

Amended October 14, 2010

The fourth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2010-2011 was called to order by President Marx in his office at 3:30 P.M. on Monday, October 4, 2010. Present were Professors Basu, Ciepiela, Loinaz, Rockwell, Umphrey, and Saxton, Dean Call, President Marx, and Assistant Dean Tobin, Recorder.

The members reviewed the second draft of the minutes of the Committee's meeting of September 27 and voted unanimously to approve the minutes. The members then turned briefly to a personnel matter.

Under "Announcements from the President," President Marx informed the members that, as requested by the Committee, he had conveyed to the Trustees the members' preference to meet with the Board this spring, rather than talking with Trustee Howard Gardner and former Trustee Diana Chapman Walsh in October, as proposed. The President said that it is his understanding that the Board would welcome a broad discussion of governance at the College, in the aftermath of the dramatic changes in the economy of last year, and in anticipation that governance structures may be tested in similar ways in the future. The Committee agreed that the members should prepare for such a conversation, which would occur with the Board this spring, by having minuted discussions on this topic during some of its regular meetings in February. The Committee also decided that it would be beneficial to convey directly to the Board its rationale for declining Mr. Gardner's and Ms. Chapman Walsh's invitation to meet in October and its interest in having a conversation this spring that would encompass the topics that the President had described. The members agreed to draft a letter to Mr. Gardner, Ms. Chapman Walsh, and Board Chairman Jide Zeitlin '85. The Committee then turned briefly to personnel matters.

Under "Announcements from the Dean," Dean Call informed the members that he had shared with the Committee on Priorities and Resources (CPR) and the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) the Committee of Six's request that each of these committees review the Five College strategic planning document and provide a response statement on the plan to the Committee by October 15. Dean Call informed the members that, while the CEP's schedule will permit the committee to respond by the deadline, the CPR's agenda and meeting schedule (the committee meets on Tuesdays and will not meet on October 12 because of fall break) will make it impossible for the CPR to offer a response by the Committee of Six's deadline. The CPR has agreed to discuss the Five College strategic plan on October 19, Dean Call said, and to respond as soon as the committee can thereafter. As a result, the Committee of Six will need to adjust its schedule for discussing the responses of the CEP and the CPR, shifting to its October 25 meeting instead of having its conversation on October 18, as originally planned. This schedule should still permit the Faculty to be informed, through the Committee of Six minutes, of the members' discussion of the response statements, before the anticipated November 2 Faculty Meeting.

Noting that the Copeland Colloquium Program had been expanded and is now organized around a theme put forward by the Faculty, Dean Call informed the members that last year's Committee of Six had decided that it would be best to have more data before seeking to evaluate this new interdisciplinary theme-based structure. The new format, the Dean said, had been initiated for the colloquium on a pilot basis three years ago. The Committee had also agreed that the Faculty Research Awards (FRAP) Committee and the Lecture Committee together, or a self-selected subcommittee of the members of these committees, should conduct the evaluation of the theme-based approach. The Dean explained that, if the theme-based approach is to continue in 2011-2012, theme proposals must be solicited this fall for next year's Copeland Colloquium.

Amended October 14, 2010

Because of this timetable, he asked the members if the Copeland Colloquium should be allowed to run one more year in its present form, while the evaluation is under way (it is expected that it will be completed in spring 2011).

Continuing the conversation, Dean Call noted that this is the fourth year that Copeland Fellows have come to campus for a year, rather than for a semester, with the intent of scholarly collaboration and engagement with the Amherst community. The Dean said that, during the first year (2007-2008), the theme was “Art and Identity in the Global Community.” The next year the theme was “Violent States.” Last year’s theme was “It’s Not Easy Being Green: The Science, Politics, and Ethics of Environmentalism.” This year’s theme is “International Development: Successes, Failures, and Future Directions.” Noting the relatively small number of Copeland theme proposals developed and put forward by the Faculty, Professor Basu commented that, if theme proposals are solicited from the Faculty for next year’s colloquium, it would be useful to encourage faculty members to bring proposals forward. She suggested, for example, a meeting between faculty members who have been involved in the theme-based colloquia and colleagues who might be interested in developing proposals. It would be beneficial to encourage proposals focusing on disciplines and topics that have not been represented among the selected themes so far, she commented. The Dean agreed that ways to encourage a greater number and fuller range of proposals should be explored. The Committee recommended that the Copeland Colloquium should continue next year under the new approach. The Dean thanked the members and commented that, in addition to sending a letter to the Faculty inviting colleagues to submit theme proposals for 2011-2012, he plans to make an announcement at the next Faculty Meeting to encourage the submission of theme proposals. The minutes of the Committee’s discussion would also serve to inform colleagues, he said.

Under “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Umphrey said that she would find it helpful to gain clarity about the process for nominating Croxton Lecturers, asking specifically about the role of departments in regard to these and the other visiting appointments that the Committee had discussed over the past several meetings. President Marx explained that, due to the need to reduce the budget for visiting faculty last year, he has tried to bolster that budget in a number of ways. One approach has been to make funding from the Croxton Lecture Fund (which had previously been used only to support single lectures at the College) available to support a small number of visiting positions for accomplished alumni and/or others to teach courses on a single-course basis, if departments wish to make proposals to the Dean, following regular procedures for requesting visitors. If nominations for Croxton Lecturers are brought forward by individual faculty or through self-nomination, departments are provided with information about the individual and choose whether they wish to host the visitor. All Croxton Lecturers must be hosted by a department, the President said. President Marx noted that the President’s Initiative Fund (PIF) has also served as an additional source of funding for bringing visiting faculty to the College. Departments and groups of faculty could apply for visitors through the PIF. These visitors need not be hosted by departments, as agreed by the Faculty. In addition, the President noted that, after discussion with the Faculty, it had been agreed that he could invite a small number of highly distinguished scholars to be appointed as Simpson Lecturers or McCloy Professors to teach at the College for a period of up to three years and that there would be a total of no more than three Simpson Lecturers and only one McCloy Professor at any given time. All of these requests would come to the Committee of Six, including the Dean, in accordance with the processes upon which the Faculty had agreed. President Marx

Amended October 14, 2010

responded that he has been, and remains, open to nominations from individual faculty and/or departments for these visiting positions. The College had not accepted any new funds to underwrite any of these visiting positions, but is instead using existing endowments.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Basu asked what the teaching load is for Croxton Lecturers. The Dean said that Croxton funds could be used to support a range of visiting positions, from a single-course hire to a full-time visitor, but that, if an individual Croxton Lecturer is asked to teach more than two courses, it would be necessary to advertise and conduct a national search for the visitor. Professor Basu asked how many Croxton Lecturers may be supported each year. President Marx said that he would review the budget for the Croxton Fund and would report back to the members. Professor Basu asked if a department could request a Croxton Lecturer to teach a single course in an area in which there might be little expertise among Five-College faculty, making it impossible to hire a "Five-College Borrow." President Marx said that such a request would probably always have been a possibility, even without Croxton funding. The Dean agreed. Professor Umphrey thanked the President for the clarification that he had provided.

Noting the departure from the College of Steven Sauter, Museum Educator at the Amherst College Museum of Natural History, Director of the College's Bassett Planetarium, and Amherst College Weather Station Manager, Professor Loinaz asked about plans to fulfill Mr. Sauter's many responsibilities in the near and long term. Dean Call said that he has been in conversation with Professors Crowley, Greenstein, and Harms to develop plans to meet needs in the areas overseen by Mr. Sauter immediately, for the near future, and for the longer term. He stressed that for the short term, the focus will be on keeping facilities and programs running, until a replacement is hired for Mr. Sauter's position. For the medium and longer term, Dean Call said that he has asked faculty and administrative colleagues to explore with curators at the Mead Art Museum ways in which approaches to collections management, education, and outreach programs may overlap, and possibilities for collaborative approaches to meet the needs of the College's museums.

President Marx, noting Mr. Sauter's varied contributions to the College, commented that it may be difficult to find another colleague with such a unique combination of interests and skills to assume Mr. Sauter's role. The President said that he is awaiting a proposal for how best to move forward with structuring a replacement position. Commenting that the College has made a substantial commitment to the Natural History Museum and that Amherst will continue to do so, the President noted that more than 88,000 people have visited the Museum since it opened in its new location four years ago and that it is a valuable education resource for Amherst College and the wider community. Professor Loinaz asked if the future of the observatory, which is used largely at alumni and parent events and by local amateur astronomers, is being considered at this transitional juncture, both in terms of the departure of Mr. Sauter, and as a new science center is being conceived. Professor Loinaz commented that the telescope has historic value and was one of the most sophisticated instruments of its time, while noting that it is no longer a research-grade instrument. Professor Loinaz informed the members that he and other colleagues had met with the Dean some time ago about the possibility of establishing a science outreach center in the observatory building. President Marx said that, while no decisions have been made, the architects of the new science building could be asked to explore whether the telescope could become a part of the new science center. He said that, in his view, questions

Amended October 14, 2010

surrounding resources and the distance from the observatory to center of the campus would make establishing a science outreach center there a significant challenge.

The members reviewed a draft agenda for the October 19 Faculty Meeting. Dean Call said that, as the Committee had discussed, some members of the Senior Staff (Allen Hart, Dean of Students; Megan Morey, Chief Advancement Officer; Tom Parker, Dean of Admission and Financial Aid; and Peter Shea, Treasurer) will provide brief written reports in advance of the meeting (they will be posted with the Faculty Meeting agenda), and an opportunity for discussion and questions about the reports will be provided at the meeting. As part of the meeting, Treasurer Peter Shea will offer a presentation on the budget, and Jack Cheney, on behalf of the Planning Oversight Committee, will present an update on plans for the new science center. Professor Loinaz asked which colleagues make up the Senior Staff. President Marx said that the Senior Staff, all of whom report directly to him, are Dean Call, Allen Hart, Dean of Students; Paul Murphy, Legal and Administrative Counsel; Marian Matheson, Director of Institutional Research and Planning; Megan Morey, Chief Advancement Officer; Tom Parker, Dean of Admission and Financial Aid; Susan Pikor, Executive Assistant to the President and Secretary to the Board of Trustees; Robyn Piggott, Special Assistant to the President; and Peter Shea, Treasurer. The members voted six to zero in favor of forwarding the Faculty Meeting agenda to the Faculty, after several suggested revisions have been made.

The Committee continued its conversation about restructuring visiting/temporary teaching positions at the College as permanent renewable teaching positions that are not tenure-track or tenured lines. Dean Call provided information about these positions by department, and discussed the process by which these positions had been created. The Dean also explained the structure of the contracts and process for review and renewal for these positions. He noted that teaching loads for these position vary, as several categories exist within these types of positions; some positions, for example, have an expectation of research and creative work, while others—those that are focused on pedagogy (largely language lecturers)—do not. The former type of position would have a lower teaching load than the latter, since there is an expectation of productivity in terms of research or creative work for those positions. Professor Saxton asked if any of these positions have administrative responsibilities. The Dean said that some do, and that it is up to departments to structure these positions. All of these positions have renewable contracts, the Dean said. Professor Umphrey asked the Dean if the structure of these positions seems to work well. The Dean said that he sees pros and cons to structuring positions as ongoing or rotating. If a position is structured as an ongoing one, then the structure of renewable contracts should be used, he said. Professor Basu suggested that, since this category of position seems to be growing and to be filling a need at the College, perhaps there should be an emphasis on making the process of review more rigorous. At present, it was noted, the Dean reads the reappointment file of those in these positions and shares his or her impressions with the Committee of Six. There are no outside reviewers, though candidates in some positions other than that of language lecturer are asked to report on their scholarly or creative work, Dean Call said.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Umphrey asked if the difficulty of evaluating creative work was a motivation for creating Resident Artist positions, rather than allocating additional tenure lines to arts departments. While acknowledging that evaluating creative work can pose challenges, the Dean said that there are constraints on the number of FTEs that can be allocated, since resources are limited. Since efforts have been made to move away from long-

Amended October 14, 2010

term visiting appointments, including a number of these positions within arts departments, the Resident Artist structure has provided a means of regularizing these positions and meeting departmental needs without allocating as many new FTEs.

Professor Basu reiterated that, if these positions are ongoing rather than rotating, she sees value in having greater scrutiny at moments of contract renewal, through the use of reviewers from outside the department or outside the College, for example. Professor Umphrey urged caution, commenting that, if the review for these positions approximates that done at the time of tenure, then these positions should become tenure lines. Professor Basu commented that introducing a more thorough review process, perhaps conducted by ad hoc committees that are outside the department and represent a stage of review without the Dean, would be a way of making moments of review more thorough and meaningful and would serve as a means to assess whether contracts should be continued or should not be renewed. The Committee then turned to a personnel matter.

The meeting adjourned at 5:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Gregory S. Call
Dean of the Faculty