

Faculty Executive Committee (FEC)  
Annual Report 2007-2008

1. ROUTINE BUSINESS

As part of its regular duties this year, the Faculty Executive Committee (FEC) met 22 times in regular sessions during the academic year 2007. In addition, FEC convened two meetings of the Committee of Committees (CC) and one Faculty Caucus (i.e., faculty-only meeting). FEC ran elections and sought sabbatical replacements for standing faculty and all College committees, and coordinated willingness to serve nominations for faculty to serve on various ad hoc groups. FEC continued to serve as Faculty Observers at the Board of Trustees meetings. FEC worked with other faculty committees and with members of the Administration on changes to the Faculty Handbook. Finally, FEC further refined

proposal ought to come to the Faculty Floor—a harbinger of the close vote on the proposal at the May 14, 2008, Faculty Meeting.

C. Committee Elections To the relief of all FEC members, this election year was much less fraught with difficulty. That said, finding robust rosters of faculty members willing to serve on our various committees remains challenging, especially in the wake of three new committees created this year: the Faculty Advisory Board (FAB), the Responsible Citizenship Task Force (RCTF), and the

3. DOS RESTRUCTURING REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE

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(average of 10 min.); 2:11 to VPAA's Report (average of 16 min.); 3:48 to Old Business (average of 38 min.); 2:25 to New Business (average of 24 min.); 2:38 to other Reports (average of 16 min.); and 1:26 to Other Business/Announcements (average of 9 min.).<sup>3</sup> By these measurements the Meetings appear to be both expeditious and proportionately appropriate. Indeed, last year FEC and the Administration made a joint commitment to limit the Meetings to 90 minutes, and on average this has been successful. Moreover, the total and average amount of time spent on Old Business and New Business combined is significantly greater than the time spent on any other category.

However, there is something of a disproportion between the categories of business (Minutes, Old Business, New Business) and reports (President's Report, VPAA's Report, other Reports, Other Business/Announcements). The total times given above, about 6:21 were devoted to all kinds of business and 7:19 to one kind or another the average times for business reports, 1:03 and 0:52, respectively, reflect the fact that overall there were fewer instances of business than instances of reports.

The disproportion between business reports grows when one accounts for the fact that there were two heavier-than-normal items of business on the Faculty Floor this academic year: the adoption of Handbook Part Six (February 29, 2008) and the vote on the proposal to close UWW (May 14, 2008). The weight of these issues in the overall calculations is significant. If, say, the discussion of Part Six were excluded from Old Business on the grounds that it does not represent usual faculty business the total business time decreases to 4:40 (versus 7:19 for reports), and the average business time decreases to 0:52 (versus 0:52 for reports). If only the discussion of UWW is excluded on similar grounds, the total business time decreases to 4:32, and the average business time to 0:45. If both discussions are excluded, the total business time becomes 4:00 and the average becomes 0:30.

<sup>3</sup> For calculation purposes, Other Business was grouped with Announcements. The averages reflect the fact the agenda of each Meeting was unique in terms of its constituent parts: there was, for example, no President's Report when the President was away from campus. Thus the average length of VPAA Reports and other Reports is both 16 min. —reflects 2:11 averaged over eight Meetings versus 2:38 averaged over nine, respectively.

<sup>4</sup> Other Business is here included under the broad rubric of reports on the basis of content: the only use of this category in AY 2007/8 was the presentation and discussion of the WS 375 video "Words on Fire" (December 7, 2007). To judge from the comments received by FEC from many faculty members following this Meeting, the broad classification of the presentation/discussion as a report is probably valid.

<sup>5</sup> On the business side: Minutes at eight (of nine) Meetings; Old Business, six; New Business, six. On the reports side: President's Report at seven Meetings; VPAA Report, eight; Reports, nine; Other Business/Announcements, nine. The average length of time for business is therefore greater, since the time spent is averaged over fewer instances of business, while the average length for reports is lesser, with time spent being averaged over more instances of reports.



Finally, this section closes with one aspect of the Faculty Meetings that warrants immediate attention, namely the practice of voting on motions with paper ballots. It is customary for FEC to distribute, collect, and tally paper ballots whenever called for (unless the motion on the Floor comes from FEC, in which case the duty of handling the ballots falls to another committee, such as CEPP or CAPT). In anticipating such measures, FEC reviews the list of those eligible to vote at Faculty Meetings (as established in Article I, Section C of the Meeting ~~Bylaws~~ in Part Two of the Faculty Handbook) and usually publishes this information by email in advance as a reminder to the community. With the ~~Bylaws~~ in mind, FEC members do their best to distribute one ballot, and only one ballot, to the voting members of the assembly.

From time to time FEC has wondered whether this longstanding system is sufficiently protective of the democratic process. Specifically, we have wondered whether ballots have sometimes found their way into the hands of those not eligible to vote and whether those individuals have indeed voted. On the one hand, FEC is inclined to presume that all members of the assembly conduct themselves in accordance with the Skidmobertkf-2( Tw r-14(d)-4(u T)-9(w)2( Tw r-14(d)-4(u T)-9(w)2d)-n)2(d)2(in)2p[(pubin)2p[(pu

For instance, in response to Question 10 (“you believe there should be incentives to motivate faculty to serve on major committees?”), 65 of 89 respondents answered either “Neutral” (23 responses), “Agree” (27) or “



- Proposing to the VPAA and DOF a system for service compensation.
- Re-evaluation of Skidmore's committee system now that ~~three~~ <sup>one</sup> ~~has~~ <sup>has</sup> elapsed since the last major reorganization (AY 2004/5).

## 9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The outgoing Chair thanks this year's FEC members, particularly John Brueggeman, the incoming Chair, for their frank and helpful deliberations on important and sometimes thorny governance issues. Thanks also to Sue Blair, Colleen Kelly, and Mary Ellen Kokoletsos for efficient and friendly administrative assistance.

Respectfully submitted,

Dan Curley  
June 2, 2008

## FEC 20072008 MEMBERSHIP

Lisa Aronson, Art and Art History (on leave fall 2007)  
 Sue Bender, Anthropology, Sociology, and Social Work, IPPC representative  
 Una Bray, Mathematics and Computer Science (replacement for Aronson, Rubio)  
 John Brueggemann, Anthropology, Sociology, and Social Work  
 Dan Curley, Classics, Chair  
 Jennifer Delton, History (on leave 200708)  
 Mark Huibregtse, Mathematics and Computer Science, IPPC Vice chair  
 Mehmet Odekon, Economics, IPPC representative  
 Viviana Rangil, Foreign Languages and Literature (replacement for Delton)  
 Paty Rubio, Foreign Languages and Literature (fall 2007 only)

Mason Stokes, English (on leave 2008~~2009~~)  
Natalie Taylor, Government