

**Committee of Six Minutes
of Monday, May 21, 2007**

The thirty-ninth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2006-2007 was called to order by the Dean at 3:00 P.M. on Monday, May 21, 2007. Present were Professors George, O'Hara, Schneider, Sinos, and Woglom, Dean Call, President Marx, and Assistant Dean Tobin, Recorder. The members approved the minutes of the meeting of May 14. Professor Parker was absent by prior arrangement.

The Committee spent the first portion of the meeting on personnel matters and then returned to the topic of committees.

The Committee discussed the creation of advisory committees for the Center for Community Engagement (CCE), the Teaching and Advising Project (TAP), and the study of film and new media at the College. The members made suggestions of colleagues who might serve on the committee, which will act as an advisory board to the CCE. It was agreed that a broad cross-section of the College community, possibly including members of the Faculty, students, administrators, and staff, should serve. Professor O'Hara suggested that individuals have a longer rotation than is typical for a faculty committee, and she proposed that the term be four or five years. It was agreed that a separate group made of alumni would have a consulting role in regard to the advisory board and the CCE.

Dean Call next recommended that a similar advisory group, comprised of members of the Faculty, be formed to assist with the development of the TAP and with governance and oversight of the project. He said that he envisions the creation of a faculty development center that would provide support for both pedagogy and research. An advisory board would be helpful in identifying next steps and could serve as a sounding board for new ideas, he noted. Associate Dean Basu will be leading this effort, and she has expressed the desire to foster a rich and inclusive conversation about the development of the TAP; she would welcome the advice of an advisory group, Dean Call said. Professor O'Hara suggested that the Thalheimer Professorship be expanded to three or four professorships encompassing the different divisions of the curriculum. Such professors could be responsible for fostering conversations about pedagogy and curriculum among faculty within their disciplines, as Professor Cox (who will end his term as the Thalheimer Professor at the end of this academic year) has done so successfully in quantitative areas. She noted that the lunches and meetings that he has organized have been very productive. President Marx said that he would be open to considering a Thalheimer-like model, but that taking such a step would be in addition to forming an advisory group for the TAP and moving forward with that project.

Professor O'Hara expressed some concern that the TAP would have a joint focus on teaching and research. She said that the College has traditionally provided less support for programs to enrich teaching and curricular development and has focused more of its resources on supporting the Faculty's research. Professor Woglom agreed and said that the Faculty would benefit from having a teaching center. Dean Call noted that, after conducting research on various models of teaching and learning centers, he and Associate Dean Griffiths had come to the conclusion that the most effective models integrated support for faculty teaching and research into a faculty development center, rather than combining support for faculty teaching with

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support for student learning. Working toward this model is in no way meant to signal that the College will provide less support for pedagogy, the Dean noted. Professor Sinos commented that some members of the Faculty may not welcome training in pedagogy, since courses in education departments, which teach pedagogy, have a reputation for lacking substance, she said. President Marx said that the College should provide programs to support the improvement of teaching. The TAP is in a nascent phase at present, and many of the services that it will provide, and its structure, have yet to be decided. The establishment of the Faculty Innovation Fund (FIF) and Work-in-Progress Seminars, and increasing the travel allowance for Faculty, launched this initiative this year, the Dean said. Agreeing that an information advisory group would be helpful to the development of the center, the members offered suggestions of faculty members who might serve.

Concluding the discussion of committees, the Dean noted that the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) has recommended that a committee on the study of film and new media be formed. Dean Call said that he supports the CEP's recommendation and will look to establish the proposed committee as an ad hoc committee in the fall.

President Marx next informed the Committee that the position of Interterm Colloquium Green Dean has been shifted from his office to that of Public Affairs. In addition to managing the program that brings speakers to campus during Interterm, the coordinator will devote some of his or her time to helping faculty members and academic department coordinators arrange other lectures or organize conferences.

Turning to the topic of the teaching of writing at the College, the President noted that he has had numerous informal discussions of late about this topic with faculty members. They have reiterated to him that the Faculty should have the primary responsibility for teaching writing, but have said that they would not exclude the possibility of having individuals who have been trained in the teaching of writing contribute to writing efforts at the College. President Marx said that he agrees that Amherst and its students could benefit from the expertise of so-called "compositionalists," if these professionals are properly integrated within a larger proposal. He expressed his hope that the possibility of hiring compositionalists would be part of conversations, as they move forward, about meeting the College's educational responsibility regarding writing.

The Committee turned to a personnel matter.

Under "Questions from Committee Members," Professor Schneider asked about the status of the search for a new Director of the Mead Art Museum. The President said that a decision would be made soon, and he said that he anticipates that further resources will be devoted to the museum in the years ahead.

Professor Sinos next asked if the unexpectedly large size of the entering class for 2007-2008 would necessitate that FTEs beyond the cap be awarded for next year. The Dean said that he would be generous with visiting appointments in order to accommodate the extra students. He pointed out that it would be up to the Trustees to raise the cap and that, if they do, it would take a year to search for new tenure-track colleagues. Such searches, if they occur, would be undertaken in 2007-2008, he noted. The number of First-Year Seminars presents the greatest

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challenge at present, he said. The Committee then reviewed three course proposals and voted unanimously to forward them to the Faculty. Turning to its review of the nominee for the Woods-Travis Prize, the Committee voted five in favor and zero opposed to approve the nominee. The members next reviewed the theses and transcripts of students recommended by their departments for a *summa cum laude* degree and having an overall grade point average in the top 25 percent of the graduating class. After a discussion, the members voted unanimously to forward all of the recommendations to the Faculty.

The members turned next to a consideration of attendance and voting at Faculty Meetings. After some discussion about the possibility of adding, moving, or removing administrative positions within various categories—attendance without vote, attendance with vote, etc.—the members decided that no changes should be made at present. The Committee viewed this issue as a complex and potentially divisive issue within the Amherst community and felt that caution should be exercised when making changes. It was agreed that Molly Mead, the new Director of the CCE, and Marian Matheson, Director of Institutional Research, should be invited to the meetings as guests in 2007-2008.

At the meeting's close, the Dean and the President expressed their appreciation to the Committee for their hard work throughout this very busy year.

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Gregory S. Call
Dean of the Faculty