

Amended October 13, 2011

The fifth 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, October 3, 2011. Present were Professors Basu, Ferguson, Hewitt, Loinaz, Ratner, and Umphrey, Dean Call, President Martin, and Assistant Dean Tobin, Recorder.

The members of the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP), Professors Lyle McGeoch, Bishop, Clark, Corrales, Lopez and student members Matthew DeButts '14, Pranay Kirpalani '12, and Jacob Ong '14; the CEP's recorder, Nancy Ratner, Associate Dean of Admission and Researcher for Academic Projects; and Paul Murphy, Legal and Administrative Counsel and Special Assistant to the President for Diversity and Inclusion, joined the Committee of Six for the first hour of the meeting for a discussion on the topic of building a more diverse Faculty.

Prefacing the discussion with some remarks, the Dean expressed his appreciation to the Committee of Six, the CEP, and Mr. Murphy for coming together to continue their ongoing conversations about diversity. Dean Call commented on the timeliness of "Half a Century of Women Teaching at Amherst: Gender Matters," a symposium that brought together former and current women faculty from 1962 to 1984 to examine that period in the history of the college and to consider the lessons Amherst can learn from their experiences. Attending this thought-provoking event over the weekend had prompted the Dean both to reflect, and to continue to look forward to discussions about issues of diversity and inclusion at the College. The Dean said that today's conversation might encompass aspirations, challenges, processes, best practices at peer institutions, and possible legal constraints and questions.

The conversation began with a review of approaches that have been used at the College to attract the most diverse pools of candidates for faculty positions, and those target-of-opportunity procedures that could be used, when outstanding candidates are identified within and outside regular search processes. The Dean asked the committees to consider whether these are viable tools that should be pursued with equal vigor, and he noted the importance of developing a collective understanding of the criteria that should be used for faculty hiring. Dean Call then described the strategies have been or could be employed. At times, it has been possible to make 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, especially if the candidate could add expertise in areas of the curriculum that the department wishes to pursue in the near term). Making a second hire from an individual search requires consulting with the CEP and asking for its recommendation on a second FTE allocation to the department. Exceptional colleagues have also been hired at the senior level, either through previously authorized searches or through an expedited process, after being identified during, or outside, the regular search cycle. Once again the CEP would be involved in the process. Finally, talented graduate students may be brought to College as pre- or post-doctoral fellows. If a department is impressed with a fellow's performance during his or her initial appointment, and feels that the colleague would bring needed strengths to the department and the College, the department may propose that the fellow be hired into a tenure-track position—either through the regular FTE allocation process or through an expedited process that does not require a national search. Once again, consultation with the CEP would be required. If departments wish to make hires outside the regular search process, the first step is to make a request to the Dean, who would discuss it with the CEP and the President.

Mr. Murphy noted that the primary consideration when making hires should always be the quality of the candidate as a teacher-scholar. Mr. Murphy stressed that making efforts to develop the broadest possible applicant pool and making hires through the regular hiring process is the preferred approach. The other strategies described by the Dean can be used effectively to supplement the regular hiring process. Agreeing that the primary criterion for any faculty hire

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should be excellence, President Martin suggested that the conversation focus on the College's aspirations in regard to building a more diverse Faculty. Consultation with legal counsel about how any specific goals and procedures fit within the legal framework should be a separate consideration, she said. The President noted that, with the wave of faculty retirements that is occurring throughout the country, there is tremendous competition to hire outstanding scholar-teachers, particularly those who may be from diverse backgrounds. The President said that she supports making use of mechanisms that will allow the College to hire compelling candidates, as opportunities arise.

Professor Umphrey asked about the impact of hires made outside the regular FTE process on the FTE count. Dean Call responded that it is unlikely that the FTE cap will be reached any time soon. He explained that the FTE count is going up very slowly because new hires are nearly matched by retirements and emphasized the unusual flexibility that the College will have to make hires over the next five years. A number of factors are contributing to this fortunate circumstance. The budgeted number of tenure-line Faculty will be increased by three positions a year for the next five years; retirements are occurring in robust numbers; and the Board has provided additional hiring flexibility by allowing hiring during a given year to go beyond the budgeted number of hires, when the Dean can find the financial resources and there are compelling reasons for doing so. The Dean commented that the College should take advantage of this moment of opportunity, while allocating resources carefully and responsibly.

Questions were raised about whether the priorities identified by the Committee on Academic Priorities (CAP) would guide the allocation of FTEs, as envisioned in the CAP report and affirmed by the Faculty and the Board. Conversation focused on whether the CAP allocation priorities have been informing FTE proposals, whether the CAP allocation system has been helpful and/or remains relevant, whether priorities should be shifted, and/or whether new priorities, which may emerge through the envisioned long-range planning process, should replace the CAP priorities.

The committees discussed the progress that has been made, toward the CAP categories/goals through the allocation of FTEs. The chart below represents the hires, or fractions of hires, made toward the eighteen FTEs that were awarded through the plan.

	Number of CAP allotments	Number of Positions filled	Number of positions available
Quantitative (IS)	2.5	1.5	1
Global	2.5	2	0.5
Existing needs	4	1.25	2.75
Writing (IS)	2	0.5	1.5
Interdisciplinary	5	2.75	2.25
Targeted opportunity	2	0	2
Total	18	8	10

Professor Ratner commented that the consideration of departmental needs may make it difficult for the CEP and College to make ready use of the numerous FTE slots still available according to the CAP guidelines. Rather, a given department's needs would come to the fore in any particular FTE actually allotted. Professor McGeoch agreed, commenting that, in his experience serving on the CEP, the CAP categories have not been all that useful when considering FTE allocations. The Dean noted that the two FTEs allocated to target-of-opportunity hires by the CAP are still available and are part of a rotating bank. Departments who

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make such hires do encumber a future FTE, he said. Professor McGeoch noted that accounting for FTEs in terms of CAP priorities had become less useful in recent years. While these priorities were intended to guide the allocation of eighteen new positions, they did not apply directly to the reallocation of the FTEs that became available due to retirements. Furthermore, certain priorities have been included within FTE requests without regard to CAP, for example, an emphasis on interdisciplinarity. The members of the CEP agreed that, while departments would pursue most of the CAP priorities without having incentives, the commitment to focus on writing and quantitative skills, for most departments, would not be part of an FTE request, without the incentive provided by the CAP. Professor McGeoch noted that, last year, the CEP took seriously the expectation that replacements are not automatic. For this reason, none of the FTEs recommended by the CEP to the administration was labeled as a replacement by the committee; when faculty retire or enter phased retirement, the position that they occupied returns to the FTE pool, Professor McGeoch commented. Those proposals that would address particular CAP priorities were identified as doing so, he said.

Professor Hewitt commented on the importance of educating departments about the ways in which they can be more proactive about considering diversity as a factor in the hiring process—by broadening applicant pools, by familiarizing themselves with practices at peer institutions through articles such as those provided to the Committee by the Dean’s office, and by researching graduate programs that generate individuals with Ph.D.s who are from diverse backgrounds. The Dean noted that constructing ads to be broad, in terms of field, is one way of attracting a rich array of candidates. President Martin stressed that using a variety of approaches leads to intersections that produce positive results. Rather than waiting for diverse candidates to approach searching departments, when departments work to build diverse applicant pools, different kinds of candidates in different kinds of fields emerge, departments’ interest is piqued in new ways, and departments are inspired to engage in creative approaches to hiring. Professor Lopez commented that it will be important for departmental plans for diversification to dovetail with their long-range curricular planning to ensure that the curriculum is coherent. Professor Ferguson noted that it would be helpful for departments to have assistance with the time-consuming work of building diverse applicant pools and other important efforts to enhance diversity at the College.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Basu asked about the possibility of identifying a thematic focus and making a number of appointments in different disciplines that relate to the theme, leaving open the combination of departments that would house the new FTEs. They would be, in essence, “floating FTEs.” Departments could, perhaps, apply for the FTEs, which could be appointments in single departments or joint appointments. President Martin said that she has had experience with “cluster hiring,” which involves having different departments apply for a set of positions (three or four) surrounding a priority. This approach can be a mechanism for encouraging conversation among departments, President Martin said, and the benefits include creating cohorts of faculty with a powerful level of interdisciplinary cohesion. Professor Umphrey said that she is intrigued by approaches such as this one that may provide a discursive space for engaging with a set of themes. Professor Ferguson suggested that, if cluster hiring were done around a broad, interdisciplinary theme—such as the global study of race and ethnicity—a diverse applicant pool of excellent candidates would emerge.

Professor Lopez asked what the role of the CEP would be if such an approach were taken. Would the CEP, for example, have the authority to identify certain areas of needed growth for the College around which hires would be made, or would the CEP’s responsibility be merely to vet proposals that would come before it? Professor McGeoch expressed his hope that the long-range planning process would address curricular needs. President Martin responded

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that, after having conversations with six departments during her first month at the College, she believes that the planning process should explore, in integrated ways, the needs of departments—offering as examples needs surrounding enrollments and infrastructure. The President said it is her hope that the planning process will take shape soon, and then commence.

The committees reviewed the process that is in place for requesting and considering requests for FTEs at the College. It was agreed that it would be helpful if the CEP would engage in a thoughtful consideration, earlier than is typical, of the substance of the letter that it sends to departments about FTE requests. Questions to be addressed would be the significance of CAP priorities when constructing FTE requests; defining the CAP priorities more clearly, if they are used; and considering how plans to address questions of diversity can be incorporated into proposals. The committees discussed the benefits of soliciting and receiving proposals, and making FTE awards, earlier than has been done in the past, in order to give departments more time to conduct their searches. The Dean thanked the CEP and Mr. Murphy for coming to the meeting and commented that the conversation had been most valuable. The CEP left the meeting at 4:40 P.M.

Mr. Murphy remained at the meeting and provided general legal advice related to the tenure process. He left the meeting at 5:05 P.M.

The Dean next reviewed with the members some demographic information about the make-up of the Faculty, focusing on age, gender, and race, to inform the members' continuing discussions about diversity at the College. Professor Ferguson commented that building a more diverse Faculty will require imaginative efforts. He stressed the importance of considering what diversity would mean going forward, beyond the structuring of positions. Having a chief diversity officer would seem critical to such efforts, he said. The President and the Dean said that they are convinced of the need for the position and plan to move forward, but they are taking some time to consider how to structure the position to be most effective. The Committee asked the Dean to provide examples of models that some peer institutions have adopted for this position and the description that had been developed by the Amherst search committee that had conducted the recent (failed) search. The Dean agreed to do so. Professor Basu suggested that, for this year's searches, departments could benefit from having a consultant work with them.

The Committee approved the Faculty Meeting agenda for the October 18 Faculty Meeting. President Martin left the meeting at 5:40 P.M., and the Committee turned to a personnel matter.

The meeting adjourned at 6:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Gregory S. Call
Dean of the Faculty