year’s Committee of Committees report, FEC raised a concern that meetings of IPPC were “more informational than deliberative.” To judge from discussions at our CoC meetings this year, this concern is of significantly lesser magnitude; we speculate, though, that discussions of changes to retirees’ benefits might well prove to be a touchstone for this concern, and we sincerely hope that the primary entity for deliberations on any changes — including when and how such changes might be implemented, and even whether or not they should be implemented at all — will be IPPC.

Finally, FEC reported to the CoC that its relationship with the Administration and with other committees remains by and large congenial and cooperative. FEC has met

chairs to discuss and assess mutual work and make recommendations for improvement. FEC is certainly open to considering such a structure, and we can see that it would be in many ways more expedient than Faculty Caucuses and CoC meetings, at least in terms of allowing for direct contact between committees and the Administration, versus the rather indirect system of reporting we currently have. Nevertheless, FEC believes that we the Faculty should retain our provisions for meeting to speak candidly among ourselves in whatever ways we deem appropriate. Toward this end, it seems likely that the practice of convening Faculty Caucuses and the Committee of Committees will continue, at least for the foreseeable future, even as we find new ways of reaching out to our administrative colleagues.

Respectfully submitted,

Dan Curley
Chair, Faculty Executive Committee