

these committees are included in this issue of *Almanac* and describe the many accomplishments not included in this report. I would like to take the opportunity to thank both the membership of the various committees, as well as their chairs: Sigal Barsade (SCOA), Sheila Murnaghan and Ivan Dmochowski (SCSEP), Sarah Kagan (SCESF), Jeffrey Winkler (SCOF), Kelly Jordan-Sciutto and Peter Struck (SCFDDE).

The Tri-Chairs of the Faculty Senate engage in frequent and worthwhile meetings with President Amy Gutmann and Provost Vincent Price. In these consultations, we share the perspectives of the faculty with the administration. These conversations have been engaging and productive, and we appreciate their straightforwardness in discussing any issues we brought to them for consideration.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not express my deep and enduring gratitude to my partners in this endeavor. I could not have agreed to take on this important responsibility without the support of my staff in the Center for Africana Studies. Gale Garrison, Carol Davis, Michelle Houston, and Deb Broadnax hold down a sizable and growing fort, taking care of the Center, the students who are attached to the Center, and of me. I am on time and up to speed in no small measure because of this wonderful group of women. I also want to thank my faculty colleagues in the Center for their support, and for making themselves available at a moment's notice.

During my year as Chair-Elect, Robert Hornik was an exceptional model in leadership. This year, as Past-Chair, Bob continued to offer his thoughtful advice and valuable insights in a wide variety of circumstances. Chair-Elect Susan Margulies has been a quick-study, bringing terrif-

ic and much-appreciated enthusiasm and commitment to her role, as well as a wealth of knowledge of issues important to the Senate; I am very much looking forward to her leadership in the coming year. The three of us could not accomplish anything without the undying commitment of Sue White, Executive Assistant to the Faculty Senate. There really are not words to express my amazement at her institutional memory and her capacity for recruiting committee members and then managing those committees, making sure that the tri-chairs stay on task and respond appropriately to all that is brought to us for consideration, remembering to remind us when we forget while at the same time staying on top of her own to-do list, and elegantly navigating and maintaining relationships with administrative counterparts. We would be lost without her, and we are truly grateful that she is our partner.



—Camille Z. Charles
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Report of the Senate Committee on Students and Educational Policy (SCSEP)

General Committee Charge

The Committee oversees and advises the Executive Committee on matters relating to the University's policies and procedures on the admission and instruction of students, including academic integrity, admissions policies and administration, evaluation of teaching, examinations and grading, academic experiences, educational opportunities (such as study abroad), student records, disciplinary systems, and the campus environment. In general the Committee deals with the matters covered by section IV. of the University's *Handbook for Faculty and Academic Administrators*.

2011-2012 Specific Charges

1. Continue the dialogue established with the Dean of Admissions, identifying areas for more in-depth discussion.
2. Become familiar with the Faculty Council on Access and Academic Support and its work to assure post-matriculation success.
3. Revisit the Intellectual Property and Copyright policies regarding curricular course materials, videotaping lectures, and posting course materials. Discuss the best way to make this information easily accessible to faculty and students.
4. Review faculty feedback from the online course evaluation system launch.
5. Consider the adequacy and effectiveness of Penn's procedures for locating and responding to academic dishonesty. Consider the relevance of the incidence of reported cheating from the online course evaluation system as data.
6. Monitor trials of possible successors to Blackboard with appropriate support staff from the Penn Libraries.

A recent "Dear Colleague" letter from the Office of Civil Rights, Department of Education made it imperative that Penn revise its Charter for the Student Disciplinary System to be in compliance with both the letter and spirit of the Title IX law. On the urging of the Senate Tri-Chairs and Vice Provost for Education Andy Binns, this Committee took up one additional charge:

7. Examine changes to the *Charter of the University of Pennsylvania Student Disciplinary System*, which were made by the Provost's Office with the assistance of the General Counsel.

8. Finally, review and discuss this Committee's general charge, as provided in the Senate Rules, and identify what you believe to be the most pressing issues facing the faculty, students and educational programs over the next few years. In light of your discussions, recommend to the Senate Executive Committee two or three high-priority charges for the Committee on Students and Educational Policy to undertake in academic year 2012-13. In explaining these charges, outline any appropriate actions you suppose the Senate might conceivably take after its review.

Accomplishments

1. SCSEP Meeting with Dean of Admissions Eric Furda

The Committee held one meeting with Dean Furda, who reviewed the policies and practices of the Admissions Office. This meeting continued the regular consultation between this Committee and the Admissions Office that has transpired in recent years.

The Committee identified several areas of mutual concern, which we expect will be subjects of ongoing discussion: changes in the composition of incoming classes and the impact of those changes on the faculty; methods for identifying students with strong intellectual interests, as a counterbalance to Penn's pre-professional culture; faculty involvement in the recruitment of students with especially strong academic interests; the ways in which selective institutions such as Penn influence, or can influence, secondary school curricula; admissions strategies for casting a wide net to ensure that applications are received from a diverse population of students. The Committee learned about Penn's recent transfer applications from students at Miami Dade College, arguably the largest and most diverse college in the nation.

2. Familiarization with Faculty Council on Access and Academic Support (FCAAS)

The Committee met with Vice Provost for Education, Andy Binns, to discuss the work of the FCAAS. The FCAAS is performing in-depth sta-

tistical analysis of student outcomes at Penn, particularly by reviewing the performance of under-represented minorities relative to the larger student body. A recent focus has been student outcomes in “on-ramp” courses, which most of Penn’s undergraduates take in their first year. Additional topics under investigation are the 4- and 6-year graduation rates, GPA, post-graduate education and career choices. Current SCSEP Chair Ivan Dmochowski, now serves on the FCAAS, which will facilitate dialogue between these two bodies in the future.

3. Clarification of Penn’s Intellectual Property and Copyright Policies

The SCSEP learned that faculty and student questions regarding the dissemination of course materials are common, and to gain greater understanding of these issues, the SCSEP has met with the General Counsel’s Office in recent years. With an eye to disseminating the most important information to as many faculty and students as possible, Ivan Dmochowski met with Associate General Counsel Robert Terrell, to consider the creation of a FAQ list. An outline of topics to be covered in the FAQ will be circulated to the SCSEP, which will oversee the completion of this project in 2012-2013.

4. Review of Faculty Feedback from New Online Course Evaluation System

The Committee met with Andy Binns to learn about the status of the current online course evaluation system. Several SCSEP members expressed concerns about the lack of control that faculty have over when students evaluate the course. Are the students evaluating it before the conclusion of the course, without the benefit of having seen the final lectures? Conversely, are they waiting until after taking the final exam to evaluate the course, and providing evaluations that are clouded by the disappointment of having performed poorly on the final exam? Are students who regularly do not attend lecture (and in previous years would have missed the in-class evaluation process) being given too large a voice in evaluating the professor? These and other questions are vexing for many faculty.

Dr. Binns shared with the Committee the challenges of providing a very flexible online course evaluation system that faculty could tailor to fit their own syllabus. For example, in order to get the highest possible student response rate, it is desirable for students to be able to complete all evaluations at the same time. Nevertheless, improvements to the online evaluation system are in the works, and faculty will soon be able to modify the basic questionnaire to include additional, very specific questions that pertain to a particular assignment or feature of the course.

5. Consideration of Penn’s Procedures for Treating Academic Dishonesty

Following up on issue 4 (*above*), Andy Binns apprised the SCSEP about a greater reporting of cheating that has arisen from the online course evaluation system. Without additional information, it is difficult to assess the veracity of these reports. Thus, here too, the ability to ask students follow-up questions in a more flexible format will empower faculty to police their own courses. Questions also arose about a faculty member’s responsibility to report incidents of cheating to the Office of Student Conduct.

6. SCSEP Discussion of Possible Successors to Blackboard

The Committee met with H. Carton Rogers, Vice Provost and Director of Libraries; Marjorie Hassen, Director of Public Services; and Michael Winkler, Director of Information Technology & Digital Development and discussed the status of courseware at Penn. It was noted that Blackboard has been running more smoothly this year and will not be upgraded in May. Following a successful pilot of Sakai in the fall semester, the Library will be piloting a new version of Sakai beginning this summer. This fall the Library will also be piloting Canvas which several schools have

shown interest in using. Additional tools to support teaching and learning that the Library is looking at include: BigBlue Button, an open source synchronous online communication system; Kaltura, a hosted media streaming tool; Turnitin plagiarism detection software, and eXplorance, an online system for faculty to solicit student feedback. The consensus among this group was that due to different needs in courses across the University, Penn faculty will have greater options in course management software in the years to come. The Library system will be challenged to support all of the different systems adequately.

7. Review Changes to the Charter of Penn’s Student Disciplinary System

The Committee reviewed the “Dear Colleague” letter and the resulting revised Charter (*Almanac* April 10, 2012). Andy Binns gave a special 30-minute presentation on this topic. The Committee formulated a brief list of recommendations, which included providing special training to faculty who might serve on hearing panels for the Office of Student Conduct. In particular, the new “Preponderance of Evidence” standard (only 51% certainty required in reaching a verdict) poses new challenges for faculty members who serve on the hearing panel.

Additional issues were raised in this meeting with Andy Binns, including whether legal representation should be allowed at OSC hearings. The Committee learned that exclusion of legal representation from Penn’s academic hearing process mirrors that at many other academic institutions, and is not inconsistent with the intent of the “Dear Colleague” letter.

8. Consider Charges for the Coming Year

At its April meeting, the Committee reviewed the status of its charges and identified areas for continued work in the coming academic year. These topics are summarized below.

Recommendations for Next Year’s Committee

- Continue the dialogue that has been established with the Dean of Admissions. The SCSEP should consider with the Dean the admissions strategies that are likely to yield applications from academically gifted students with disadvantaged backgrounds. As examples, the SCSEP should get progress reports on efforts to expand Penn’s reach in local Philadelphia high schools as well as in targeted community colleges, in Florida and elsewhere.
- Develop a FAQ list for faculty and students on Intellectual Property and Copyright Policies of relevance to the academic mission. Robert Terrell, Associate General Counsel, has agreed to guide this effort. The SCSEP should decide how to make this information widely available.
- Continue to monitor the online course evaluation system, and consider whether slated improvements address faculty concerns.
- Continue to get updates on courseware options in consultation with relevant administrators from Penn’s library.

SCSEP Membership, 2011-2012

Ivan Dmochowski, School of Arts & Sciences/Chemistry, *Chair*
Christine Bradway, School of Nursing/Behavioral and Health Sciences
Ellis Golub, School of Dental Medicine
Shaun Harper, Graduate School of Education
John Jackson, Annenberg School for Communication and School of Arts & Sciences/Anthropology
Catriona MacLeod, School of Arts & Sciences/Germanic Languages and Literatures
Sheila Murnaghan, School of Arts & Sciences/Classical Studies
Ex Officio Members:
Camille Z. Charles, School of Arts & Sciences/Sociology, *Senate Chair*
Susan Margulies, School of Engineering and Applied Science/Bioengineering, *Senate Chair-Elect*