

Educational Policies and Faculty/Student Relations Committee
Annual Activity Report

The Educational Policies and Faculty/Student Relations Committee during the 2017-18 academic year was comprised of Mark Alter, Anna Harvey, Dara Regaignon, Arthur Tannenbaum, and co-chairs Sharon Weinberg and Robert Lapiner.

In the autumn, we wrapped up one of the previous year's major initiatives, to promulgate broader university-wide faculty engagement in efforts originally spearheaded in CAS, to support First Generation College Students. We also enlisted the C-FSC to support the initiative. While the Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs has administrative responsibility to coordinate with student affairs staff across campus, the energetic involvement of the T-FSC has been acknowledged as a significant factor in other Schools now having created parallel First Gen programs, and most especially in the increase of faculty members who have volunteered to serve as mentors to these students.

(The knowledge of the affirmative impact of our involvement has sparked interest on the part of the Provost for us to leverage faculty participation in efforts that could be targeted towards other undergraduate student populations which have been identified as vulnerable to not staying the course at NYU.)

Throughout the year, the Ed Pol committee also channeled attention to faculty concerns that had been communicated to us --this time with respect to the information coming from the Office of Enrollment Management about the roll-out of the Spring Admits initiative. This undergraduate admission project is conceived for entering freshmen, who will commence their NYU experience in the spring term. The first cohort is presently in Liberal Studies. Tandon and Steinhardt are slated to follow suit in 2019.

It is presumed that this program will have significant impact on curricular planning, not to mention faculty course-load and summer teaching, and the need for specialized student advising. Yet it appears that these initiatives have been designed and are being implemented without the input of the schools' faculty leadership (including elected senators). Because the concerns that have been raised are manifest among both tenured and contract faculty, albeit experienced differently, our co-chairs reached out to the counterpart committee of the C-FSC, to explore how we might collaborate.

The two committees subsequently held joint meetings, and in the process, developed a discussion document identifying a range of curricular and academic administrative questions that were subsequently vetted and endorsed by both Councils for follow-up. Before the end of term, with this document as the basis of a conversation, the chairs of both our committees will be meeting directly with the Administration to clarify expectations—with the goal of protecting the essential role of the full-time faculty (tenured and contract faculty together) in shaping, overseeing, and assuring our students' learning experiences. We expect a constructive discussion and responsive outcome.