

Amended September 27, 2010

The second meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2010-2011 was called to order by Dean Call in the President's office at 3:30 P.M. on Monday, September 20, 2010. Present were Professors Basu, Ciepiela, Loinaz, Rockwell, Umphrey, and Saxton, Dean Call, and Assistant Dean Tobin, Recorder. President Marx, who was traveling for the College, was absent.

Continuing their conversation of the previous week, the members discussed the procedures and timetable for approving the Committee's minutes, with the goal of refining the process to allow sufficient time for the Committee to review and edit the minutes, while ensuring that the document reaches the Faculty in a timely manner. After making some adjustments to the first iteration of the process, the members agreed to adopt a system that would typically result in the public minutes being made available eight days after the Committee meets. If a Faculty Meeting has been scheduled, an expedited process will be used to produce, review, and approve the minutes. If for any reason the Committee cannot reach a consensus to approve the minutes under these circumstances, it was agreed that two sets of abbreviated minutes would be read at the Faculty Meeting. The members then voted unanimously to approve the minutes of September 13.

At 4:00 P.M., Dean Call introduced Attorney James Wallace, who participated in the meeting by speaker phone. Paul Murphy, Legal and Administrative Counsel, also participated by speaker phone. Each fall, Mr. Wallace is invited to speak with the Committee of Six prior to personnel discussions to provide general legal advice related to the tenure and reappointment processes. At the conclusion of the discussion with Mr. Wallace, the Dean, the Committee, and Mr. Murphy expressed their thanks. The Committee then turned to several committee nominations.

Continuing with his announcements, Dean Call discussed with the Committee the long-standing policy of appending letters to the minutes when the matters contained within them have been discussed by the Committee. Colleagues are informed by the Dean's office as to when their letters will be appended. If a colleague states at the outset that he or she does not want the contents of a letter discussed in the public minutes, the Committee will decide whether it wishes to take up the matter in question. The Dean then noted possible Faculty Meeting dates for the Fall semester. They are October 5, October 19, November 2, and December 7.

In response to the question, posed the previous week, of whether there might be any flexibility within the terms of the agreement that established the John J. McCloy'16 Professorship of American Institutions and International Diplomacy in regard to the fields of its occupants, Dean Call reported back on his reading of the agreement. The Dean said that the memo of understanding states that McCloy Professors must be located in the Department of History. He reported that, over the years, the professorship has been used to bring to Amherst distinguished scholars in Mr. McCloy's fields of interest: American history, American studies, economics, history, law, political science, and sociology. While the professorship was established to bring scholars to the College to "offer structured courses to the undergraduates of the College," for many years McCloy Professors were asked to come to the College to present lectures and not classes. Visiting professorships are more consistent with the intention of the agreement, Dean Call noted. He said that the College has and will continue to remain faithful to the agreement that established the professorship, while interpreting it broadly. Dean Call noted that similar constraints in terms of field are not applicable to the John Woodruff Simpson Lectureship, and that this position may be used to bring distinguished visitors to the College across a wide range of disciplines. The members then discussed the credentials of three individuals who might be considered for a McCloy Professorship or Simpson Lectureship.

Professor Rockwell commented on the importance of ensuring that anyone who is appointed to these distinguished positions have terminal degrees and other academic credentials

Amended September 27, 2010

that are, at a minimum, comparable to those required of Amherst faculty members, since he or she would be teaching. Professor Saxton disagreed, noting that, under some circumstances, she could envision a journalist, who might not have a terminal degree, being a suitable candidate for these positions. Dean Call noted that all three candidates under discussion have Ph.D.s and have held academic teaching appointments.

Continuing the conversation about visiting faculty more broadly, Professor Basu asked about plans for informing the Faculty about the opportunity to nominate Simpson Lecturers and McCloy Professors, as well as Croxton Lecturers. Dean Call said that he would make an announcement at the next Faculty Meeting about making nominations for all of these positions. He also plans to notify departments that they may nominate a Croxton Lecturer as part of the letter regarding requests for visitors for next year, which he will soon send to chairs. Professor Basu asked if these positions would be advertised more broadly. The Dean responded that an ad had been placed in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* last year for the McCloy and Simpson positions, but that this venue had drawn only a small number of viable candidates, though it did serve to inform members of the higher education community about these positions. Professor Umphrey argued that the positions should be advertised beyond the College's Web site, as is the regular practice for other academic positions, including that of Copeland Fellow, for example. Professor Basu commented that the selection of Copeland Fellows through both advertising and nomination provides a useful model. The Dean confirmed that some Copeland Fellows are solicited through advertising, while others are nominated by Amherst faculty and/or chosen by the Copeland Program's faculty theme group for the year. Dean Call commented that Croxton Lecturers teach on a per-course basis and are not likely to teach more than a couple of courses. Formal searches and broad advertising are not done for positions of this type typically, he said. A number of alumni have expressed interest in the Croxton Lectureship, and faculty colleagues' networking is another way that candidates for these positions have emerged.

Dean Call next discussed with the members the issue of restructuring visiting/temporary teaching positions at the College as permanent renewable teaching positions that are not tenure-track or tenured lines. The Dean noted that, in his experience, it is not uncommon for departments, particularly when they are pleased with the performance of a visitor who has been teaching courses at Amherst for some time and who may be filling a curricular need, to request to have an ongoing rotating position converted to a permanent renewable position. He said that it would be helpful to have a sense of the Committee's views on this issue in a broad sense, as the question of whether creating more of these types of positions at the College can become lost, as each request for a new structure is treated on an individual basis.

As background for the discussion, Dean Call noted that he has worked over the years to prevent visiting positions from becoming long term and exploitative. Visiting Assistant Professors now typically have appointments for three years, and never for more than four. He then described the position of Lecturer at the College, noting that he has tried to regularize this position (as part of the larger effort to move away from having long-term visiting appointments), which is largely part of the teaching structure in foreign languages and arts departments, though there are a few Lecturer positions outside of those departments. The Dean explained that Lecturers and Resident Artists are hired on three-year contracts. After two three-year terms, a Lecturer or Resident Artist may be eligible for promotion to Senior status, receiving a five-year contract, with a greater expectation of renewal. In relation to the question at hand, he noted that, if a colleague has taught at the College for some time as a visitor and is later hired into a new renewable position, he or she often has one three-year contract, a review, and then is promoted to Senior Lecturer or Senior Resident Artist.

Amended September 27, 2010

The Dean explained that, when considering a request from a department to convert what has been a visiting position to a Lecturer or Senior Resident Artist position, it is important to consider how best to structure the position—whether to have an ongoing appointment or one that rotates—to best meet the institution’s needs and not to focus on the benefits that the person currently occupying the position might bring. Professor Rockwell asked if national searches are conducted when a position is re-structured, ensuring that affirmative action guidelines are followed. The Dean said that, when a position is re-classified as an ongoing appointment, an ad is placed in the relevant publications for the field, and the procedures for a national search are followed rigorously. Practically, what often tends to happen is that the person who had occupied the rotating position is seen as the best candidate for the permanent one, and he or she is hired. Professor Basu asked if there is a danger that decisions about terminations of contracts might be made on an ad hoc basis. The Dean said that, since visiting colleagues no longer teach on an extended basis, his intention has been and remains to ask departments to make recommendations about restructuring positions occupied by long-term colleagues and thus to eliminate these informal arrangements over time.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Saxton said that she imagines that departmental needs should govern decisions about the best structure for these positions. Professor Ciepiela commented that she finds it difficult to discuss this issue in the absence of a specific example. The Dean reiterated that in considering this issue, the objective is not to consider individuals, but to focus on structures. Professor Umphrey commented that adding these sorts of positions to the College is not done through the regular Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) process. She wondered about the level of vetting that proposals to reclassify positions receive as a result. The Dean said that, if a department requests to restructure a rotating position into an ongoing one, there is a conversation with the CEP, as doing so is providing a new resource to the department. Following the conversation, the CEP makes a recommendation to the Dean, who makes the decision. Professor Umphrey expressed some concern about the possibility of creating a second-tier faculty if these positions proliferate. Professor Saxton noted the precedent for permanent non-tenure-track or tenured positions in the arts and language departments, for which this seems to have been an effective structure. Professor Umphrey commented that small departments often need to fill curricular gaps that arise from sabbatic leaves, and that having the continual presence of a Senior Lecturer, or a series of visitors, can be necessary to mount a major. Professor Ciepiela agreed that these positions are filling a critical need within some departments. Professor Loinaz asked if there are ongoing non-tenure-track or tenured positions in the science departments. The Dean said that there are not. Though there are lab instructor and coordinator positions that are permanent, these positions involve some teaching (of lab sections and discussion sections, typically), but they are classified as staff positions rather than faculty lines.

Professor Basu returned to the concern about creating a differential in status among teachers at the College, if these positions proliferate. The Dean noted that this issue is further complicated by the field-specific nature of these positions. Lecturers and Senior Lecturers and Resident Artists and Senior Resident Artists are similar in terms of their contracts. However Lecturers outside the language departments typically have a two/two teaching load and conduct scholarly research. Language lecturers tend to focus largely on pedagogy and teach three courses (often two sections of the same course) per semester. Professor Saxton noted that the Faculty made a specific decision not to create a group of lower-level faculty to teach writing. It was felt that having a structure of what would essentially be technicians would not be desirable. Professor Rockwell expressed concern about regularizing a growing number of these positions across departments and posed the question of whether doing so might ultimately undermine the College’s commitment to tenure and tenure-track positions, possibly supplanting them. The

Amended September 27, 2010

Dean said that he shares this concern, while recognizing the benefits of creating these ongoing positions when it is in the best interests of departments and the College as a whole. The Committee then turned briefly to a personnel matter.

In the context of discussing a request from a department to restructure a position, Professor Loinaz asked what the distinctions are between a Senior Lecturer or Senior Resident Artist, outside the language departments, and a tenured faculty member. The Dean responded that the standard of review is higher for tenure-track and tenured faculty and that the leave policy is different. He noted that, while Lecturers are often scholars in their fields, their primary role at the College is a teaching one, and their performance is evaluated on the basis of teaching alone. In addition, there are some differences in terms of requirements for service to the College. Senior Lecturers are eligible for a single one-semester leave during the course of their careers at Amherst.

The Committee next discussed a proposal for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Summer Stipend Program and approved the nomination of the professor who had submitted it.

The Committee returned briefly to a discussion of the draft of the Five College strategic plan. Professor Rockwell expressed the view that the process of gathering feedback on the document is being rushed, and that, since the window for responding to the draft is so brief, Amherst should not be viewed as having endorsed it. Dean Call said that he does not have the sense that a formal endorsement is being sought, as the document is not a contract. The Dean explained that the Five College Directors feel that it would be helpful for Neal Abraham, the new Executive Director of Five Colleges, to have a plan in place as soon as possible. Professor Umphrey reiterated her suggestion that the relevant major committees (the Committee on Priorities and Resources, the CEP, and the Committee of Six, at the least) of the Faculty be asked to comment on the document. Dean Call asked if the members felt that Amherst should try to have a broad discussion of the document. The members decided to discuss this question at their next meeting. Professor Umphrey asked how the initiatives outlined in the document would be funded, if adopted. The Committee expressed concern that Amherst, as the institution in the best financial position, might have to take on a disproportionate share of the financial burden for implementing any plans that are adopted. Dean Call responded that the institutions would share costs, and that grant funding would be sought, for any plans that are launched. He anticipates that in the future, as initiatives are brought forward, each institution will decide for itself whether it will participate. The Dean said that there is a general sense among the institutions that collaboration is often, but not always, beneficial. Recalling the Committee's discussion of the previous week, he noted that not every collaborative project need be undertaken by all five institutions.

The meeting ended with a brief discussion of a personnel matter.

The meeting adjourned at 6:25 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Gregory S. Call
Dean of the Faculty