

Committee on Priorities and Resources

Meeting Minutes – November 15, 2011

In attendance: Administrative Assistant Carol Allman-Morton, Dean of the Faculty Gregory Call, *ex officio*, Diwa Cody '14, Technical Services Associate Mark Fiegenbaum, Adam Gerchick '13, Associate Treasurer/Director of the Budget Shannon Gurek, *ex officio*, Prof. Nasser Hussain, chair, Prof. Jagu Jagannathan, Luke Lavin '13, Prof. Karen Sánchez-Eppler, Treasurer Peter Shea, *ex officio*, and Sarah Barr, recorder. Guests: Ingrid Berwick, Jonathan Devins, Employee Council Chair Suzette Farnham, and Manager's Council Chair Molly Mead.

Not in attendance: Prof. Rob Benedetto and Director of Human Resources Maria-Judith Rodriguez, *ex officio*.

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 am.

1. Introductions – Committee members introduced themselves to the guests from the Employee Council and Managers Council.
2. Employee Council – The Employee Council met with the CPR to discuss the progress of this group as well as its goals for the upcoming year.
 - a. Structure – The Employee Council consists of 13 elected members (10 from various constituent groups across campus and 3 who represent Trustee Appointed employees). The Council is divided into working groups that manage communication across campus, run the election process, and communicate directly with Human Resources. This year the Council received a budget from the college.
 - b. Campus wide open houses – In order to build connections across campus, the Employee Council would like to sponsor a series of open houses. These events would give employees an opportunity to meet new people and to learn about various departments and programs at Amherst College.
 - c. Recognition for service to the campus – The Employee Council has identified employee recognition for service to the college as a major priority for the 2011-2012 academic year. In the coming weeks, members of the Employee Council will meet with the staff of HR to discuss ways to include service in the formal evaluation process. Members of the CPR noted that institutional support is needed for the initiative's success. If the college decides to recognize employee service, activities could be documented in the formal evaluation process and then compiled to look for patterns. The CPR encouraged the Employee Council to make sure that service is seen as a plus so employees do not feel like they are being penalized for a lack of involvement.
 - d. Climate Survey – Rather than conducting a climate survey this year, the college has decided to wait until the president and director of Human Resources have a chance to get acclimated.
 - e. Trustee Appointed Positions – The Employee Council currently consists of Trustee Appointed and non-Trustee Appointed employees. Historically there was a greater

differentiation between these types of positions. There seems to be some discussion at the administrative level about the status and future of this designation.

3. Managers Council

- a. Trustee Appointed Positions – The Managers Council has discussed the Trustee Appointed designation too. They have recommended that the college identify a process to either fully embrace the designation or eliminate it.
- b. Ideas for the Senior Staff Retreat – President Martin invited the Managers Council to submit ideas for a retreat. Highlights from the report include:
 - i. Decision Making – The institution has a difficult time making decisions. Often decisions are sent in a procedural direction, to committee, or up to senior administrators. The Managers Council is interested in exploring other strategies for decision making on campus.
 - ii. Critical Culture – Amherst College seems to have a very critical culture that has led to risk aversion. The Managers Council would like to find ways to be more supportive of each other's work.
 - iii. Diversity of Staff – Amherst College has made faculty diversity a priority. The Managers Council is interested in working to increase the diversity of the staff as well.
 - iv. Budgetary Challenges – We are currently at the end of the ABC recommendations. The Managers Council is eager to play a strong, collaborative role in the budgeting process. The CPR discussed the impact budget cuts and voluntary retirement had on different departments and asked if the Managers Council ever discussed employee morale at the department level. Molly Mead will raise this concern at the next meeting.
- c. Teaching Opportunities – Several staff members have teaching experience and terminal degrees but there are few ways for these individuals to teach courses on campus. To include this group of staff members, departments can invite colleagues to teach and then submit individual courses to the CEP for approval.

4. Minutes – Minutes from October 18, 2011 were approved.

The meeting adjourned at 9:27 am.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, November 29 at 8:30 am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sarah Barr