

Amended December 14, 2011

The eleventh meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2011-2012 was called to order by Dean Call in his office at 4:30 P.M. on Tuesday, November 29, 2011. Present were Professors Basu, Ferguson, Hewitt, Loinaz, Ratner, and Umphrey, Dean Call, President Martin, and Assistant Dean Tobin, Recorder. President Martin joined the meeting at 5:00 P.M.

The members discussed the Library Committee's request ([appended via link](#)) to form a task force to explore whether the College should develop a resolution promoting free and open-access to the Amherst Faculty's journal publications. The members agreed that there would be a number of benefits for adopting an open-access policy. As the Library Committee noted, studies have shown that publications that are made available through open-access models are cited and read with greater frequency than those that are not made available in this format. Professors Basu and Ratner, who said that they favor having an open-access policy, noted that it would enhance opportunities for scholars from other countries to gain access to the scholarly work of Amherst Faculty. At present, some scholars, particularly from other countries, face challenges when attempting to do so, they pointed out. Professor Ratner commented that there may be some costs to adopting the policy, but that, in his view, the benefits of doing so outweigh them. For example, the College would need to develop and maintain a website to enable articles to be shared. Professor Ratner said that he has been told that resources within the library would make doing so possible and would not pose an excessive burden on staff. Some publishers, he noted, will not permit authors to retain copyrights. If a journal refuses to publish a faculty member's work if it were to be made available via the College's open-access policy, the faculty member should be permitted to opt out of the policy, he said. Some journals, Professor Ratner noted, will not allow the final version of an article to be shared through open access, but may permit an "author's version," which can be very close in substance to the published iteration, to be shared. Continuing, Professor Ratner commented that academic societies, which often publish journals and rely on the income generated by journal subscriptions, may resist open access because they will suffer as a result of it. The Committee agreed that, rather than forming a task force to explore this issue, the Library Committee itself is well equipped to investigate the pros and cons of open access and should be asked to study this issue and report back to the Committee of Six and the Faculty as a whole. If the committee feels that the Faculty should move forward with an open-access resolution, it should craft and propose one, the members noted. Professor Umphrey wondered if there might be colleagues who are not on the Library Committee with expertise in this area who should be asked to join with the committee to explore the question of open access. The members felt that doing so would be beneficial, and the Dean agreed to make an announcement requesting participation, perhaps at a Faculty Meeting. Professor Basu wondered if copyright costs to the College might be lowered through the open-access effort. It was noted that, at present, only a small number of institutions have open-access policies, so adopting the policy would not have an impact on copyright costs now. However, if many institutions decided to make their faculty's scholarship available through open access, copyright costs would likely decrease.

Discussion turned to approaches for moving forward with the upcoming long-range planning effort. Prefacing her remarks by noting a number of external trends that are having or could have an impact on the College, President Martin commented that this is an interesting moment for Amherst, for liberal arts colleges, and for higher education more generally. She noted that the planning process, which will be a mechanism for Amherst to define what it wishes to be, set goals, and to determine how it plans to realize its aspirations, will provide avenues for

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exploring a wide range of significant issues. Inclusiveness will be a priority, she emphasized, and faculty, students, staff, and alumni will be invited and encouraged to participate. President Martin asked the members for their views on questions that the process should seek to address and on the structures that might be employed to facilitate the process.

The members discussed possible advantages and disadvantages of using existing committees to facilitate the planning process, with the goal of gathering wide-ranging and innovative ideas from faculty, students, staff, and alumni. The Committee agreed that there should be a steering committee that could serve a coordinating function and synthesize ideas, and that particular issues/questions that are raised could be taken up by a combination of existing structures and groups that would be constituted to explore them. President Martin agreed and asked whether the Committee of Six, in its role as the committee on committees, should appoint the members of the steering committee. The members agreed that the Committee of Six could do so. Professor Umphrey asked if proposals that emerged from the process would require votes of the Faculty. President Martin responded that she envisions that some proposals, which would be within the purview of the Faculty, would require votes and some might require consultation. Professor Ferguson wondered if there might be mechanisms other than committee deliberations—and approaches that place less emphasis on consensus-building and more on generating creative ideas—that might be employed. The Dean suggested that an open call for proposals be offered, perhaps with some recognition for the most interesting ideas, in order to generate new, imaginative ways of approaching particular issues and/or needs.

Continuing the conversation, President Martin said that those involved in the planning process will be encouraged to think broadly, beyond the operational and toward the visionary. She stressed the importance of welcoming all ideas and of members of the community feeling that they are not constrained in the range of suggestions that they are prepared to offer. Professor Basu suggested that the planning process would benefit if conversations began with a dynamic, decentralized approach that encouraged discussions across constituencies. Professor Ferguson agreed and offered the view that there could be a series of events that could serve as a foundation for the planning process and guide the directions in which it would proceed. The Committee agreed that, particularly in this early stage, the planning effort would also benefit from perspectives from individuals from outside the College community. Experienced and imaginative thinkers could be brought to campus to offer views around a central theme, for example. Panel discussions and/or debates could be held that would allow for the presentation of multiple, divergent opinions surrounding key issues facing higher education and liberal arts colleges, generally, and/or Amherst, specifically. The members suggested that conversations could encompass topics such as the increasing emphasis on technical learning; the globalized world; the ways in which teaching at liberal arts college is distinctive; the connection between education and democracy; the advantages and disadvantages of an open curriculum; and questions such as who ought to be educated; what it means to be an educated person and the essential categories of knowledge; and why residential education matters and the impact that this system has on American culture. Questions that might focus on Amherst more narrowly could include issues surrounding students' course selection patterns as reflections of interdisciplinary interests; the paths that students chart for themselves as they navigate the curriculum; how students are allocating and spending their time; athletics; the needs of international students; grade inflation; Amherst's role within the Five-College consortium; and a number of issues that address the worklife of faculty. The President commented that the Committee's suggestions

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about the planning process were most helpful. Dean Call asked if the members would consider devoting part of the Committee's weekly meetings to conversations about long-range planning, and the members agreed that doing so would be productive. The remainder of the meeting was devoted to personnel matters.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Gregory S. Call  
Dean of the Faculty

To: Committee of Six

From: Library Committee: Alan Babb, Bryn Geffert, Susan Niditch, and David Ratner

Re: Task Force to Investigate an Open Access Resolution

Date: 17 May 2011

Faculty at a number of institutions—including Oberlin College, Harvard University, Stanford University, and Trinity University—have passed resolutions promoting free and open access to their journal articles. These resolutions are designed to disseminate faculty research and scholarship as widely as possible, and to help faculty authors resist publishers' efforts to wrest exclusive control of and access to their articles.

The Amherst Faculty Library Committee notes that Amherst College lacks the protections these resolutions offer, and it believes that our faculty suffer as a result. Studies indicate, for example, that publications available through "open access" models are read and cited more. (See Gunther Eysenbach, "Citation Advantage of Open Access Articles" *PLoS Biology* 4 No. 5: e157.)

The committee is disturbed by the limited availability of our faculty's publications to colleagues and students at other institutions. It is troubled that our faculty's research, conducted in the public interest, is unavailable to most of the world's public. And it is frustrated that Amherst faculty lack both a legal mechanism to help them retain ownership of their scholarship and a platform from which to disseminate that scholarship.

We thus write to propose that the Committee of Six commission a task force to (a) investigate the feasibility and advisability of crafting an open-access resolution, and should it find such work to be both feasible and advisable, then (b) craft a resolution for discussion and an ultimate vote at a faculty meeting.

As it ponders this request, we commend to the Committee of Six several documents that provide more information about the open-access movement and open-access resolutions.

- Text of the resolution passed by the Oberlin College Faculty: <http://oberlin.edu/library/programs/scholcomm/OAresolution.html>
- *The Case for Institutional Repositories: A SPARC Position Paper*: [http://www.oberlin.edu/library/programs/scholcomm/ir\\_final\\_release\\_102.pdf](http://www.oberlin.edu/library/programs/scholcomm/ir_final_release_102.pdf).
- Stuart Shieber, *The Death of Scholarly Journals*: <http://blogs.law.harvard.edu/pamphlet/2009/06/08/the-death-of-scholarly-journals/>.

We would, of course, be delighted to speak with the Committee about any of these matters.