

Amended March 28, 2011

The twenty-eighth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2010-2011 was called to order by President Marx in his office at 2:15 P.M. on Monday, February 28, 2011. Present were Professors Basu, Ciepiela, Loinaz, Rockwell, Umphrey, and Saxton, Dean Call, President Marx, and Assistant Dean Tobin, Recorder.

The meeting began with President Marx informing the members that he had been contacted by the family of a decorated World War II veteran who had interrupted his education (which began in 1940) at Amherst at the end of his junior year to serve during the war. Upon his return from the war two years later, the individual was offered admission to Harvard Business School, which waived the college degree requirement for veterans, and he had accepted. The family reported that, while grateful to have had the opportunity to go to the business school, the man, who is now ninety, has always regretted that he did not receive a B.A. from Amherst. The family has asked if the College would consider awarding this member of the class of 1944 a degree at Commencement this year. President Marx noted that there are three other individuals who are still alive who left the College during World War II to serve in the armed forces and did not return to Amherst to complete their degrees. He informed the members that he planned to get a sense of the Faculty's views about this matter by requesting a vote on the question at the March 1 Faculty Meeting. He asked the members for their opinion about how best to move forward. President Marx explained that the College could either choose not to grant degrees to these individuals, to grant regular bachelor's degrees, or to grant honorary bachelor's degrees. He explained that there was some precedent, supported by a vote of the Faculty in 1945 (supported by the Board of Trustees that same year), for awarding degrees, under certain conditions, to former Amherst students whose course of study at the College had been interrupted by entry into the armed services. The College has also, under certain conditions, granted degrees to a small number of students who left the College before graduating, by recommendation of the Faculty, in order to enter graduate school, after having exhausted the College's offerings in their disciplines. The Committee discussed the pros and cons of the approaches outlined by the President. The members also considered the Dean's view that those who had left the College to serve in World War II and who had not returned to Amherst should be given honorary bachelor's degrees, rather than regular degrees, and recommended that honorary degrees be bestowed. The President thanked the members for their advice.

Under "Announcements from the Dean, Dean Call informed the members that the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) would soon be forwarding to the Committee of Six the recommendations that had emerged from the committee's review of the report of the Class Scheduling Task Force. Professor Loinaz asked if the Committee would also receive the report itself, and the Dean said that the members would indeed be provided with the report.

Under "Questions from Committee Members," Professor Umphrey asked if plans were in place for the Committee to meet with the CEP. The Dean said that he is working on scheduling the meeting. He noted that he and members of the CEP plan to discuss the target-of-opportunity hiring process with department chairs at a chairs meeting that will be held on March 25. In addition, the Dean will give a presentation on the demographics of the Faculty to the chairs and said that it is his hope to give a similar presentation to the Faculty at a Faculty Meeting this spring.

Returning briefly to the topic of target-of-opportunity hiring, President Marx noted that he has already been contacted by a number of departments about particular candidates. The President asked whether sufficient systems are in place to move forward with hiring. He noted that the CEP has developed processes for departments—both within and outside an authorized search—for bringing outstanding candidates whom they have identified to the attention of the

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Dean and the President, who could work with the CEP to move forward with the hire via an accelerated process, if all agreed that doing so would be advantageous to the College. Continuing, the Dean said that the CEP has developed procedures for making more than one hire from an individual search (hiring a second colleague, for example, who does not meet the precise needs of the authorized search, but would be able to contribute in important ways to the department and the College, in addition to an individual who does meet the specific needs that had been outlined in the FTE request). The Faculty and Board of Trustees had approved the mechanism of target-of-opportunity hiring earlier, by approving the recommendation of the Committee on Academic Priorities (CAP) that a rotating bank of two FTEs be allocated for such hiring. Depending on how quickly this rotating bank of two FTEs is repaid by retirements, additional FTEs could be allocated for target-of-opportunity hiring, if needed.

Professor Basu said that, while she is in favor of moving forward with such hiring, departments will need to think about how to identify the fields in which they search for target-of-opportunity hires, since these positions would not be defined by FTE requests. President Marx responded that the departments would have to come to a consensus about any proposals they would bring forward and would have to make a convincing argument, as they do for any FTE request. Dean Call said that the strongest proposals for target-of-opportunity hires would relate in some ways to previously discussed departmental goals. Professor Rockwell said that he supports the target-of-opportunity hiring process as a mechanism for bringing outstanding scholars to the College, but wondered if other FTE requests would be in any jeopardy if target-of-opportunity hiring brought the College close to the FTE goal. The Dean said that, with impending retirements, and because the FTE cap would be raised by three FTEs per year over five years (beginning in 2012, at the conclusion of the period of planned financial constraints that were recommended by Advisory Budget Committee), it would be unlikely that the cap would be reached in the near term. The Dean said that the Board has indicated that, as long as it is possible to pay for a cohort of FTEs, there will be flexibility in terms of the number that can be hired, and that it may even be possible to exceed the cap, if there are compelling reasons to do so. The Committee agreed that it will be important to make departments aware that additional resources are being directed toward target-of-opportunity hiring, and the President and the Dean said that this information is being conveyed through these minutes and would be shared during the March 1 Faculty Meeting and at the March 25 meeting of department chairs. The Committee then reviewed proposals for new courses and voted six to zero in favor of forwarding them to the Faculty. The members turned to personnel matters.

The voting faculty members of the Committee and the Dean then reviewed proposals for Senior Sabbatical Fellowships. The Dean noted that the review process should yield feedback when necessary. He said that his office would work with colleagues to respond to any recommendations that might be offered and to make all proposals viable for funding.

The members began a conversation about whether to propose to the Faculty some revisions to some tenure procedures.

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Gregory S. Call  
Dean of the Faculty