

Amended March 14, 2012

The nineteenth 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, February 20, 2012. Present were Professors Basu, Ferguson, Hewitt, Loinaz, Ratner, and Umphrey, Dean Call, President Martin, and Assistant Dean Tobin, Recorder.

President Martin did not have any announcements, and the meeting began with “Announcements from the Dean.” Dean Call informed the members that the Chief Information Officer (CIO) Search Coordinating Committee, which he chairs, encourages colleagues to attend the upcoming talks (February 23 and 28) by two finalists for the position. The committee has asked each candidate to share his/her vision for technology in a liberal arts college environment.

Dean Call reported back to the members about Registrar Kathleen Goff’s responses to questions that had been raised during the Committee’s discussion ([see the minutes of February 6](#)) of the new policy regarding the use of online and hybrid courses for transfer and make-up credit, on a limited basis, which had recently been approved by the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP). The Registrar had stressed that, only under extraordinary circumstances, and only in consultation with the Dean of Students, would permission be granted for students to take hybrid or online courses. She had informed the Dean that only one student has requested permission to take an online course since the CEP approved this option. In that case, permission was denied; no student has been approved to take an online course to date. The Registrar said that she had not considered posting the online course notation on students’ transcripts, when applicable, but that she can do so. Ms. Goff stressed that all courses approved by the Registrar are for general credit; students are informed that they need the additional approval of their department(s) to apply any course credit toward a major. Conversation turned briefly to a personnel matter.

The Committee, the President, and the Dean next discussed possible areas of responsibility for the proposed Provost position, why the position is needed, and its potential benefits for the College. Conversation began with the Committee considering whether for the Faculty Meeting it would be useful to provide the Faculty with an organizational chart of the administration as it is currently constituted, as well as a chart that would show how the structure might be re-imagined if a Provost position were to be added. President Martin said that she would prefer discussing the structure without showing charts. The current chart is dense and detailed and would not be a useful way to inform discussion, in her view. President Martin said that it would not be productive to formulate a chart of any new structure at this time, both because consultation has not yet taken place with those who oversee areas that might have new reporting lines, and because the process of determining the shape of the position is in its earliest stages.

Professor Ratner asked whether the current organizational chart could be simplified, and Professor Loinaz felt that there could be value in presenting organizational charts for present and envisioned structures. Wondering what questions might be answered by organizational charts, Professor Umphrey expressed a preference for having the Faculty Meeting discussion without them. Professor Ferguson agreed, commenting that a discussion of the larger issues, most critically the Provost’s relationship to the Faculty, would be preferable to focusing on details; he expressed the view that charts might provoke a conversation that would focus on the latter rather than the former. President Martin agreed and discussed with the Committee possible areas of the College for which a Provost might have oversight. Before any decisions are made about the reporting lines for the new position, President Martin said that she would prefer to have the Provost in place, so as to benefit from his or her input and further consultation with the Faculty.

Professor Basu next asked whether the President had plans to consult with the staff, as well as the Faculty, about the position. President Martin said that she wants to discuss the Provost position with the Faculty first, but that she plans to communicate with staff about the

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shape of the position, once a process has been adopted to define it. The President reiterated that she envisions the Provost position as having a College-wide role, with responsibility for strategic planning, budget, and the integration of programs and initiatives that span the traditional boundaries of students, staff, and faculty. Professor Hewitt said that she has sensed some anxiety among the Faculty about whether funding this position might prevent the College from fulfilling goals in other areas. President Martin said that she has proposed that the Provost, whom she envisions leading efforts to promote diversity in the Faculty and staff and to make the strength of Amherst's diversity central to the College's experience, be funded through the administrative line that has already been approved for the position of Chief Diversity Officer. President Martin stressed the importance for any president, herself included, of assembling a team that will enable the president to develop ideas, engage in planning, seize opportunities, and implement initiatives most effectively.

Continuing the conversation about the structure of the administration, President Martin noted that the areas of information technology and assessment, and the intensification of procedures, have put additional pressures on the Dean's office. Establishing a Provost position, and, possibly, increasing staffing in the Dean's office, would help meet the increasing demands in these and other areas. Professor Basu asked about the impact that the Provost position might have on faculty governance and the position's relationship to faculty committees. The President responded that she envisions that the Provost would participate in faculty governance through his or her service on some faculty committees, for example, the Committee on Priorities and Resources (CPR). A change in the membership of any standing committee of the Faculty would require a vote of the Faculty, she noted. Professor Basu asked whether the President had gathered comparative information about administrative structures. Responding that she had done such research, including consulting directly with the presidents of three liberal arts colleges, the President said that she had found that a Provost's functions are different on every campus. She expressed the view that an argument for a Provost that would be based on such comparisons would be a weak argument for the position, and that the College should focus rather on Amherst's needs. President Martin commented that a Provost position could be viewed as an experiment, with a Provost hired for a particular period, for example, three to five years, with the possibility of renewal, following an evaluation of the position. Some members felt that it might be challenging to attract the best candidates if the position had a term.

At 4:20 P.M., the Committee was joined by the members of the Amherst College Architectural Studies Advisory Committee (Heidi Gilpin, Associate Professor of German and Chair of European Studies; Thom Long, Five-College Assistant Professor of Architectural Studies; Carol Clark, William McCall Vickery 1957 Professor of the History of Art and American Studies; Nicola Courtright, Professor of the History of Art; Ronald Rosbottom, Winifred L. Arms Professor in the Arts and Humanities and Professor of French and European Studies; and Kevin Sweeney, Professor of American Studies and History) for a conversation about the proposed interdisciplinary Five-College major in Architectural Studies. Professor Gilpin thanked the members for reviewing the proposal with such care and thoroughness, and the advisory committee said that the Committee of Six's discussion ([see minutes of February 6](#)) had raised good questions and had already prompted the proposers to refine the proposal. Noting that the proposal for this major had emerged after more than twelve years of dialogue and experimentation across the campuses of the Five Colleges, Professor Gilpin stressed that the new major would present an exciting opportunity for Amherst students.

Continuing the conversation, Dean Call asked what the advantages would be for Amherst students of having a more formal structure for the study of architecture, since such study has been occurring more informally. Professor Long noted the benefits of moving away from the

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current ad hoc approach and toward a structure that would enable students to undertake the study of built environments through a program that has been designed with vision and intention. Professor Courtright said that Amherst students would be enriched by a major that would offer coherence and intellectual and creative direction and depth. Professor Clark commented that some Amherst students develop an interest in architecture fairly late in their time at the College, often because they happen upon a course that excites them about the subject. If the College were to offer a program with weight and a formal identity, students would likely begin their studies of architecture earlier in their academic careers, she noted. In addition, at present, students from the institutions (Mount Holyoke and Hampshire) that have adopted the major are given priority in the courses for the major, particularly the necessary studio courses; as a result, Amherst students regularly cannot gain access to the courses that are among the most critical for them to take if they wish to study architecture. Several members and the President wondered whether adding the major at Amherst would ensure that there would be space in these classes for Amherst students. The advisory committee expressed confidence that this would indeed be the case and that slots would be available for Amherst students majoring in Architectural Studies.

Professor Basu asked whether the Advisory Committee would consider initially offering a Five-College certificate in lieu of a major in Architectural Studies. Professor Clark said that, in essence, through ad hoc means, a certificate has been offered for a number of years. The need now, the advisory committee argued, is for a program of study that is more substantive and intentional. Continuing, Professor Long noted, and Professor Courtright concurred, most certificates are in subfields within larger fields. Architecture is a major field in its own right. Professor Courtright commented that the major would be staffed by Five-College faculty in a rich array of disciplines. She noted that these colleagues enjoy collaborating with one another and share a vision for the study of the built environment and an approach that is consistent with the liberal arts.

Professor Umphrey asked the members of the advisory committee about their view that additional resources would not be needed to mount the major. Returning to the topic of offering priority to majors, she wondered whether it might become necessary to add courses, and faculty to teach them, in order to ensure the necessary access, particularly if the major became popular. Dean Call said that he also wondered if additional resources would be needed. Professor Long responded that, if it became necessary to add courses/faculty, the burden of providing these resources would be shared among the campuses. He said that the goal would be to develop, in a well-planned and strategic way, a curriculum for the major across the campuses, noting that students would also take the pre-requisites for the major across the campuses. The chairmanship of the major, which would be for two years, would rotate to Amherst every six years. The advisory committee envisioned that an academic coordinator would likely be needed for about five hours a week, at least initially.

Stressing the flexibility that would be a hallmark of the major, Professor Long commented that there would be a variety of paths through the major, depending on a student's interest, and that faculty would help students develop a program of study that would meet their needs within the major. Professor Clark commented that the major is not intended to prepare students to become architects, but would take a humanities-centered, liberal arts approach. Credit toward the major will not be given for technical courses offered by the university, though students could take them if they wished. Professor Gilpin said that the major would comprise four required foundational core courses that would provide a balance between artistic practice and the theoretical and historical, five electives, and one semester of capstone or two semesters of honors thesis work. The major would have a structure similar to that of the Film and Media Studies major. There would be sufficient flexibility within the major to allow students to take some of

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the courses as late as their senior year, she said. President Martin asked whether there would be so much flexibility that a lack of coherence might be a result. Professor Gilpin responded that flexibility would be a strength of the program, in her view, and that the faculty who will participate in the major will ensure that there is coherence for each student. Five-College faculty who teach architecture courses, who already meet twice during the semester for purposes of discussion and collaboration, would continue to meet at least twice a semester to oversee the major and the progress of individual students.

Professor Clark noted that the proposal for the major is a Five-College proposal, and it should be seen as a generic document that includes elements that would not be a part of the Amherst major; Amherst faculty would oversee the major at the College and would ensure that the program of study undertaken by Amherst students would be consistent with their needs and the College's expectations. For example, Professor Gilpin noted, she does not envision that Amherst students will choose to participate in UMass's five-year master's program. She also explained that an affiliation with the New York Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies would not be a central part of the major at Amherst—there are also many other study-abroad programs, including Cornell's architecturally-focused program in Rome, in which Amherst students have long participated—though it plays a prominent role for Hampshire students. It was noted that the Smith faculty has decided not to offer the Five-College major formally, but to participate fully in the curriculum of the major, and prioritize a major's access to Smith courses in architecture and landscape studies, even pledging to offer a new introductory course.

Dean Call suggested that, before the proposal for the major is brought to the Faculty for consideration, the advisory committee should provide the Committee of Six with more information about how the major would be integrated into Amherst's curriculum and how it would be shaped and structured on our campus. The committee might seek to answer the following questions in this document: Why a Five-College major? What role will Amherst faculty members have in the major? Why do Amherst students need this major and how would they benefit? Stressing that the goal of the major is not to prepare students in technical ways for architecture school, but, rather, to provide them with a curriculum that will allow them to think deeply, broadly, critically, analytically, and in interdisciplinary ways about the built environment, Professor Sweeney noted that Amherst students regularly are admitted to architecture school without the major, while commenting that students who wish to go to architecture school would have enhanced opportunities to develop a portfolio if the major were to be adopted, thus ensuring access to studio courses. This information would be shared with the Faculty as a cover letter that would accompany the Five-College proposal for the major. The Advisory Committee agreed that doing so would be useful and that today's conversation would help the committee think further about Amherst-specific issues within the Five-College major. Professor Rosbottom noted that Amherst students have shown a great deal of interest in architecture and the built environment and that the College should want to serve students' needs. Courses that were taught as part of the Urban Imagination, an initiative funded through the President's Initiative Fund (PIF), were quite popular, he noted. Professor Umphrey asked why, given what sounds like considerable student interest, an architecture major solely at Amherst is not being proposed. What is the benefit of the Five-College approach? Professor Gilpin noted that this option had been considered, but the already existing wealth of Architectural Studies faculty throughout the Five Colleges made an Amherst major far less compelling. She also noted that, unless Amherst participates in the Five-College major, Amherst students will continue to lack access to the courses offered at other campuses, which are vital to ensure a comprehensive program of study.

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Continuing the conversation, Professor Long emphasized the richness of the Five Colleges as a consortium, noting that each campus, including Amherst, has something unique to offer—encompassing everything from medieval architecture to material culture. Amherst, he noted, has the only digital architecture lab in the Valley. Smith has particular strengths in studio and landscape studies, and Hampshire is strong in studio and also has a faculty member who focuses on architectural history and theory. Professor Umphrey said that, in the context of this discussion, and more broadly, the question of what should drive curricular change is an important one. It was noted that Amherst chose not to participate in the Five-College Film major and to offer its own Film and Media Studies major because of differences in how Amherst faculty envisioned the curriculum. Professor Sweeney commented that, in the case of the proposed architecture major, the faculty involved share the same vision for the major and collaborate extremely well. Professor Umphrey asked how many Amherst students are currently majoring in the new Film and Media Studies program. Professor Gilpin responded that the current number of Amherst Film and Media Studies majors is low: A total of nine majors (one senior, five juniors, three sophomores). She anticipates that the number of Amherst Five-College Architectural Studies majors would be similar, in line with the numbers of Amherst students who have focused on Architectural Studies in their interdisciplinary, art, or other majors in the recent past. Professor Basu, noting that the major depends on shared curricular commitments among Five-College faculty, wondered how the campuses will collaborate in making new hires in the future. She noted that, among the Amherst proposers, several colleagues are on phased retirement. Professor Gilpin responded that the departments involved in the major at each campus have agreed that, when structuring new positions and making hires, when possible and applicable, a focus in the built environment, and filling in the curricular “gaps” within the major, will be an area of emphasis. Amherst Advisory Committee members, she continued, have already been including Architectural Studies interests in recent FTE and short-term hires in their departments. Professor Clark noted that the Department of Art and the History of Art has offered new courses in architecture and design history, from introductory to advanced, and has plans for two, or possibly three, new courses next year. Professor Umphrey commented that this approach would have implications going forward, as departments and the College would need to think about the allocation of FTEs carefully in order to mount this collaborative major. The Advisory Committee left the meeting at 5:30 P.M. The Committee of Six agreed that it would ask the Architectural Studies Advisory Committee to revise and resubmit the proposal. The remainder of the meeting was devoted to personnel matters.

The meeting adjourned at 6:20 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Gregory S. Call  
Dean of the Faculty