

FACULTY MEETING
December 4, 2009

10 Principles of Governance Resolution

Rationale

Not all of the problems in committee work arise from structural pressures (e.g., too many committees spots per faculty member). The faculty of Skidmore College have long been energetic members of the college community, contributing to its shared governance and assuming many and various roles in campus life. Informal practices have contributed to excessive and inefficient energy spent in work on committees. While the faculty remain committed to the work of the college, their departments, and their programs, increasing demands have been made on the faculty's time and energy. By explicitly acknowledging the value of general goals, the faculty can make a collective commitment to foster a culture more conducive to efficient and effective work in governance.

Resolution

The faculty resolve to adopt the following principles of governance.

1. Be lean. All things being equal, the smaller a committee is, the better. It is easier to plan meetings and make decisions.
2. Emphasize consultation more and representation less. Different colleagues could be consulted productively in the context of more focused, limited timeframes.
3. Attend carefully to the relative weight of faculty voices on any committee compared to that of other constituencies. We should add or subtract individuals representing different stakeholders with consideration for the right balance in terms of the main goals of the committee in question.
4. Serve and protect the central governance committees in special ways. We must make sure that the faculty's commitment to IPPC, FEC, FDC, CAPT, CEPP, CAFR and Curriculum Committee is always robust.
5. Use ad hoc committees when a particular challenge requires experts focused on a short-term project. Standing committees will be in a better position to attend to their normal operations when such ad hoc committees are utilized.
6. Direct the results of ad hoc committees' efforts through standing committees in the governance system. Important decisions based on ad hoc committees' work should be avoided without substantive consideration within appropriate standing committees.
7. Make use of staff and administrators in work that faculty may surrender because others are qualified to do it.
8. Every committee should assess regularly whether it is using its time and resources effectively.

