

February 14, 2005

TO: FT and PT/VL Faculty

FROM: Karen Schermerhorn
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SUBJECT: Report on status of Faculty Governance

We have recently written to you about the administration's attack on **the FT/PT faculty ratio**, in essence an attack on tenure as well as on the creation of full-time faculty positions. Another alarming but perhaps less noticeable attack is occurring

The administration is also engaged in an assault on **faculty governance**. By "governance," we mean the structure through which the faculty's judgments on academic and related issues are made part of the dialogue on college policies and ultimately have an effect on decisions made about the direction of the College. This structure includes the Standing Committees and the Institution-Wide Committee, the Departments, the Hiring Committees, and the newly created Faculty Council on Education. Let us give you some examples of this unfortunate trend.

- A majority of the members of the Middle States Self-Study Committees (2002-2003) were administrators, Department Heads, non-tenured faculty, and Classified Employees. Tenured faculty, many of whom were also Department Heads, constituted a minority of the members of these committees. In a departure from the past, Federation officers were not appointed to these committees, despite the fact that some had volunteered to serve.
- The Strategic Planning Committee (2004) included no Federation officers nor, as had been the unbroken past practice since 1983, was the Federation asked to recommend members for this committee, which has laid out a plan for the College from 2004-2008. Again, tenured faculty were in the extreme minority (six of 27 members) on this Committee.
- The recently appointed Academic Master Plan Coordinating Committee (2005) includes 15 people, of whom 10 are either Department Heads or administrators, three are non-tenured faculty, and only two of whom are tenured faculty who are not also Department Heads. The Co-Chairs of the newly elected Faculty Council on Education would seem to have been logical choices for membership on this committee, but they were not included. Alarming, the administration has not assured the Federation that the Standing Committees and IWC will review the recommendations of this committee.
- The administration has recently announced three openings in major administration positions: Vice President for Student Affairs, Chief Information Officer, and General Counsel (this position will replace the current Executive Assistant to the President for Human Relations), whose major task will be labor relations. Again,

in a break with the past, the Federation has not been asked to appoint representatives to these committees.

Some might ask: what is the problem with this pattern of appointments? After all, non-tenured faculty and Department Heads have opinions on these matters and can be asked to express them.

The problem with committees appointed as described above is this:

- Faculty appointed by the administration to these committees are placed in an impossible position: although faculty members, they were chosen to represent the administration, not the faculty as a whole. However independent such faculty may feel, they will be widely viewed as administration representatives.
- Faculty without tenure are in an especially delicate situation: they do not have the job security that tenure affords to raise the unpopular questions that need to be asked.
- Department Heads serve a key role at CCP, but since they must be accepted by the administration to serve as Department Heads, and are in part beholden to the administration for support of their Departments, they are not in a good position to act independently.
- Federation officers and appointees can serve an important role as members of these committees. Since they are more aware than others of the underpinnings of the operation of the College, they can ask questions that other committee members would not think of asking.

What is the faculty role in governance at CCP? The administration is saying that faculty, especially tenured faculty, should play only a minimal role. Thus,

- The unpopular questions do not get asked. Alternatives do not get considered.
- The administration is able to produce recommendations from these committees that they later say represent the “faculty” even though they do not.
- The message goes out to the rest of the faculty: To get along, go along. Don’t ask the unpopular questions if you know what’s good for you.
- Most important, discussions of policy do not have the benefit of the experiences that knowledgeable tenured faculty bring from their work with students. Decisions made in such a context are not likely to be the best decisions. Discussion conducted with a free flow of information, discussion in which faculty with job security play a major role, can prevent serious mistakes in determining the direction of the College.
- When the faculty is not properly included in policy discussions and decisions, they are unlikely to carry out such policy actively.

What can we do?

- First, we can take steps to be sure that the FT/PT ratio is enforced so that a larger percentage of the faculty has tenure. With about 400 FT faculty and 800 PT faculty every semester, a large majority of the total CCP faculty is non-tenured.

- Those of us who are tenured faculty have a major responsibility to be sure that the unpopular questions are asked.
- We can volunteer for the Standing Committees, Institution-Wide Committee and run for positions on the Faculty Council on Education. When recommendations are being discussed in those bodies, we can bring them to the attention of the rest of the faculty at Bargaining Unit or General Membership meetings.
- We can examine carefully any administration proposals to change the governance system. At the In Service meeting on January 11, 2005, President Curtis said the administration would make contract proposals on governance in the upcoming contract negotiations if the soon-to-be-appointed Governance Task Force does not come up with recommendations to the administration's liking. We must insist on maintaining the faculty's rightful role to ask unpopular questions and to debate the future of the college openly.

Please give one of us a call if you have comments or questions about this memo.

c: FSFCCP Executive Committee