

A CFG White Paper: Improving Participation in Faculty Governance
27 March 2002

Part One: *What is at Stake*

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. -2(i(g)lmr6au.06 en.06

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, IRC, & 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
% of CFG-eligible faculty who are tenured: 53%
Number currently serving on at least one of the 22 committees: 42
% service rate for tenured faculty: 34%
% of unrestricted slots filled by tenured faculty: = 33%

Number of **untenured tenure-track** CFG-eligible faculty: 50
% of CFG-eligible faculty who are untenured tenure-track: 21%
Number currently serving on at least one of the 22 committees: 30
% service rate for untenured tenure-track faculty: 60%
% of unrestricted slots filled by untenured tenure-track faculty: 56%

Number of **non-tenure-track** CFG-eligible faculty: 58
% of CFG-eligible faculty who are non-tenure-track: 26%
Number currently serving on at least one of the 22 committees: 6
% service rate for non-tenure-track faculty: 10%
% of unrestricted slots filled by non-tenure-track faculty: 11%

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 serves, well above the 34% of tenured faculty and the 10% of non-tenure-track faculty. Moreover, this group constitutes only 21% of the eligible pool, yet it fills 56% of the unrestricted

III. *Voting Participation in 2000-*

References

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Ciancio, R. (1988). Revised Report on the Committee System and Faculty Meetings.

Ginsberg, R. (1996). CFG action plan for review of faculty governance.

Shuster, J., Smith, D., Corak, K., & Yamada, M. (1994). Strategic governance: How to make big decisions better. Phoenix, AZ: American Council on Education/Onyx 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

To fill this need, the College employs approximately 208 FTE. This means then that on average, an FTE must perform about $4640 / 208 = \mathbf{22.3 \text{ units each year}}$.

We know, of course, that not everyone does this level of teaching-service. Professor A may teach 16 semester hours, oversee 5 theses, advise 20 students, direct a program, and serve on 3 committees, for a total of 29 units; whereas Professor B may teach 18 semester hours and advise 10 students, but do no other teaching or service, for a total of 19 units. In terms of compensation, however, the College likely treats Professors A and B as equals. *CFG wonders if Professor A might be rewarded for his/her level of contribution and if Professor B might be encouraged by his/her chair to contribute a bit more.*

More specifically, perhaps some kind of **teaching-service unit guidelines** could be employed to help department chairs as they consult each year with members of their departments about their levels of contributions to the College and to reward faculty for meritorious teaching-service contributions. Here is a possible set of guidelines:

On average, a full-time faculty member is expected to accomplish 22 teaching-service units (TSU) for an academic year. These can be accomplished via:

1. Credit hours of teaching – maximum 20 TSU
2. Independent studies and theses – 1 TSU for each, to a max of 3
3. All-college and/or departmental service – 1 TSU each position, to a max of 3
4. Chairing a department, program, or major committee – 2 or 3 TSU
5. Advising – 1 TSU for 5 to 15 advisees, 2 TSU for more

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 DOF could designate, as he/she deems appropriate C(e)4(2 oo75mu-2(, co,.cT.-2(eooo7