

REPORT ON THE COMMITTEE OF COMMITTEES MEETINGS
AY 2007-2008

Read at the Faculty Meeting, May 14, 2008

The main point is that every effort should be made to ensure that the time of faculty — indeed, of any committee member — is being used effectively and productively.

These two tensions are structural, as is the third, which involves the very future of shared governance at Skidmore. How are we as an institution to address these tensions? To recognize service as a duty rather than a burden? To ensure equity across the panoply of service opportunities? To make service matter, really matter, in the professional lives of our Faculty? At this point, FEC has wondered whether nothing less than radical reform will do the trick. If we have reached the point where new committees (in every sense of the word) can only be added, and few-to-none subtracted, perhaps it is time to consider a system of compensation for service — and more on this when the results of the FEC Service Survey are published. Or perhaps it is time for the Faculty to consider and implement new entities of governance, such as a Faculty Senate, which might serve as a broadly consultative body and reduce the need for ad hoc committees on any given issue. Naturally, any such reforms would require frank discussion among and across all the various constituencies of the College.

For the Faculty’s part, there seems to be a shift in progress, a shift away from a culture of unremunerated service toward a more balanced and practical point of view. The established generation should perhaps remember that increased expectations for tenure and promotion, to say nothing of the demands of family, place at a premium the time that any given faculty member can devote to service. Members of the more practical generation, however, should perhaps remember that the service question is not about what we are willing to give up (full-time) (e)3(e)4(s)1 pe

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