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Faculty Minutes

Secretaries of the Faculty of Sweet Briar College. Faculty Minutes. 13 vols. Sept. 1906-May 1957. Sweet Briar College Archives, Office and Workroom on the right wall bookshelf, bottom shelf closest to the door.

I read the Sweet Briar College Faculty Minutes from Volume I-VIII, Sept. 26, 1906-May 12, 1926. The minutes came into existence with the first Faculty meeting on Sept. 26, 1906 when the Faculty voted Miss Pattenon as Secretary. The earlier minutes contain records of decisions made on academic rulings, petitions approved and refused from the Student Government Association, expenses, traditions, calendar decisions, and announcements. The Faculty later passed over most of the academic matters to the Executive Committee when it was formed in 1911, and the major topics at Faculty meetings became social offences of students, discipline, concerts planned, lectures, and announcements.

The purpose of the Faculty Minutes was to keep records of decisions made so that rules would be established in writing and could be referred to if something was questionable, there would be no repetition at future meetings, and a record of expenses could be kept.

The Minutes are useful as an historical source, for they give the reader an idea of what topics of discussion were important at that time. Of course, there is some bias because various secretaries wrote the Minutes and what one person feels is important to record may not be so important to another person. The Secretaries are not always explicit. For example, the Secretaries often record the decisions made but make no mention of any discussion or debate held. The reader of the Faculty Minutes then assumes that everything ran smoothly at the meetings, but other evidence reveals that actually things did not run so smoothly. The Faculty Minutes cannot be used alone as an historical source, but I think they can be used to get a general insight of what went on at the College.