

**Amended October 26, 2010**

The seventh meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2010-2011 was called to order by President Marx in his office at 9:00 A.M. on Thursday, October 14, 2010. Present were Professors Basu, Ciepiela, Loinaz, Rockwell, Umphrey, and Saxton, Dean Call, President Marx, and Assistant Dean Tobin, Recorder.

The members reviewed the final drafts of the minutes of October 4, October 8, and October 9 and voted unanimously to approve them. In the course of the Committee's recent review of new course proposals via email, some members had wondered about courses with single-digit enrollment caps that are being offered under the rubric of colloquia. The Dean explained that the College had received a \$200,000 grant from the Mellon Foundation for a three-year project designed to focus on student-faculty research collaboration in the social sciences and humanities. At present students often propose research projects that are unrelated to faculty members' own research areas, he said. This project will explore whether, by bringing student and faculty research projects into closer alignment, collaboration can be enhanced and become more meaningful for all involved.

Continuing, the Dean explained that, over the course of three years, beginning this spring, twelve (four each year) experimental tutorials will be developed and offered to Amherst students. There will be two types of tutorials, the Dean said, though both will be linked to the research interests of the Amherst faculty who are teaching them, and the courses will generally have six students per tutorial. The first type, for sophomores, will present research on a series of related questions in the faculty member's area of expertise. The other type, for juniors, is intended to facilitate students' identification and pursuit of a research topic. The Dean said that, in the sophomore tutorials, by investigating how different scholars approach a topic, students will learn to frame a research question, develop research strategies, and identify and use sources. The tutorials for juniors aim to facilitate students' engagement with a research topic that intersects closely with the scholarly interests of the faculty member who is teaching the tutorial. Dean Call noted that, in most cases, faculty are teaching the tutorials as overloads and are being paid a modest honorarium (the equivalent of a Five College "borrow") through the Mellon grant. In some instances, faculty members are teaching the tutorials as part of their regular course load. In these instances, the honorarium will be used to support a visitor to teach an additional course within the faculty member's department.

Professor Umphrey asked if the College plans to implement a tutorial program on a larger scale if this experiment is successful, or if more generally it has an interest in the model of tutorial-style teaching. Dean Call said that it is too early to make any determination, and explained that the tutorial experiment arose as a result of interest expressed by a small group of faculty; most of these colleagues will be teaching tutorials during the grant period. The success of the Amherst Academic Intern Program and the increasing number of student research proposals in the humanities and social sciences, he suggested, indicates that there is a desire to foster additional opportunities for students and faculty to collaborate on research within these disciplines. Professor Loinaz asked how the success of the tutorials will be measured. The Dean said that one measure will be whether students continue with their research projects over the summer and make them the focus of their honors theses. Professor Ciepiela suggested that courses within the Mellon program should be listed together in the course catalog since their parameters are so distinctive.

Turning to the other course proposals, Professor Basu noted that, as she reviewed them, she became concerned that the criteria for determining which students will be admitted to over-

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enrolled classes are not clear. Professor Saxton agreed, commenting that there is wide variation when it comes to clarity, and that it is best if the criteria that will be used for selection are as specific as possible. Professor Rockwell concurred, commenting that he feels that it is not in the best interest of the institution to allow faculty to choose their students. Professor Umphrey noted that, in her experience, every year the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) had discussed this issue and considered ways to give students greater clarity about how these decisions are made.

Dean Call next asked if Jim Brassord, Director of Facilities and Associate Treasurer for Campus Services, could attend the October 19 Faculty Meeting as an invited guest, as the new science center project would be under discussion. The members agreed that Mr. Brassord should be invited. The members turned to personnel matters for the remainder of the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Gregory S. Call  
Dean of the Faculty