

A CFG White Paper: Improving Participation in Faculty Governance

4 April 2002

Part One: *Introduction*

Currently Skidmore faculty governance is undergoing a crisis of participation. It seems that we are not alone in our dilemma. Many colleges and universities are now facing dissatisfaction with the system and confusion regarding the role of faculty in campus decision-making (Schuster et al., 1994). In their theoretical work on planning and governance Schuster and colleagues (1994) describe four imperatives for higher education decision-making. These include involvement, leadership, efficiency, and environment. In recent years two major factors have influenced faculty life. Faculty members are tolerating more administrative decisions because they are made more efficiently and academics are struggling to adapt in an environment that makes increasing demands on time. Although it has reigned supreme for many years, the push for participatory governance is diminishing on many campuses.

In keeping with the trends of the 1980s Skidmore convened a task force on faculty governance that addressed the issues of faculty meetings and the faculty committee structure. Our current system is based largely on the recommendations made by that task force (Ciancio report, 1988). Not even a decade later, however, the Committee on Faculty Governance (CFG) was experiencing problems with the committee system. Not enough faculty were willing to serve; some committee members were dissatisfied with their roles (e.g. FPPC and IPC); some faculty thought that their committee work was fruitless and their time was wasted; and others

Part Two: *Some Supporting Data*

Anecdotal evidence of difficulties in the faculty governance system is plentiful and compelling, but statisticians are fond of saying that "data beat anecdotes." To this end, CFG has attempted to gather some specific data about faculty participation in the governance process. The three areas investigated are, first, current service rates among tenured, untenured tenure-track, and non-tenure-track faculty; second, willingness to serve among tenured faculty; and, finally, voting participation.

CFG annually seeks willingness-to-serve on 22 committees, 18 elective and 4 appointive (Athletic Council, CAFR, CAS, CASA, CAPT, CEPP, CFG, Curriculum, EMAC, FDC, FPPC, Honors Council, IPC, Tenure Review Board, UWWC, Faculty Observers, ACC, Board of Appeals, Benefits, Honor Code Commission, IPC, & Integrity Board). The data below is based

on those committees and hence does not include service on numerous subcommittees, departmental committees, curricular committees (such as the LS committee), and so on. CFG also recognizes that "service" can mean many things in numerous contexts, so we make no claims to be studying "service at Skidmore" under its widest definition. Nonetheless, service on faculty and college committees is a crucial part of the overall picture.

I. Service on Current Faculty and College Committees:

Number of CFG-eligible faculty (2001-2): 233
Number currently serving on at least one of the 22 committees: 78
% service rate for all eligible faculty: 33%

Number of slots (total) on the 22 committees: 84
27 slots are for tenured only and 3 are for untenured only.
Hence the number of unrestricted slots: 54

Number of tenured CFG-eligible faculty: 125

The data above would seem to have no dramatic messages, but they do contain some useful information. Perhaps most clear is a dispelling of the myth that *untenured tenure-track faculty do not participate in the system sufficiently*, probably because of worries about the other two areas (teaching and scholarship). On the contrary, currently 60% of this group actually ~~participates well above the 34% of tenured faculty and the 10% of non-tenure-track faculty.~~

III. *Voting Participation in 2000-01 and the beginning of 2001-02*

2000-01

Special Round - 176 = 76%

Round I - 119 = 51%

Round II - 101 = 40%

Round III - 111 = 48%

Round IV - 100 = 43%

2001-02

Special Round - 90 = 39%

Round I - 122 = 52%

Overall = 50%

CFG finds an overall voting participation rate of 50% to be disappointing. A college faculty presumably consists of enlightened individuals who honor the democratic ideal and see clearly the value of participation through the simple act of casting a vote (from the comfort of one's

Revisiting and Rebalancing the Evaluative Criteria for Promotion

service in evaluating faculty members in tenure and promotion decisions. We might consider returning to a more balanced profile stressing a teacher/scholar/citizen model. Since it is the

References

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Shuster, J., Smith, D., Corak, K., & Yamada, M. (1994). Statagic governance: How to make big

divisions better. Phoenix, AZ: American Council on Education/Oxy Press

Appendix A

A Possible Plan for Teaching-Service Unit Guidelines at Skidmore

In an effort to create a somewhat more coherent view of teaching and service by the Skidmore faculty, or at least to promote discussion, CFG proposes a concept of "Teaching-Service Units." In order to establish appropriate guidelines for the desired numbers of such units, we start with the needs of the college as estimated by Ann Henderson and by CFG.

In an average academic year, the College needs, approximately:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Regular teaching | 3700 semester hours |
| Independent studies & theses | 470 units ("headcount") |
| Advising about 10 students | 220 units |
| Regular committees | 80 slots |
| Other committees (departmental, etc.) | 80 slots |
| Chairs, Directors, etc. (30 times 3) | 90 units |
| Total | 4640 units |

Notes:

- a. The TSU obligation can be averaged over two or even three years in consultation with the department chair/program director.
- b. TSU over the 22 per year average can be "banked" over a period of at most six years. The banking of 12 or more units during this period would enable faculty, as a reward for meritorious and consistent service to the College, for example:
 - i. To take a full-year sabbatical at full (or near full?) pay in the 7th year, or
 - ii. To receive additional equipment support, travel allowance, or other similar reward.
- c. Committee and departmental service would normally count as 1 TSU per assignment, but chairs of major committees would receive 2 or 3 units, and ~~the DOE could designate as half the degree appropriate other such units (e.g.~~

~~_____~~ all members of CAPT in 2002-3 and 2003-4 shall receive 3 TSU due to the