

Amended September 30, 2011

The third meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2011-2012 was called to order by President Martin in her office at 3:30 P.M. on Monday, September 19, 2011. Present were Professors Basu, Ferguson, Hewitt, Loinaz, Ratner, and Umphrey, Dean Call, President Martin, and Assistant Dean Tobin, Recorder.

The meeting began with “Announcements from the President.” President Martin informed the members that she feels it would be constructive for the College to embark on a long-range planning effort in the near term. Professor Loinaz asked if such planning would focus on a particular area of the College or would be overarching in nature. The President responded that she envisions an integrated, “big picture” approach for the purpose of helping to clarify opportunities, pressures, and challenges; identifying priorities, goals, and aspirations for the next two decades; and guiding decision-making. President Martin said that she is engaging the Senior Staff in thinking about long-range planning and hopes to work with the Committee of Six on this process. It was noted that planning efforts of late—the Committee on Academic Priorities (CAP) process, which primarily had an academic focus, and facilities plans have been more narrowly focused than the long-range planning that the President had described. The Dean commented that Amherst has not undertaken a great deal of master-planning on a broad scale, focusing instead on planning on individualized fronts. He expressed enthusiasm about planning that would be integrated and overarching, as well as aspirational, and for the goal of making use of such planning to inform decisions. Professor Loinaz asked how a long-term planning effort of the kind under discussion would dovetail with the capital campaign. The President responded that no decisions have been made, while expressing admiration for the success of the campaign thus far.

Under “Announcements from the Dean,” Dean Call informed the members that productive conversations had taken place at the conference (President’s Forum on Transformative Leadership for Diversity and Innovation) at Columbia University that he and Paul Murphy, Legal and Administrative Counsel, had attended on September 15 and 16. Under discussion at the gathering, which was attended by presidents, deans, and diversity officers, were collaborations that might be initiated among liberal arts colleges and research universities. The goal of forming such groups would be to enable the colleges to engage with graduate students (future faculty) in productive ways, possibly including the creation of pre- and post-doctoral fellowships, with the goal of aiding recruitment efforts. The Dean said that, by forming collaborations, liberal arts colleges, which do not hire faculty in large numbers each year on an individual basis, but which do significant hiring in a broad array of fields, collectively, would achieve a scale that would make collaborations with research universities advantageous to these institutions and their graduate students. Continuing, the Dean noted that the position of diversity officer, which is new to many academic institutions, was also discussed at the conference. Speakers stressed that to be most effective, this position should be structured so that the portfolio of responsibilities encompasses diversity as well as some related areas and should be provided with sufficient resources to support the areas within its purview. Offering the example of Oberlin and the University of Michigan, Professor Umphrey said that she understands that liberal arts colleges have formed singular relationships with research universities in their geographic region. Dean Call said that he sees advantages to forming collaborations with outstanding research universities and other liberal arts colleges that are in close proximity to Amherst.

Following up on requests made by the Committee at its last meeting, the Dean noted that he had reviewed the [charge to the Ad Hoc Committee on Advising](#), commenting that the ad hoc committee has been asked to report back to the Committee of Six by March 31, 2012. In regard to coordinating and communicating with the Committee on Priorities and Resources (CPR) and the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP), the Dean noted that the CPR had not yet had its

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first meeting this year. The CEP, which has met, has a lengthy agenda and has expressed the desire to meet with the Committee of Six early this fall. Among the issues on the CEP's agenda are possible revisions to the online registration process, advising, and teaching evaluations (for tenure-track and tenured faculty). The Dean noted that diversity in faculty hiring is high on the CEP's list of topics for discussion. In terms of teaching evaluations, the Dean said that the CEP would like to focus on making the purpose of senior teaching evaluations clearer. He noted that such evaluations are meant to be a means of facilitating conversations about teaching and are for the use of the individual faculty member. The members agreed that the two committees should meet as soon as is practical, and the Dean agreed to make the necessary arrangements.

Under "Questions from Committee Members," Professor Umphrey asked whether it would be helpful for the Committee of Six to meet with the CPR. The Dean noted that, unlike the agendas of the CEP and the Committee of Six, the agendas of the CPR and the Committee of Six most often do not overlap a great deal. Dean Call said that it might be most helpful to wait for the CPR to clarify its agenda and to see if the CPR requests to meet with the Committee. Professor Basu asked if the CPR intends to return to the issue of the College's family leave policy. The Dean said that he does not know whether there are plans for the CPR to do so at this time. Professor Umphrey asked if the CPR will be considering the issue of childcare. The Dean responded that childcare is an important priority for the College, particularly as more and more new faculty with young families are being hired. He said that he expects that the CPR will return to this issue and noted again that Marian Matheson has consulted with the CPR and solicited feedback from faculty and staff about their childcare needs and experiences. She is in the process of compiling and summarizing the results of several surveys and interviews and will soon share the information that she has gathered with the CPR, President Martin, and himself. Professor Loinaz asked if there have been any further developments in regard to the future of the Little Red Schoolhouse. Dean Call responded that there is nothing new to report on this front, and that construction on the new science center will make it unsafe to use the school building. The facility is scheduled to close on June 30, 2012.

The Committee reviewed a proposal for a Senior Sabbatical Fellowship. The need to submit the proposal outside the regular application cycle was the result of a logistical error made by his office, the Dean explained. Dean Call reviewed the history of the Senior Sabbatical Fellowship Program and the application process. He noted that the fellowships are awarded to tenured members of the Faculty, upon approval by the Dean of the Faculty, in consultation with the Committee of Six, of a proposal for a program of research, study, writing, or other creative work to advance his or her professional growth and effectiveness as a scholar and teacher. The fellowship consists of the sum necessary to raise sabbatical salary support from 80 percent to 100 percent for one semester of leave after six semesters of service or two semesters of leave after twelve semesters of service. He said that the review process should yield feedback when necessary, and said that his office works with colleagues to respond to any recommendations that might be offered and to make all proposals viable for funding. The Committee discussed the pros and cons of requiring faculty to submit proposals for the fellowship, since all proposals are funded. Questions centered around whether the proposal process serves a useful purpose for faculty who are developing leave plans and/or who might wish to apply for outside grants; the Faculty's time might be better spent in other ways; the application process should be revised; and the current proposal process signals the importance of scholarly productivity at the College. In the context of last point, it was noted that the funding may support activities other than research and writing. The Dean said that, as part of the CAP process, which also resulted in an agreement that all sabbatic leaves should be supported at the 100 percent salary level, the Faculty

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and the Board had voted to approve the Senior Sabbatical Fellowship application process that is currently in use.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Basu suggested that questions surrounding expectations for the Amherst's Faculty's scholarly productivity be explored as part of the planning process envisioned by the President. Professor Ferguson agreed, commenting that it would be helpful, in addition, to discuss the intellectual isolation of faculty in the context of a broader discussion of intellectual life and culture at Amherst. Professor Umphrey expressed the view there should be a reflective faculty discussion about the life arc of faculty members and how best to help faculty flourish during different periods of their careers. The members also discussed how expectations for Amherst's scholar-teachers, in regard to scholarship and creative work, teaching, and service to the College, have evolved over time. The Dean noted that, as part of recruitment efforts, he stresses to prospective faculty that Amherst has a high standard in all of these areas and is committed to providing the support colleagues need to achieve their goals for their research and teaching. He also explained that College service is valued and expected. Professor Umphrey noted that support for research at Amherst is generous, but that the College asks more from the Faculty in all categories now than in the past. She suggested that it would be helpful to engage in a conversation on this topic in terms of scale, register, and balance. Dean Call commented that the concept of Amherst as a research college is appealing to many prospective hires. While Amherst may aspire to be a research college, he feels it is important to define what the term means and how the College makes such a model possible. Professor Basu suggested that this topic is linked to a range of other issues that the planning process should discuss, such as the different ways in which the College evaluates tenure-track and tenured faculty.

Professor Loinaz asked whether sufficient institutional structures are in place to support the work of the Faculty and asked, in this context, about the position of Director of Sponsored Research. The Dean said that this position was occupied for only a year (in 2007-2008) after it was created; the decision was made to cut it as part of the process of setting priorities during the Advisory Budget Committee (ABC). At present, the Associate Deans and the Office of Foundation and Corporate Relations assist faculty, upon request, with grant proposals and in identifying funding sources. In addition, the Dean's office has hosted workshops, bringing representatives from funding agencies to campus, on applying for grants. Professor Ratner commented that, while others can certainly aid a faculty member who is applying for a grant, he cannot imagine how anyone other than the faculty member could take on the most challenging parts of the process.

The members next discussed agenda items for the Committee, including those that fall within the regular work of the Committee as well as possibilities for other topics. The items include tenure, reappointment, and promotion review; review of proposals for internal and external fellowships, both pre- and post-tenure; review of proposals for new courses; committee nominations; advising and copyright and coursepack policies; teaching evaluations; the Amherst calendar; faculty governance; building a diverse Faculty; communication among major faculty committees; course release for College service; tenure procedures, including procedures for tenure-track faculty located in departments and programs; mentoring tenure-track faculty; faculty housing; the role of department chairs. After some discussion, the Committee identified the issues of building a diverse Faculty; prioritizing faculty time and work and the related topic of faculty productivity; mentoring; and communication with other major faculty committees as the first priorities for the agenda for the Fall semester. Professor Umphrey said that whenever possible, it would be helpful to have data to inform discussions. The Committee also discussed

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the tendency for faculty committees to, at times, become bogged down in process and mechanisms—to the detriment of moving forward on important issues.

Professor Hewitt asked how soon the Committee could start a conversation about diversity within the Faculty and ways to become more proactive on this front. The members agreed to discuss this topic as soon as possible. The President, the Dean, and the Committee expressed support for putting procedures and strategies in place that would encourage and assist departments in ensuring the broadest possible applicant pools when conducting searches. To further faculty conversation on this topic, it was agreed that there should be a meeting of department chairs early in the Fall semester. Open meetings and/or Faculty Meetings would be other vehicles for encouraging broader faculty discussion, the members agreed. Considering how best to structure a position at the College that focuses on diversity and inclusion, and moving forward with a hire, are also top priorities, the President, the Dean, and the members agreed. The Committee asked the Dean to gather comparative data from peer institutions on approaches and procedures that would be viable and effective for recruiting and retaining diverse faculty and on possible administrative structures that could aid diversity efforts at the College. He agreed to do so, working with colleagues in his office and Marian Matheson, Director of Institutional Research and Planning.

In the time remaining, the Committee turned to the [evaluation of the theme-based format of the Copeland Colloquium](#) (appended via link), which was conducted by Professors Aries, A. George, and Harms as members of last year's Faculty Research Award Committee (FRAP), at the request of the Committee of Six. After some discussion, the members expressed support for the theme-base approach and agreed that it should be continued. If more administrative support for the program is needed, as the evaluation suggested, the Committee agreed with the Dean that faculty theme groups should be informed that they may allocate funds from the colloquium's budget for the year to support such assistance.

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Gregory S. Call
Dean of the Faculty

Charge to The Ad Hoc Committee on Advising

The Committee of Six charges the Ad Hoc Committee on Advising with conducting a broad review of the advising system at the College, considering the meaning, purpose, and efficacy of advising at Amherst. We ask that college and major advising be assessed on their own merits, as well as in the context of the Amherst educational experience as a whole, and that the Ad Hoc Committee report back to the Committee of Six by March 31, 2012.

The review should include an examination of the advising work of faculty, deans (especially the Dean of New Students) and other administrators, coaches, and staff. In the process of evaluating existing systems for advising and considering new ones, we suggest that you consider the distinction that has traditionally been made between academic and non-academic advising, in light of the impact that those with less formalized advising roles have on our students' academic and co-curricular lives.

As part of its work, we ask the committee to review the efforts that have been under way over the past several years to improve academic advising at the College, including the development of new programs to adapt advising practices to better meet the needs of our diverse student body—which encompasses in greater numbers than in years past international students, community college transfers, first-generation students, and students who have come through the Summer Science and Summer Humanities and Social Science Programs.

We provide the following questions for you to explore:

1. What are the purposes of academic advising? Is academic advising primarily an adjunct to the student course selection and registration process? Should advising focus more specifically on the articulation and assessment of student learning goals?
2. What priority should faculty give to their advising responsibilities in relation to their work as teachers and scholars?

3. Should all faculty continue to be required to serve as college and major advisors?
4. Is the allocation of advising responsibilities among faculty equitable and fair?
5. What are the virtues and problems with the Orientation advising system?
6. Should the effectiveness of advising be evaluated and considered as part of re-appointment, tenure, and promotion decisions?
7. What roles do/should non-faculty (e.g., coaches, deans, administrators, peer advisors) play as advisors about academic matters?
8. What are the new questions and challenges for advising posed by online registration?

March 23, 2011

May 25, 2011

Dean Greg Call
Dean of the Faculty
Converse Hall

Dear Greg,

The Faculty Research Award Program (FRAP) Committee was asked to evaluate the present theme-based format of the Copeland Colloquium. We have now completed our evaluation and written up a report. We drew our evidence for the evaluation from meetings with the current 2010-2011 Copeland Fellows, and with faculty members who sponsored Copeland Fellows over the past four years. The report includes a summary of our findings and a set of recommendations.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Aries
Alexander George
Tekla Harms

Copeland Colloquium: Evaluation and Recommendations

The Faculty Research Award Program (FRAP) Committee was asked to evaluate the present format of the Copeland Colloquium. The Colloquium has taken a variety of forms since its inception in 1971. Currently a group of faculty members develop an interdisciplinary theme and invite four or five Copeland Fellows to be in residence on campus for the year to serve as both a stimulus and resource for students and faculty. The themes for the past four years have been International Development: Successes, Failures, and Future Directions (2010-11), It's Not Easy Being Green: the Science, Politics, and Ethics of Environmentalism (2009-2010), Violent States (2008-2009), and Art and Identity in the Global Community (2007-2008).

Data Collection

We based our evaluation of the program on information from two sources. We met with the 2010-2011 Copeland Fellows, Daniel Altschuler, Christiane Badgley, Shahrukh Khan, and Roger King, to hear about their experiences in the program and their thoughts about changes that might be helpful to improve the program. In addition we met with faculty who had sponsored Copeland Fellows: two from each of the four former Copeland Colloquia. [We also designed a student questionnaire to assess the extent to which students were aware of and participated in the Copeland Colloquium program, but on the advice of the Office of Institutional Research we did not use this instrument.]

Summary of Findings

Program Strengths

Faculty sponsors of the Copeland Colloquia were unanimous in their enthusiastic support for the theme-based format of the Copeland Colloquium. They described the colloquium as “a great addition to intellectual life at the college,” as providing “the best of interdisciplinary conversation,” and saw it as an important contribution to faculty development at the college. The faculty sponsors felt one of the unexpected strengths of the colloquia is that it brings together Amherst College faculty from different disciplines who would not ordinarily have interacted with one another. Faculty found these interactions stimulating and broadening, and felt their intellectual lives were enriched by their exposure to different interdisciplinary perspectives. The faculty found their contact with Fellows to be enriching as well, and noted that Fellows often stay in touch with faculty after the year is over. Faculty liked the current practice of advertising for Fellows, and reported that they found people in their searches they would not have considered otherwise.

The faculty sponsors we spoke to who had experience with the Copeland Colloquium before the program was theme-based, thought the current format was by far the better model for faculty and for the college. Not only does a theme-based program bring colleagues together on campus, but having a theme also enables the program to reach out to the larger community.

Faculty sponsors felt the theme basis for the program attracted a highly qualified and varied applicant pool of Fellows, resulting in appointments of unexpected diversity and unanticipated benefits.

Although faculty sponsors have more contact with Copeland Fellows than students do, students get exposure to the Copeland Fellows in several ways. One is through classroom lectures and visits. This year the four Fellows did one or two visiting lectures each in courses on campus. Students also get exposure through attending public lectures or conferences that are part of the program. These events have been well attended.

The 2010-2011 Copeland fellows were highly enthusiastic about their experiences as well. They found their time on campus to be enriching and rewarding for their work and for them personally, and saw the theme-based nature of the program to be key to its success for them. The fellows gelled as a group, felt they gained a lot from one other, and feel likely to stay in touch with one another in the future. They turned to each other for feedback on their ideas and worked together to organize over 15 events that were advertised on campus and to the larger Five College community and were attended typically by 25-50 people. This was a particularly active group of fellows, and they partnered with the Career Center and the Center for Community Engagement and the larger Five College community in running events.

Program Weaknesses

Both faculty and Fellows offered thoughtful suggestions on how the structure and success of the program could be improved. Sponsors agreed that the selection of the theme for the Copeland Colloquium occurs too late in the academic year, after which there is too little time left for selecting fellows and planning Colloquia goals. This is a significant impediment to maximizing integration of the Copeland program into the regular life of the College. If the theme were chosen earlier there would be time for faculty to plan courses around the theme, for example, or to include units that make use of Copeland fellows in existing courses.

Faculty sponsors are responsible for finding housing and office space for Fellows, tasks that faculty may or may not fully anticipate as they propose Colloquia themes and, once a Colloquium is approved and Fellows selected, find themselves ill equipped to do. We are concerned that without more administrative support faculty might be discouraged from taking on the responsibility for planning colloquia. Furthermore, the scramble to establish housing and workspace is an unwanted distraction for Fellows as they start their year at the College. Finding housing in this area is difficult and, for Fellows who are bringing children, the situation is quite stressful because the Amherst public schools make it impossible to register their children without a lease. Most departments do not have offices to offer Fellows. Some Fellows are currently given study spaces in Frost Library, but don't have appropriate office space that allows them to meet with interested students or interact regularly with each other. The issues of housing and office space are serious enough to the success of the program that the present haphazard system should

be addressed. Some of the administrative burden needs to be taken from faculty sponsors who find they can't be very effective in these areas.

Rewarding as faculty sponsors and Copeland Fellows found the program to be, more could be done to raise the profile of the Colloquium with other constituencies at Amherst and in the Five Colleges. While there is now a web page for the colloquium, few people see it unless they seek it out. The Colloquium might be given a place on the college web page. The Fellows felt it would have been helpful had they been invited to some events early in the academic year to introduce them to faculty. Finally, some thought might be given as to how the annual theme of the Copeland Colloquium might be an organizing principle for more activities across the College, drawing in Museums, performances, speakers and/or the Library, for example.

Finally, improvements in advance planning, facilities, integration, and visibility can provide for greater interaction between Copeland Fellows and our students, ideally including meaningful one-on-one exchanges over student projects, research, and goals.

Recommendations

- **The present format of theme-based Copeland Colloquia should be retained.**
- The theme for colloquia should be chosen a year in advance.
- Faculty sponsors should be encouraged to undertake advance planning to promote:
greater curricular integration of the Copeland theme

broader dissemination of the Copeland theme across the College and in the
Five Colleges

increased interaction between students and Copeland Fellows where students
might most benefit.

- Fellows should be provided offices, preferably in a space together, perhaps in one of the college houses.
- The Copeland Colloquium should be given more administrative support, especially around the issue of finding housing and advance planning responsibilities.