

**COMMITTEE ON FACULTY GOVERNANCE
REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON PRESIDENTIAL SEARCHES
with implications for searches for a**

Faculty Council (the predecessor to CFG) reported to the May 22, 1985 Faculty Meeting, the final meeting for the academic year, that it had sent a letter to the Board of Trustees recommending that "faculty representatives on the committee should be elected."

By the fall of 1985 the intended good will expressed by the Board had given way to anger and frustration on the part of the faculty. In September, the faculty learned that the board had prescribed a composition for the Search Committee: 5 trustees, 3 faculty, and 2 students--no administrators (presumably because there might be an inside candidate). Moreover, the trustees' decision that the Search Committee had immediate work to do by the beginning of October made the election of faculty representatives impossible. Faculty Council and CAPTS worked out a procedure whereby individuals expressed a willingness to serve or nominated colleagues to Faculty Council. CAPTS then interviewed all of the potential representatives, and, after final consultation with Faculty Council, appointed three persons on September 27th: Beverly Becker, Physical Education and Dance, Ken Johnson, Geology, and Tadahisa Kuroda, History. (See Appendix A2) The other members were Gina Borelli, student; Myles Cane, trustee; Judith Eissner, trustee; Penny Kaniclides, trustee; James McCabe, trustee; Gregory Rutchik, student; Inez Scribner, trustee. The Search Committee held its first meeting on October 1, 1985.

The October Faculty Meeting was tumultuous. (See Appendix A3) The faculty adopted the first of a series of resolutions introduced by Faculty Council:

That the faculty will exercise sole and exclusive right to determine how it will select its representatives on all committees enumerated in the Faculty Handbook, and on all search committees for administrative positions at the level of Dean or above.

The Faculty Meeting proceeded to adopt a resolution in support of the AAUP's "Statement on Faculty Participation in the Selection and Retention of Administrators" and then a very strong statement critical of board action:

RESOLVED, That with regard to the Presidential Search Committee, the faculty wishes the Board of Trustees to know:

1. that it deplores the failure of timely and genuine consultation in the determination of the procedures for selecting its representatives; and
2. that it considers its lack of equal representation on the committee discouraging in light of Trustee profession of faith in the faculty and expressions of a determination to share responsibility with them

The Meeting narrowly defeated a resolution proposed by three faculty members, stating:

That this Faculty requests the Board of Trustees to enlarge the residential Search Committee by two faculty members. These members will join the presently operating Search Committee after being chosen by the faculty at large in an election to be held immediately by Faculty Council. If the Board declines, the Faculty requests that a representative of the Board appear at a convocation of the full Faculty to explain the Board's unwillingness to permit the kind of faculty representation described in the AAUP guidelines for Presidential Search Committees.

The Meeting passed a second resolution proposed by the three faculty members:

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That the Faculty strongly urges that the Presidential search Committee bring at least the final three candidates for the position of President of Skidmore College to the campus for ex

absolute deadline. The trustees also named Myles Cane, a member of the previous search committee, to serve ex officio on the new search committee.

In September of 1997 David Porter made public his decision to step down as President on December 31, 1998. Through September and into October, CAPT and CFG worked to build a consensus around a selection process for their representatives. After discussions at open meetings and at the October Faculty Meeting, CFG and CAPT determined on a procedure that combined elective and appointive phases to take into account faculty wishes to have a direct vote in choosing their representatives and to ensure that the four faculty chosen reflected a balance of disciplinary areas, experience, and gender. (See Appendix B2) Hence CFG conducted a willingness to serve stage and a nominating ballot stage to select eight candidates. (See Appendix B3) CAPT then chose four of the eight: Thomas Denny of Music, Mary Ellen Fischer of Government, Murray Levith of English, and Elaine Rubenstein of Biology. The process worked smoothly and appeared to elicit general support from the faculty at large.

At the October Board meeting, the trustees appointed Joan Dayton, Chair of the Campaign Executive (ed Joan Day)-8(t)-1

The CFG believes that our recent experiences with two presidential searches provide important lessons that might well inform future searches for president and other board-appointed officers. CFG realizes, however, that two searches in the past fifteen years constitute only a small portion of the searches conducted by quality liberal arts colleges for presidents during this same time frame. Many other colleges have followed a different course from the one that Skidmore has, particularly in bringing more than one candidate to the campus. Neither the 1985-86 nor the 1997-98 search committee began with the decision to bring only one candidate, and reached that decision rather late in the process. Nevertheless, CFG encourages the trustees and future search committees to give serious consideration to bringing several candidates to campus, as the faculty formally requested in 1985. A more open search will reduce the burden placed on search committees to make a special case for bringing only one candidate. CFG refrains from prescribing such a step, however, because each search committee will face unique circumstances and dynamics that require flexibility.

Although the CFG realizes that good procedures by themselves will not assure consensus on final appointments, the committee members believe that they serve a useful purpose in framing the appointment process. In this light, CFG recommends the following:

A. Trustees should:

1. Consult faculty in a timely fashion through CAPT and CFG prior to formation of search committees for President and for other board appointed officers.
2. Grant faculty a representation on such search committees appropriate for their particular roles and knowledge.
3. Allow faculty to determine the mode of selecting their representatives. The 1997-98 model sets a good example.

B. The search committee should:

1. Report regularly to Faculty Meetings and to the community, and establish a website, as the 1997-98 committee did.
2. Make clear to the community the role of the consultant.
3. Provide CAPT with credentials of all candidates invited to campus.
4. Provide credentials of candidates on the short list to CAPT in the event that only one candidate is invited to campus, as the 1986-87 committee did.

a. Rationale from CAPT.

It is improbable that a search committee will put forward a totally incompetent person as its candidate of choice.

CAPT is thus reduced to a "rubber stamp" role when it sees the credentials of only one candidate. In theory, CAPT could say that the candidate is unacceptable and unilaterally bring a halt to the entire process. In practice, CAPT will pretty much be reduced to saying that the candidate is acceptable.

CAPT represents the faculty in personnel matters. Its role is to recommend, not appoint, and it requires context in order to perform its job effectively. CAPT could compare the single candidate to the current President, but, since presidents are chosen to fit particular institutional needs at particular historical moments, such comparisons are not nearly as helpful as seeing credentials of other candidates in the same pool.

b. Additional rationale:

It is true that the search committee in 1997-98 presented only one candidate to the Board as well as to the CAPT. However, CFG notes that about twenty percent of the board served on the search committee, whereas only 1-2% of the faculty

