

# TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING: A REPORT ON THE COMMITTEE SYSTEM

Faculty Executive Committee

4/3/09

## I. THE PROBLEM

A number of faculty in different venues have expressed concerns about how governance and service work at Skidmore. One of the main issues is that the Faculty Executive Committee routinely has difficulty getting faculty to serve on committees, including those central to the governance system.

Our understanding of these issues is informed by the following sources: FEC's survey on service, Susan Wa's scholarly research on faculty culture, meetings with Committee of Committees, IPPC, Academic Staff, the VP for Academic Affairs, several members of CAPT from recent years, email communications with the Dean of the Faculty, Department Chairs and Program Directors, and Chairs of all major committees, various conversations with individual faculty as well as our own observations and deliberations.

|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| Number of Institutional Committee Spots Vacant   | 19 <sup>1</sup>  |
| Number of Institutional Committee Spots Occupied | 207              |
| Number of Available Faculty per Committee Spot   | 1.09             |
| Number of Faculty on 1 Committee                 | 71               |
| Number of Faculty on 2 Committees                | 41               |
| Number of Faculty on 3 Committees                | 11               |
| Number of Faculty on 4 Committees                | 4                |
| Number of Faculty on 5 Committees                | 1                |
| Number of Faculty on at Least One Committee      | 128              |
| Number of Available Faculty on 0 committees      | 119 <sup>2</sup> |

## B. INVENTORY OF FACULTY COMMITTEE SPOTS

| <i>Faculty Committees</i>                                     | <i>Faculty Spots</i> |
|---|----------------------|
| Committee on Appointments, Promotions and Tenure <sup>4</sup> | 6                    |
| Faculty Executive Committee                                   | 6                    |
| Committee on Educational Policies and Planning                | 6                    |
| CEPP Subcommittees  |                      |
| Advisory Committee on Off-Campus Programs                     | 4                    |
| Grade Grievance Subcommittee                                  | 3                    |
| Assessment Steering Committee                                 | 4                    |
| Dean of Studies Review Committee                              | 6                    |
| UWW Working Group   | 6                    |
| Committee on Academic Freedom and Rights                      | 6                    |
| Curriculum Committee  | 6                    |
| Curriculum Committee Subcommittees                            |                      |
| Routine Matters Subcommittee                                  | 1                    |
| Writing Initiative Subcommittee                               | 2                    |
| Self-Determined Majors Subcommittee                           | 4                    |
| Faculty Development Committee                                 | 4                    |
| Tenure Review Board   | 0 <sup>5</sup>       |
| Tenure Appeal Committee (CAPT+TRB)                            | 9                    |
| Honors Forum Council  | 4                    |
| University Without Walls Committee                            | 4                    |
| External Master of Arts for Liberal Studies Committee         | 4                    |
| Athletic Council  | 4                    |
| Committee on Academic Standing                                | 3                    |
| Faculty Advisory Board  | 6                    |
| Advisory Panel  | 0 <sup>6</sup>       |
| Total   | 98                   |

*All-College Committees*

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Institutional Policy and Planning Committee      | 7 |
| IPPC Subcommittees                               |   |
| Budget and Finance Subcommittee                  | 2 |
| Admissions and Financial Aid Subcommittee        | 2 |
| Student Affairs Subcommittee                     | 3 |
| Committee Intercultural and Global Understanding | 3 |
| Bias Response Group                              | 1 |

Total 14

*Overlapping Membership*

(Committee chairs/members who serve on other committees)

CEPP Chair serves on IR, IPPC, and CC Writing Subcommittee

CIGU Chair serves on IPPC

Campus Environment Committee Chair serves on IPPC

Tenure Appeal Committee consists of TRB and CAPT

Two members of FAB serve on AP

Three members of IPPC sit on FEC

Grand Total 226

C. DEPARTMENT AND PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Countless forms of service are ~~used~~ in departments and programs every day, some of which takes place in the context of formal committees, especially in large departments, and much of which does not, especially in small departments. This service includes work related to curriculum, ~~operational~~ strategic initiatives, advising, budgets, infrastructure, capstones, student ~~prizes~~ ~~prizes~~ development, admissions, alumni relations, and so on. This work surely relates to ~~two~~ ~~two~~ items mentioned above we do not fully understand: the 119 faculty members who are not serving on an institutional committee and the numerous "Other Miscellaneous Committees", which are often invisible to colleagues not directly involved.

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