To the Faculty Legislature, Santa Barbara Division

The charge of the College of Letters and Science Faculty Executive Committee (FEC) is defined in Part III, Appendix II, D1.93A of the Santa Barbara Division’s Bylaws and Regulations as follows: “Each FEC of the Faculty of a College, often abbreviated as ‘FEC of the College,’ is a committee of the Academic Senate. These Committees are authorized by the Bylaws of each Division of the Academic Senate as organizations through which the Faculty of each College can coordinate the academic affairs of their College.” The FEC provides oversight on academic and other matters pertinent to the welfare of departments, faculty, and students within the College of Letters and Science.

The FEC met 12 times during the academic year, four meetings per quarter for two hours each.

Professor James Roney was elected FEC Chair at the meeting on October 10, 2019, and offers this Annual Report for academic year 2019-20.

Executive Summary

Academic year 2019-20 was an unusual and challenging time given both the onset of the coronavirus pandemic and significant social justice issues in the country at large. The university may be entering a period of transition in which it adjusts to continuing effects of these events. The FEC engaged in discussions of many significant issues related to this transition that may be especially relevant to the Faculty Legislature in the near future. This Executive Summary highlights recurring significant issues that the committee discussed in 2019-20.

- Perhaps relevant to all of the issues that follow is the principle of shared governance. What role does the faculty have in determining new directions the college may take during this time of potentially significant transition? This issue was central to our discussion of the Regents’ and Office of the President’s decision to suspend the use of standardized testing in admissions decisions. As noted in our memo from June 15, this decision was contrary to a unanimous vote of the Assembly of the Academic Senate despite the fact that university by-laws state that the Academic Senate shall determine the conditions for admission. Decisions like this raise questions regarding the limits of shared governance, which may be an important issue for the Faculty Legislature moving forward.
- The issue of how to build a more diverse, inclusive, and welcoming college, which was a significant topic of discussion in all department PRP reviews. A recurring suggestion was the possibility of developing a clear, standardized protocol for reporting and investigating
discriminatory statements or behaviors in the service of improving department climates.

- The development of new methods for evaluating teaching effectiveness. The FEC had in-depth discussions of the ad hoc task force reports on student evaluation of teaching. We strongly endorsed the conclusion that ESCI scores and similar assessment devices are not valid or unbiased indicators of teaching effectiveness. Given this, they should be replaced by methods that are supported by evidence. What should these methods be and what role will faculty have in determining this?
- Many discussions were informed by the mass movement of students away from the Humanities and into STEM fields. This has caused some departments to be impacted by rising enrollments to such a degree that their majors are no longer functioning well, in addition to diminishing the academic job opportunities for HFA graduate students. How can L&S produce a coordinated plan to distribute resources and alter graduate training in ways that respond to these shifts? Our view was that this is not a problem that can be solved by individual departments on their own, some of which may be unfairly criticized in PRP reports for what are college-wide problems that require college-wide solutions.
- The FEC reviews online course proposals. There was some discussion of how this approval process should change given the possibility that online or hybrid instruction that began during the pandemic may continue at elevated rates in the coming years. How will the college adjust its course approval processes to this new landscape, as well as ensuring quality control for instruction? This issue will intersect with many of the others listed above, as it carries implications for teaching evaluation, managing large enrollments, and potential inequities in student access to technology.

The FEC would like to acknowledge the contributions of its ex officio members, Executive Dean Pierre Wiltzius and AVC and Dean of Undergraduate Education Jeff Stopple. Their perspectives and extensive background knowledge of campus issues provided important context and greatly facilitated the productivity of the committee’s discussions. We also express great appreciation to Assistant Dean Barbara Gilkes for her indispensable efforts in organizing and ensuring the smooth operation of all FEC business.

**Academic Program Reviews**

Maintaining excellence in College departments, undergraduate programs, and graduate education is essential for the continued excellence of the University. As such, the FEC takes its role in Academic Program Review very seriously. In 2019-20 the committee provided extensive comment during the reviews of the Departments of Communication, Mathematics, and Statistics and Applied Probability as well as a combined review of the Comparative Literature Program, the Department of French and Italian, and the Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies. Many of the significant issues highlighted in the Executive Summary arose within the context of these reviews.

FEC also provided comment on academic units that should undergo program review next and nominated candidates for the Program Review Panel.
At the Graduate Level

The FEC provided input on:
1) An Interdisciplinary PhD Emphasis in Climate Science and Climate Change
2) A request from the Department of Feminist Studies to suspend Graduate Admissions for one year
3) Program name change for the M.A. and Ph.D. from "Theater Studies" to "Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies"
4) Establishment of a Geographic Information Science (GIS) 4+1 Master of Science program
5) Establishment of a Graduate Degree Program and new academic unit of Biological Engineering
6) A request from the Sociology Department to suspend Graduate Admissions for one year.

At the Undergraduate Level

In Winter 2019, FEC expressed its concern and called to the attention of the Undergraduate Council the lack of regulation requiring a syllabus for all courses. The FEC recommends that the UGC formally considers this matter.

The FEC has review authority over the modification of all undergraduate programs (majors and minors) in the College. Due to the sheer volume of academic programs being monitored and changes that occur on an annual basis, modifications are divided into two categories—technical (typos, course title adjustments, removing discontinued courses, etc.) and more substantive (impacting the major or minor program). Technical revisions are reviewed by divisional subcommittees (HFA, MLPS, SOSC). Substantive changes undergo full review by the entire FEC and are then forwarded to the Undergraduate Council for final approval to ensure equitable application of policies across the three colleges offering UG degrees (CCS, Engineering, and L&S).

During 2019-20, the L&S FEC endorsed the following substantive curriculum changes while FEC subcommittees reviewed technical adjustments to 94 major and minor sheets (or, just under 50% of all such academic study sheets), bearing in mind that the same adjustment could appear on multiple major or minor sheets, including emphases.

Significant curriculum proposals:
1) Biopsychology Premajor and Biopsychology Major
2) Museum Studies Emphasis and Minor
3) Pharmacology Major, including a new course
4) Various Biology Majors – Removing organic chemistry as a requirement
5) Curricular changes to the B.S. in Mathematical Sciences and a name change to B.S. in Applied Mathematics
6) Black Studies Major and Minor
7) B.F.A. in Dance
8) Economics Major and Economics and Accounting Major
9) In the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultural Studies, changes to the Japanese High Proficiency Major and the Chinese Minor
10) B.A. and B.S. in Environmental Studies

Other Undergraduate Academic Items
- The FEC strongly supported the Physics Department proposed changes to Transfer Admissions criteria for Physics majors.
- The committee approved an individual student petition to pursue a major and a minor from the same department, adjudging that there were sufficient disciplinary distinctions between the two programs.
- As the final authority on such matters, the FEC ruled on a grade appeal.

At the Level of Individual Courses
The FEC
1) Endorsed a Course Materials Fee for ENST 15BL; this has been forwarded to the Budget Office for further action
2) Endorsed re-unit requests for five courses: RS ST 157A, B, C; BLST 1; WRIT 2LK
3) Reviewed the following online courses, either for an initial offering or renewal based on assessment data:
   - EEMB W 146
   - ESS W 3
   - HIST W 4B
   - HIST W 80
   - INT W 20
   - INT W 188C
   - INT W 188E
   - SPAN W 2
4) Endorsed a pilot hybrid version of ARTHI 6, in anticipation of a proposal for a fully online ARTHI W 6R

Based on its experience reviewing online courses, the FEC sent to CCGE and Instructional Development its recommended Best Practices for Proposing Online Courses. As mentioned in the Executive Summary, this issue may require further discussion and policy development given the increase in remote instruction associated with the pandemic, which began after the FEC submitted this best practices proposal.

At the Campus Level
The FEC weighed in on
- Eligibility regulations for student athletes, endorsing campus adoption of NCAA regulations
- Changes to the student registration timeline (to be piloted in F2020)
- Campus instructional responses to the ongoing pandemic (remote instruction, one-time alterations to P/NP regulations, and the like)
• The administration’s report recommending that course evaluations (currently, ESCIs) be conducted online. Here, the FEC recommended that online course evaluations be collected in classrooms (when instruction occurs there) in order to avoid the sampling bias inherent to self-selected samples that occur when students decide whether to respond to e-mail solicitations of course reviews.

• The report of the Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Student Evaluations of Teaching. As mentioned in the Executive Summary, the FEC strongly recommended a moratorium on use of ESCI scores in personnel evaluations, based on results from experiments showing that such evaluations are invalid (quality of teaching evaluations negatively predicted student performance in future courses in these studies) and biased against female and minority instructors. The Chair of the Academic Senate recommended de-emphasis of ESCI scores in personnel reviews (rather than a moratorium), though it appears that there has been no formal guidance to departments from Academic Personnel regarding this issue for the 2020-21 review cycle.

The FEC is pleased to coordinate selection of the Plous Memorial Award recipient. The 2020-21 recipient is Leah Stokes (Political Science). The committee also endorsed the nominations for the 2020 Mochizuki Memorial Awards within the college.

Systemwide Policy and Regulation Review

In 2019-20 the FEC responded to:
• Assessment Report of UCDC
• BOARS Recommendation to Eliminate the ACT-SAT Essay Requirement
• Academic Council report from Standardized Testing Task Force
• Subsequent ruling by the Regents on the use of standardized tests in UC admissions, as described further in the Executive Summary.

Selection of New Members

The FEC is grateful that the Committee on Committees identified collaborative and productive members to fill unexpected vacancies this year until the subsequent FEC election cycle. The first meeting of the year was canceled due to a lack of quorum when a full committee had not yet been appointed, although all deadlines for FEC responses were still met.

In spring 2020 a call for nominations was sent to all L&S faculty and an election was conducted under the regulations of the Senate. The following members were elected to serve on the FEC through August 2022:

  Peter Ford, Chemistry and Biochemistry
  David Paul, Music
  Kevin Whitehead, Sociology
2019-20 FEC committee members

Walid Afifi, Communication
Peter Ford, Chemistry and Biochemistry
Sabine Frühstück, East Asian Languages and Cultural Studies (Vice-Chair)
Laurie Monahan, History of Art and Architecture (through fall quarter 2019)
David Paul, Music (from January 2020)
James Roney, Psychological and Brain Sciences (Chair)
Kevin Whitehead, Sociology

*Ex officio* members:

Jeff Stopple, AVC and Dean of Undergraduate Education
Pierre Wiltzius, Executive Dean of the College of Letters and Science

Student representatives:

Aimee Wang, Associated Students
Surojit Kayal, Graduate Student Association