

Amended March 28, 2008

The twenty-second meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2007-2008 was called to order by President Marx in his office at 3:30 P.M. on Monday, March 10, 2008. Present were Professors Frank, S. George, Jagannathan, O'Hara, Servos, and Sinos, Dean Call, President Marx, and Assistant Dean Tobin, Recorder.

In preparation for a discussion planned for the next Committee of Six meeting, the Dean distributed to the members a report (appended) prepared by Rhonda Cobham-Sander, Special Assistant to the President for Diversity, on the current state of diversity and inclusion efforts at the College and recommendations for moving forward in this area. Professor Cobham-Sander will end her term as Special Assistant at the end of the 2007-2008 academic year.

Prompted by recent questions that have arisen about how best to coordinate the use of College performance spaces by members of the College and local community, President Marx suggested that Amherst should develop a coordinated set of principles and practices to guide the process of allocating College spaces for short-term use by internal and external groups. At present, he noted, access to facilities such as the gym, Buckley Recital Hall, and Kirby Theater is overseen by individual departments and/or faculty members. Dean Call said that he too is interested in finding ways to improve the system by which members of the Faculty, student body, staff, and local community reserve campus spaces. He feels that enhancing coordination in this regard would be particularly helpful in promoting collaboration in the arts. The members agreed, and the President said that he would consult with the senior staff and would organize a meeting with the following representatives from the Departments of Music, Theater and Dance, and Physical Education, and Facilities: Professor Jenny Kallick (Buckley Recital Hall); Peter Lobdell (Kirby Theater); Suzanne Coffey, Director of Athletics and Physical Education (athletic facilities); Irene Berwick, Summer Programs and Scheduling System Coordinator; and Jim Brassord, Director of Facilities and Associate Treasurer for Campus Services. Professor O'Hara noted that she has had concerns about the lack of communication that she and her colleagues have experienced regarding the use of her department's teaching labs by outside summer programs. Some issues of coordination and safety have emerged as a result, and while these issues do get resolved on an ad hoc basis, she feels that it would be helpful at the planned meeting to discuss the use of campus facilities by outside groups during the summer, as well. President Marx agreed.

Discussion returned to the issue of teaching writing at the College. President Marx said that, while he continues to look for a plan or schedule for the ongoing efforts to develop a proposal for a writing requirement, he respects the dedication and hard work of the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP). He noted that he recognizes the progress that has been made thus far in the area of writing, as well as on other recommendations of the Committee on Academic Priorities (CAP) about which the CEP has been deliberating. The President said that he had met with the CEP on February 29 and that he had found the conversation to be very informative, as was a subsequent email to him from CEP Chair Martha Umphrey, in which she summarized the CEP's work this year. President Marx told the members that he was preparing a response to Professor Umphrey's email and that he intended to ask her permission to share their correspondence with the Faculty, so as to inform future discussion. (The President later made this request, and Professor Umphrey agreed that the email exchange should be appended to these minutes.)

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Continuing the discussion about writing, Professor Frank noted that the CEP is trying to build faculty consensus on this issue, and that doing so requires time. The Dean noted that, on one hand, the CEP has devoted a great deal of thought to the issue of writing. On the other hand, a proposal for a writing requirement, which was requested by the Faculty, has not been brought forward. Professor Jagannathan suggested that, in regard to writing efforts, the problem might be that there are too many moving parts. These parts, in his view, do not seem to be coordinated, which might be complicating efforts to move toward the goal of developing a proposal for a writing requirement. He noted, for example, that, while Professors Barale and Gentzler had developed a worthy writing initiative (The Faculty Seminar on Writing Instruction), that effort was outside the formal governance structures that had been charged with working on the writing issue and was, in essence, a private initiative that was not constituted by the Faculty. At the same time, the CEP was at work on the writing question. Professor Servos said that he feels that rapid progress was being made on this issue for some time and that things then began to stall. He noted that the Special Committee on the Amherst Education (SCAE) had recommended that writing-intensive courses be developed and that writing-attentive courses be designated with a W. These recommendations, in turn, informed the recommendations of the CAP. Progress seemed to slow and momentum seemed to be lost, he felt, with the report of the Ad Hoc Writing Committee. On the other hand, he noted, perhaps there was the need, by the time that report was put forward, for colleagues to catch their breath, to take time to think, and to build consensus. He said that, while he was disappointed that the rapid advances on this issue slowed, he remains optimistic and feels that work is being done and progress is being made.

Returning to the issue of the consideration of the First-Year Seminar Program, Dean Call noted that the First-Year Seminar Committee had met with the CEP, President Marx, and him. The committee informed them that, if the First-Year Seminar Committee were to take the lead in developing a First-Year Seminar proposal that would be brought to the Committee of Six, and then brought before the Faculty as a whole, they would require a specific charge to define the parameters of this project. The Dean asked the Committee for their views on how encompassing such a charge should be. Should it, for example, encompass the first-year experience more broadly or be focused on recommendations surrounding the curriculum only? In terms of the seminar program, should the committee consider issues such as staffing, intellectual content, and a possible emphasis on writing? Should the committee be charged with shaping a longer-term charge for itself, thus defining its role in relation to its recommendations? The Dean also asked the members if they felt that membership on the First-Year Seminar Committee should be supplemented with additional colleagues for purposes of this assignment and, if so, for recommendations of colleagues. The members agreed that the committee membership of the First-Year Seminar Committee should be augmented with additional colleagues, at least two of whom have taught First-Year Seminars, and suggested specific colleagues.

Continuing the conversation, Professor O'Hara noted that, when she was on the First-Year Seminar Committee in 2006, Marian Matheson, Director of Institutional Research, had assisted the committee in administering (in the spring of that year) an in-depth survey to first-year students about their experiences in the program. She suggested that the survey results might be useful to the committee as it undertakes its work. The members agreed that the Committee of Six should develop a charge for the First-Year Seminar Committee and that the committee should focus on evaluating the existing First-Year Seminar Program and making

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recommendations on how to improve it, rather than on the first-year experience as a whole.

The Committee next considered whether a Faculty Meeting should be held on April 1 and possible agenda items. It was agreed that the meeting should be held, and that the Faculty should consider the following: the motion to create, as recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee on Study Abroad, a new standing committee of the Faculty that would be called the Committee on International Education, and course proposals. The update on campus facilities planning, which was postponed at the last Faculty Meeting, should also be on the agenda, the members agreed.

Under “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Sinos asked if the President would be willing to receive communication about the pet policy directly, rather than through the Treasurer. President Marx said that all members of the Amherst community are welcome to write to him about this and any other issues of concern to them. The Committee next asked whether the reaccreditation visiting team had given any feedback following their time on campus (March 2-5). President Marx said that the visit had gone very well and that the committee was very positive overall. In addition to offering a good deal of praise, the team, in their preliminary oral report, made a number of useful suggestions and raised some questions about the College’s ability to make progress on a number of curricular fronts. They were also interested in the current conversations about multicultural issues on campus. The team will send a draft of their report in early April, President Marx noted.

President Marx next informed the members that he was preparing a response to Senators Max Baucus and Charles Grassley, leaders of the U.S. Senate Committee on Finance. He explained that, in January, these senators had contacted Amherst and 135 other colleges and universities with endowments of \$500 million or more across the country. The legislators asked for clarification on the schools’ undergraduate tuition, spending on financial aid and endowment growth, among other matters.

Before turning to personnel business, the Committee reviewed course proposals and voted to forward them to the Faculty. At the conclusion of their personnel discussion, the Committee turned to the report of the FCAFA. In fall 2006, the Committee of Six charged the FCAFA to “analyze the distribution of academic qualifications in classes over the last decade, based on data in the applications for admission, particularly standardized test scores and reader ratings,” in order to compare the distributions of these measures among Amherst students. The Committee also requested that “the FCAFA, Dean Tom Parker, and Marian Matheson review the compilation and presentation of admissions data available to the Faculty, and make proposals for any possible expansion thereof, including longitudinal and comparative studies of admissions statistics and models that will illustrate how student attributes at the time of admission contribute to their academic outcomes at Amherst in relation to their educational and career goals.” The Committee noted that much of the information that is included in the report was disseminated to the Faculty at the December 5, 2006, meeting of the Faculty, during which the FCAFA presented a progress report.

It was noted that, in its current report, the FCAFA commented that, “While the [Committee of Six] charge focuses on faculty concern with meritocratic criteria for admission, the Committee of Six discussion leading up to the charge...was more explicit in focusing faculty concern on recent efforts to diversify the student body. Among other things, the Committee of Six wanted to ‘know whether these [particular] students on average are being well served’ by being able to take ‘full advantage of our open curriculum’ and ‘perform up to their potential.’” In

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this context, Professor O'Hara said that the Faculty should use this report as an occasion to have a conversation about the many positive aspects of having diversity on campus. Professor Servos agreed that, while the report does not bring forward any actionable items, a general discussion will be important because of the issues raised. Professor Frank also concurred, noting that the Faculty should not only articulate the benefits of diversity, but should discuss the difference between academic preparation and intellectual potential and ability. Professor Jagannathan said that he admires the spirit and tone of the report and that it is important that the Faculty be educated about how to serve the needs of less well-prepared students. He counts himself among colleagues who feel underprepared to deal with the emerging challenges in this area. Several members commented on the report's discussion of over-prepared or "over-packaged" students, which they found interesting, particularly when coupled with the report's focus on less well-prepared students. President Marx said it can be difficult to define or specify the "value added" of an Amherst education, but that this remains an important challenge that should highlight how far a student develops here, not just how strong he or she was upon entry.

Some Committee members expressed concern about sharing statistics included in the report that might lead to the identification of individual students, though it was noted that this information had already been shared with the Faculty in the FCAFA's progress report. Professor George noted some questionable uses of statistical tests in the report, that the charts devoted to reader rating and GPA groups did not include information about the sciences, and that the report contained duplicate charts for foreign languages and the social sciences. The Dean said that he would confer with Professor Lembo about these issues.

The Committee briefly discussed whether a motion might be brought before the Faculty to propose that a term limit be set on Committee of Six service. Professor O'Hara suggested that members of the Faculty who serve three or more terms on the Committee of Six should be given the option of removing their names from future Committee of Six ballots. President Marx said that, while a term limit might have the positive effect of distributing Committee of Six service among a greater number of Faculty, setting such a limit might also have the negative effect of eliminating from the pool available to represent the Faculty some of the colleagues whom they would most desire to serve in this role. Professor Servos also noted that, should a term limit be passed, greater burdens would fall on associate professors, who already struggle with chairmanships and other committee service. The members agreed to draft a term limit motion, to discuss it at their next meeting, and possibly to include it as part of the agenda for the April 1 Faculty Meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 5:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Gregory S. Call

Dean of the Faculty

Diversity and Inclusion at Amherst College

I. Rationale for a Diversity Initiative

Amherst College leads its cohort in successfully diversifying the racial and socio-economic profile of its student body, but we lag behind other institutions in ensuring that broader diversity initiatives elsewhere at the College are clearly articulated. We lag, in particular, behind others in establishing and monitoring diversity goals for our faculty and staff. The US Supreme Court's ruling in *Grutter vs. Bollinger* gave notice to private colleges and universities that their best protection against legal challenges to race attentive strategies in admissions is to ensure that diversity matters beyond admission – in the institution's intellectual agenda, in its employment policies, and in its support of programming to educate the community about the contributions a college that values diversity can make to the wider society. For Amherst College to lead its cohort on all these fronts, it will need a full time, permanent Chief Diversity Officer, capable of implementing a coherent diversity agenda that is endorsed by its senior executive, embedded in the policies crafted by its standing committees, and seen by employees and students alike as an equalizing force that enables everyone to benefit from inclusion in a dynamic, productive learning community.

One formulation of the rationale that should inform our diversity goals is that **we seek to maintain a learning community in which everyone is informed about and responsive to all aspects of diversity.** This formulation harkens back to the educational reasons for which we value a diverse student body in the first place. A school that admitted Jewish students, or students of color, for example, but limited how they could fraternize with white or Christian students (as Amherst and other institutions of higher learning did in the past) would severely limit its ability to achieve the diversity goals the formulation above upholds. A school that encouraged its students to fraternize across racial and social lines, but did not introduce them to the various ways of knowing that such difference makes possible, would also fall short. Finally, a school whose faculty and students were encouraged to develop the full range of their cultural and intellectual strengths would have failed in its educational mission if its governance structures and employment policies did not also support the vital contributions that staff and administrators from a variety of backgrounds make to furthering these goals. All of these considerations inform the College's new mission statement, which takes the unusual step of explicitly including the contributions of administrators and students as well as of faculty and staff in its characterization of our academic enterprise.

The vision of a learning community in which everyone is informed about and responsive to all issues of diversity incorporates many of the ideals about social justice subtending affirmative action policies in previous decades. However, it goes beyond affirmative action in valuing the diverse needs and gifts of all members of our community. To achieve this level of inclusion, the College must ensure that each sector of the community – its trustees, alumni, faculty, administrators, staff, and students -- defines for itself the specific challenges it faces and the successes it has achieved in incorporating into its operations practices that support a diverse learning community. That process will be most effective if we can set clear goals for ourselves, supported by a transparent system for monitoring our progress towards them.

II. Characteristics of a Diverse Workplace

The literature about diversity usually identifies three stages in an organization's attempt to diversify: token representation, significant representation and full inclusion. In the first stage, isolated individuals who are members of historically under-represented groups achieve "token" status. Such pioneers succeed by performing significantly above the norm at whatever they do. Many become institutions in their own right, remembered, for better or worse, over generations, by the students or colleagues with whom they worked. One thinks, for example, of Amherst's first Japanese graduate, Henry Neesima; its famous black triumvirate, Charles Drew, William Hastie, and Charles Hamilton Houston; the College's first female Dean of the Faculty, Catherine Bateson; or, most recently, its African-American Associate Dean of Students, Onuwumi Jean Moss. Though the achievements of such pioneers may open doors for others, the institution rarely modifies its culture to accommodate them, and their professional or academic success may come at great personal cost.

Today, such token representation of people of color still characterizes many of the College's administrative offices. With the significant exceptions of the Office of Admission and the Dean of Student's Office, a single employee of color is often the only non-white person working in his or her department. Even within departments that have successfully diversified, racial diversity has been limited to African-American representation. There are no Latino employees at Amherst above the ranks of graded positions and only two employees at that level who are Asian-American. A similar limitation is true for the College's Board of Trustees, although other minorities besides African-Americans have served on the board in the past. In recent years, the College has taken steps to ameliorate this problem by drafting faculty of color into administrative service. Ironically, this strategy reinforces the "pioneer" status of such individuals, whose duties demand that they transcend race in multiple arenas, while being called upon to overachieve, precisely on account of their race.

An institution achieves significant minority representation when it can point to the presence among its members of significant cohorts from beyond the dominant group. The literature on diversity cautions that, although a community approaching these levels of representation may begin to "look" different, the diverse cultural assumptions and working styles new cohorts bring with them tend to be tolerated, merely, rather than becoming central to the culture of the institution. Unlike token individuals, whose very isolation allows others to imagine that they transcend racial or social categorization, minority cohorts often find themselves lumped together, their academic or job performance evaluated primarily in terms of their difference. The pressure on individuals within such cohorts to perform at higher levels than their majority counterparts may diminish, but the emphasis shifts to getting them to "fit in." Well-meaning supervisors may take it upon themselves to explain to the newcomers why their ideas or approaches to problems will not fly at the institution. Coworkers or fellow students may complain that making allowances for different cultural styles destabilizes the smooth workings of the institution in that it creates extra work for professors and supervisors, depresses standards of excellence, and sidetracks the policy-making process when newcomers pursue "their" minority agendas. Subject to petty forms of discrimination, as well as to systematic (if often unconscious)

forms of exclusion, members of significant minority cohorts may withdraw or become defensive over time, acquiring the reputation of being “thin-skinned,” “difficult,” or “poor team players.” Retention is often a challenge among employees and students who are part of a significant minority, leading others to wonder out loud why, despite our having done so much to bring them in, “these people” seem so resentful of the institution.

Historically, Amherst achieved significant minority representation for Jewish students in the 1950s, for women in the 1970s, and for “out” gay and lesbian students and faculty in the 1990s. With the presence of larger cohorts of minority students have come more demands for social and academic programs that address their needs and calls for full inclusion of minority perspectives across the curriculum. In the past few years a modest increase in the percentage of faculty, administrators, and staff of color has begun to inch us incrementally toward “significant minority” levels of racial diversity as well. Yet the percentage of faculty, administrators, and staff of color does not approach the 35% minority representation we have achieved among students (See Appendix 1). However, permanent and temporary employees of color made up over 23% of new staff hires in 2006-2007 and over 50% of faculty hires in the same period.

The community’s response to these demographic shifts has in some cases exacerbated tensions typical of this stage in an institution’s growth. Over the past three years I have been dealing with untenured women faculty who feel harassed by the casual sexism of their male colleagues; employees with children who feel unsupported by the College’s policies with respect to flexible hours; faculty, administrators, and staff of color who feel systematically excluded from planning processes or curricular discussions in their departments, or who become disheartened in the face of the petty cruelties contained in their colleagues’ thoughtless generalizations about blacks, Asians, or Latinos. To address such problems, my office has collaborated with HR to expand mandatory sexual harassment trainings for new faculty, staff, and administrators to cover a broad range of issues around tolerance and respect in the workplace. This year we plan to extend these workshops to include all college employees at least once every three years.

Many predominantly white institutions see significant minority representation and accommodation as their ultimate goal, but the literature on the subject points to a third level of diversity, at which full participation and inclusion become desired norms across the culture of the institution. Rather than merely tolerating, accommodating, or even formally celebrating diversity, institutions at this level strive to incorporate a range of working styles and cultural perspectives centrally into all aspects of their operations. The aim at this level is not merely to make room for token differences at the margins, or to manage the problems such heterogeneity brings with it, but to see diversity as a primary change agent for the institution. Such is the perspective that informs the definition of diversity I advanced at the beginning of this report; one that envisions Amherst as a learning community in which everyone is informed about *and responsive* to all aspects of diversity. Beyond token and significant minority representation, it demands change of everyone, not just those individuals whom we identify with minority cultures or perspectives. And it sees such change as contributing significantly to the institution’s capacity to remain competitive, creative, and productive in the future.

The emphasis here is less on numbers, although these are crucial, and more on perspective. One simple shift in perspective often observed in inclusive environments, for instance, informs the movement away from the practice of making selective allowances for parents with young families to come to work later or to be “excused” from meetings outside of regular working hours – allowances others may resent or consider inefficient. Rather than viewing these employees’ domestic responsibilities in terms of lack, the institution chooses to recognize the importance of having among its decision-makers faculty, administrators, and staff at various stages of their lives, with firsthand experience at negotiating a broad range of social responsibilities. It seeks creative ways to accommodate flexible work schedules for *all* employees, rearranging meeting times so as to allow as many employees as possible to benefit from the full range of practical and intellectual contributions its employees can make to the institution.

Similar shifts can inform the way a college deals with students whom it considers under-prepared for its academic challenges. Rather than taking them out of the mainstream, or leaving them to drown in its currents, the faculty finds ways to diversify its pedagogical approaches for all students, becoming more responsive to a wider variety of learning styles. Such changes ultimately benefit under-prepared students, as well as well-prepared students, by expanding the range of technical and analytical skills all students are encouraged to bring to the learning process. In hiring new colleagues, departments that value a wide variety of approaches to critical thinking are likely to pay closer attention to job candidates whose personal or professional experiences have made them particularly attentive to the variety of learning styles that a diverse group of students brings to the classroom. That shift in perspective may help direct a department’s attention towards candidates from racial or social groups that, historically, have had to grapple most directly with the pedagogical challenges now facing the student body as a whole.

At Amherst, only the Office of Admission can be said to have fully embraced this level of commitment to diversity, both in its internal organization and its external recruitment goals. It is the only office on campus that officially uses as a central measure of its success its ability to set and achieve specific diversity goals – whether these be racial, cultural, intellectual, or socioeconomic – and for whom a failure to achieve such goals would be considered a failure of its mission. By contrast, the faculty as a whole has yet to move beyond viewing such diversity as a mixed blessing. The point is not that Amherst’s faculty does not consider the diversity of its student body a “good thing.” In the wake of the CAP report, many departments have welcomed my suggestions about how to include diversity rationales in their requests to the CEP for new FTEs. However, when it comes to evaluating job candidates, most professors still see creative intellectual responses to the diversity of the student body as a secondary good, separable conceptually from such academic ideals as “inspired” teaching, “rigorous” research and “informed” advising. Few departments, for example, would consider an absence of expertise around issues of diversity or an absence of racial diversity among its job applicants compelling enough reasons to extend a tenure track search over a second year. Many departments have yet to answer for themselves the question I regularly pose to job candidates: how do they define the challenges and goals around diversity in their fields and what would they do to address these challenges?

Beyond the Offices of Admission and the Dean of Students, a handful of administrative departments have begun to consider changes in their department cultures that support the College's diversity agenda. This year, the chairs of the Library's search committees attended sessions about diversity at their professional conferences. They came away with valuable insights about what employees of color most wanted from their mentors within the profession. The Advancement Office has created a diversity plan that begins to articulate how changes in the race and gender of the College's alumni will impact its operations. It also has begun to evaluate candidates for new positions in terms of their ability to help the entire office respond to cultural and demographic shifts in the alumni body. The Office of Human Resources has made its capacity to address the needs of a diverse workforce a high priority by enhancing the foreign language skills and cross cultural competence of several of its employees. All three departments have made modest gains in diversifying their employee base.

III. Diversity at Amherst – The Admission Model

In thinking about what it would mean to implement a coherent set of strategies for fostering diversity at all levels, I have taken the success of our admission office in diversifying the student body as the benchmark for what we might hope to achieve more generally. Once we understand the extent of the philosophical challenges, the strategic risks, and the range of resources it has taken to obtain racial, socioeconomic, and intellectual diversity among our students, we will be able to assess more realistically the resources required to implement a diversity plan.

Over the last decade, the admission office has diversified its staff, such that one-third of the admission officers are African-Americans, whose portfolios extend well beyond minority recruitment. The office's twelve diversity interns and its two "Green Deans" run the full gamut of economic, racial, sexual, and gender identities, providing prospective students with a variety of perspectives on an Amherst education. Collaborative models of decision-making include faculty, students, administrators, and staff with different backgrounds and expertise. These models have created a culture of transparency around the admission process so that our diversity goals and track record can be understood easily by faculty, trustees, and potential applicants. The office has developed links to organizations and school districts that help take Amherst's "brand" beyond its traditional recruiting base, and it has learnt to manage the risk that recruiting students unfamiliar with the liberal arts entails by developing quantitative and qualitative assessment tools to track the success of all matriculants over their entire undergraduate career.

Amherst's Office of Admission and Financial Aid is by no means perfect when it comes to diversity. On occasion, the Faculty has called into question the department's judgment in managing risk in the admission process. The Office of Financial Aid has yet to achieve significant levels of racial or linguistic diversity, although the office serves a disproportionate number of low income, bilingual, and racially diverse students. Nevertheless, the time, money, human resources, and creative thinking have paid off. In the incoming class in 2007-08, 38% were students of color and 20% came from families in the lowest socioeconomic quintile in the nation. Moreover, students of all ethnicities now occupy the entire spectrum in terms of economic resources and academic preparation.

Despite significant levels of investment in material and human resources, it has taken the Office of Admission the better part of a decade to make significant changes in the social and racial profile of the student body, even though the student population turns over completely every four years. Viewed from this perspective we can expect that it will take at least a decade for the College as a whole to make similar progress in diversifying its staff, administration, and faculty. But even that goal will only be achieved if we invest the resources necessary to overhaul department cultures, modify employment practices, and create assessment and monitoring strategies to support diversity efforts among faculty, administrators, and staff.

IV. Diversity Initiatives at Amherst since the 1980s

Since as far back as the 1960s, when the first woman was appointed to the Faculty and the first significant cohorts of students of color were recruited, deans and presidents at Amherst College have encouraged efforts to diversify the College's educational and human resources. In the 1980s, the Assistant to the President was the College's first Affirmative Action Officer, and the Dean of the Faculty himself spearheaded non-traditional hiring strategies that significantly boosted the numbers of women and minorities on the Faculty. Such strategies included authorizing multiple offers when more than one viable candidate of color emerged in the search process, hiring women and faculty of color at the tenured level in departments where there was special need or particularly strong resistance to change, and introducing handpicked candidates from under-represented groups into applicant pools when such individuals came to the attention of the administration. At the same time, the administration reinvigorated the Black Studies department through an infusion of funds and new appointments, and established a new department of Women's and Gender Studies. However, the mechanisms that made these strategies successful were never fully incorporated into the charges to the College's standing committees. Once FTEs became scarce, it became difficult to pursue an explicit diversity agenda around faculty hiring, despite support from subsequent deans and presidents.

In 1989, responsibility for affirmative action passed from the Dean of the Faculty's office to the Dean of Students' office, where Onuwumi Jean Moss became the College's Affirmative Action Officer, while continuing to carry a full portfolio as a class dean. Working at a lower level than the Assistant to the President, Dean Moss' work focused on compliance issues – such as disability provisions, and employee grievances -- as well as on diversity issues affecting students, where her influence remains visible today in the success of the Moss Quantitative Center. In response to student sit-ins in the wake of the 1991 LA riots and student demands for greater representation of faculty of color, the College appointed Hermenia Gardener as its first full-time Affirmative Action Officer. Although she enjoyed greater autonomy than the part-time officers who preceded her, the new scope of the position and the mechanisms by which it was integrated into existing governance structures were never fully defined. Lacking clear lines of authority and recourse within the administration, the office garnered limited support among faculty members and senior administrators, many of whom did not understand the Affirmative Action Officer's role or welcome her interventions.

To her credit, the Affirmative Action Officer found ways to establish a meaningful role as a trusted ombudsperson for faculty, administrators, and staff, and as an unofficial dean of multicultural affairs with respect to LGBT students and students of color. She created an

affirmative action committee, which provided motivated staff, administrators, and faculty with a forum in which to share their goals for the community, and her office funded opportunities for employees to attend diversity and antiracism workshops. Staff, students, and parents of color remember Mrs. Gardiner as an inspiring presence (the African-American Bi-Semester Worship Service she initiated was named in her honor after she retired), but her impact on hiring practices at the faculty and administrative level remained negligible.

After Mrs. Gardiner announced her retirement, President Gerety commissioned an external committee to examine how the office should be restructured. The committee's report was submitted just before President Marx came into office and did not receive wide circulation. To bridge the transition, the new president made two interim appointments – of an Acting Affirmative Action Officer to handle staff issues and a Special Assistant to the President to handle issues relating to faculty diversity. Once the interim Affirmative Action Officer returned to his primary responsibilities, I lobbied to include all the functions relating to staff, administrators, and faculty within the portfolio of Special Assistant to the President for Diversity. I was concerned that if diversity initiatives among the faculty were separated from those affecting the rest of the community, long-range planning to support diversity goals would not be centrally coordinated.

V. Diversity at Amherst – Future Directions

After three years as Special Assistant to the President for Diversity, I am more convinced than ever of the value of keeping the College's diversity initiatives within a single portfolio, held by a senior administrator. The College needs a single, coherent, diversity agenda that is seen by all its employees as an equalizing force, capable of breaking down bureaucratic hierarchies in ways that enhance the ability of everyone involved to profit from inclusion in a dynamic, productive learning community. As long as race-attentive admission and employment strategies continue to attract legal scrutiny, affirmative action policies that focus exclusively on race will remain difficult to support. If racial diversity is to remain an important goal for institutions such as Amherst in this legal climate, it must be seen as one of several forms of diversity to which the institution is committed, including race, gender, sexual, and religious diversity, to name only a few of the salient categories.

The position of Chief Diversity Officer should also be a full-time job. Apart from the amount of work the position involves, the appointment of another part-time officer from within the institution would merely deplete the College's present resources with respect to diversity. Any individuals whose current service to the College would make them strong internal candidates for this position are probably already fully engaged in serving the College's diversity agenda in some other capacity. To remove such people from their present offices and ask them to acquire a whole new skill set in order to make a short-term commitment to these responsibilities would compromise the diversity office's ability to plan for the long term. It would also deprive the individual's current department of a valuable and scarce resource with respect to diversity.

It's tempting to think that only someone who already knows Amherst well could do this job, but insider status or knowledge of the institution need not be a primary consideration if the chief diversity officer is perceived as occupying a position of access and administrative authority, on the one hand, and working, on the other hand, to further an agenda that is securely

anchored within existing governance structures. A well publicized national search for a Chief Diversity Officer would do more for raising the profile of the office and an understanding of diversity goals than the low-profile reassignment of a familiar face. The search process would bring together representatives from across the College to lead public discussion about the role of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. It would eventually bring to the campus a series of finalists who could challenge the community with a fresh vision for what institutional diversity could make possible.

Similar to the Office of Admission, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion should not be responsible for setting the diversity agenda for the institution; that agenda must be embedded in the governing policies of the institution, laid down and enforced, like admissions goals, by the relevant faculty and administrative committees. The task of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion should be to lead the College in implementing that agenda, to educate and advise the relevant committees and departments about how best to integrate diversity goals into their policies and practices, to facilitate curricular and extra-curricular programming aimed at nurturing a culture of inclusivity, to provide departments with information and strategies that help them locate and recruit a diverse range of employees, and to assist supervisors and employees as they grapple with the challenges that the introduction of significant numbers of new colleagues of diverse backgrounds are sure to present. Like the Office of Admission, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion should also play a significant role in monitoring and reporting on the College's success in achieving its diversity goals. Once appointed, the Chief Diversity Officer will need to have clear lines of communication to other administrative departments, enhanced administrative support, and the resources necessary to keep abreast of developments in the field and to share best practices with professionals at other institutions. What follows here is a list of the duties I performed as Special Assistant to the President for Diversity and Inclusion (Section VI), a list of other duties essential to the future success of the office (Section VII), and a list of resources (both human and material) that the office will need in order to be effective (Section VIII).

VI. Duties of the SAPD

My time on the job has been devoted primarily to the groups of tasks listed below. At the end of each group of tasks I have also listed duties that I did not take on, due to the limitations on my time and resources, but which I consider essential to this office:

Recruitment – What Has Been Done

- 1) Met with academic and administrative departments to discuss searches.**
- 2) Approved ads for faculty and administrative searches.**
- 3) Interviewed all finalists for faculty and administrative searches.**

Apart from 20-30 faculty searches per year, each of which brought 3-5 finalists to campus, I worked on another 30 searches at the administrative level with the Library, the Advancement Office, the Dean of the Faculty's Office, the Office of Admission and Financial Aid, the Information Technology Department, the Athletics Department, the Mead Art Museum, and the Comptroller's Office. Opportunities to interface with departments and candidates during the recruitment process constitute the backbone of the SAPD's responsibilities. This is how the SAPD learns to navigate departmental cultures; how departments learn to articulate and evaluate the importance of diversity within their

hiring criteria; and how candidates establish their first understanding of the priority given to a commitment to diversity in Amherst's expectations for them.

Recruitment - What Remains to Be Done:

1) Start work with departments earlier and widen the scope of that work. Academic departments need to start working with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion **at least two years** before a department puts in an FTE request, and administrative departments should be working with the office on an ongoing basis. The Diversity Office needs to be able to provide incentives to departments to send members of their staffs to meetings at which they can develop relationships with minority scholars or professionals within their fields. To ensure that such consultation takes place, HR and the CEP should require all departments to produce a diversity plan that identifies the areas each department considers important for enhancing its ability to serve a diverse community. The SAPD's role would then be to facilitate rather than to enforce this process by helping departments identify their priorities, providing departments with resources to assist their recruitment efforts, assisting departments in researching professional and intellectual trends in their fields that track diversity initiatives (e.g. clustering of women and scholars of color in emergent interdisciplinary fields in the sciences; models for administrative roles that attract new groups into higher education administration, etc.), and supporting departments wishing to host conferences and job fairs at Amherst College for professionals of color in a range of disciplines, especially conferences aimed at promising undergraduate and post-graduate students. Many of the most effective organizations involved in the professional development of faculty and administrators of color are based in the South and Southwest. To gain access to these networks and make their members aware of job opportunities in the Northeast, the College will need to become actively involved in hosting some of their activities.

2) Establish and maintain links to local and regional communities of color. The Office of Human Resources, in collaboration with the Five College Community Outreach Coordinator, has shouldered much of the responsibility for supporting regional recruitment efforts to attract employees of color into graded and mid-level positions. However, here again, regional communities of color need to understand themselves as playing a vital role in the College's diversity agenda, and the SAPD will need to work with HR to demonstrate the College's commitment at the highest level to including the wider community in its diversity efforts.

3) Collect and analyze AA/OE data returned by job applicants in a timely manner. At present we lack the tools and manpower to gauge the diversity of applicant pools while searches are still in progress, so as to use that information to extend searches, or to redirect outreach strategies when the pool of candidates of color is meager.

Retention -What Has Been Done

1) Co-facilitated workshops on "Respect for People" for new faculty, administrators, and staff and co-facilitated workshops for supervisors to help them deal with issues of diversity as they affect job performance and relationships within their departments.

The College is legally obligated to update sexual harassment workshops for all its employees at regular intervals. We have expanded the content of these workshops to

address a broad swathe of issues relating to diversity, inclusion, and respect for people. Co-facilitators were Stephen Butler, the trainer in the Office of Human Resources, and Kent Faerber, one of the attorneys retained by the College. By integrating faculty, administrators, and staff in these sessions, we hope the workshops will also serve as a first step in breaking down caste barriers between academic and nonacademic employees.

2) Initiated conversations, together with HR, to help administrative departments consider creating a diversity plan tailored to their specific needs.

Conversations with other administrative departments are still going on, but only the Advancement Office actually got to the point of writing up such a plan, and then, only in response to a specific administrative directive.

3) Liaised with the Human Resources Office and the Dean of the Faculty's Office to help resolve personnel matters related to diversity and acted as a confidential resource for faculty, administrators, and staff dealing with a range of issues related to diversity.

In at least half of the searches with which I was involved, the successful candidates took me up on my offer to continue our conversations once they arrived on campus and to help them in navigating their relationships to the College and the wider community. I helped employees establish contact with service providers beyond the College (churches, ethnic hairdressers, childcare facilities, support groups, clubs and affinity groups) and assisted all employees with issues related to spousal job opportunities and housing. New faculty members sought my assistance in establishing contact with colleagues beyond their departments with whom they shared academic or other interests and in working out how to launch new research projects and pedagogical initiatives related to diversity. A range of employees sought my help in sorting out how to respond to challenges related to issues of race, gender, or sexuality. The ombudsperson also referred individuals to my office when she thought their concerns might have a diversity dimension. Conversely, supervisors, especially those who had recently brought female employees into predominantly male environments, or who had hired new employees of color, occasionally consulted the office for help in trying to work out how best to mentor their new employees. Such interactions have helped create relationships of trust between the SAPD and a wide variety of employees and supervisors and strengthened their support for the College's broader diversity goals.

Retention – What Remains to Be Done

1) Establish a baseline for measuring progress towards diversity goals and a system for monitoring outcomes. The regular campus climate survey mentioned under "Material Resources" will be an essential tool in this regard. The office also needs to gather periodic feedback from new employees about their progress in pursuing the diversity goals they established for themselves in their initial interviews, as well as their perception of how they themselves have fared with respect to diversity and inclusion.

2) Extend the "Respect for People" Workshops to include all personnel.

3) Offer all supervisors (including the chairs of academic departments) training in how to interpret new legislation about discrimination and harassment and ensure that they understand the College's policies and procedures in this regard.

4) Revitalize the work of affinity groups as requested by faculty, administrators, and staff. Members of several racial and ethnic groups have expressed a wish that the office

convene meetings that would help them get to know faculty, administrators, and staff with whom they share commonalities of descent. Other groups (LGBT employees, junior women faculty, parents of preschoolers, employees concerned about issues of class, civic engagement, etc.) also have turned to the office to broker connections among themselves. While it should not be the office's responsibility to mandate these groups, the SAPD should support them where they exist, encourage their formation when a perceived need arises, and supply them with resources, funding, training and executive access, as requested.

5) Facilitate the work of departmental/divisional diversity committees. The Advancement Office is considering establishing an internal committee on diversity and inclusion. It may be helpful to encourage other large administrative units to establish similar "branch" committees that would work independently on agendas of their own devising but consult as the need arises with the SAPD.

VII. Governance Issues

Over the last few years, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion has functioned without the assistance of an appointed college committee and without formal access to other faculty committees other than an internal working group. The office will be most successful if it has the support of the following governance structures:

- 1) A standing college committee for inclusion and diversity** that includes faculty, administrators, staff, and student representation. If the SAPD is hired from outside the faculty, it will be very important to have "divisional" representation from across academic and administrative departments on this committee.
- 2) Regular interactions with the CEP**, as well as consultations with the Dean of the Faculty over the use of "diversity FTEs" for faculty appointments.
- 3) Access on an invitational basis to meetings of the President's Executive Council, senior staff, ACP, CPR, the Committee of Six, and inclusion in CCAFA reviews of the incoming class.** Although the office of the SAPD should be perceived as having an identity separate from the administrative executive, it is important that discussions of diversity goals involve major committees and senior administrators directly and that these goals are formally reviewed at least once a year, or before major policy decisions about new diversity initiatives are put into practice.

Human Resources

- 1) A full-time professional as Special Assistant to the President for Diversity and Inclusion who has senior administrative status and professional and/or academic credentials.**
- 2) A full-time administrative assistant to the SAPD**, capable of (1) handling all the scheduling for the office; (2) creating and maintaining a website; (3) locating and updating resources to help academic departments keep track of diversity opportunities within their fields and to supply them with updated lists of potential applicants; (4) liaising with the Office of Institutional Research around assessment and monitoring resources that support diversity initiatives; (5) coordinating conferences, receptions, and workshops aimed at educating members of the community on diversity issues.

3) An additional FTE in the Office of Human Resources for someone with bilingual skills and multicultural professional expertise who can help the department manage the College's relationships with the wider local community of color, identify minority applicants for graded positions, and work closely with supervisors of graded employees to support their efforts to hire and fully integrate employees of color into their ranks. The HR Office has begun to develop mechanisms for addressing these issues but these have been hampered by a general shortage of personnel.

4) An additional half FTE in the Office of Human Resources to support diversity training for employees and/or funding to contract out such work. At present most of these workshops are co-facilitated by the half-time trainer and the SAPD who handle about six such workshops involving approximately 150 new employees and administrators per year. The need to expand such efforts to cover all 825 of the staff and faculty will stretch the resources of the present part-time facilitators beyond capacity.

Material Resources

1) Funds to sponsor faculty, administrators, and staff to attend conferences and workshops that focus on diversity issues within their areas of expertise;

2) A Website with links to the Office of Admission, the Dean of Students, the Dean of the Faculty, Human Resources, and the President's Office that gathers in one place information about all the diversity resources at the College and within the Pioneer Valley that a parent, student, employee, or prospective employee may wish to review;

3) An office located in a neutral space that is easily accessible to faculty, staff, administrators, and alumni;

4) Assessment Tools: The ability to mount, in conjunction with the Office of Institutional Research and Planning and/or outside contractors, regular campus climate surveys that establish a baseline for assessing where each department and each protected class of employees at the College now stands with respect to the College's diversity goals.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Amherst College leads its cohort in the racial and socioeconomic diversity of its student body. It boasts a curriculum in which issues of race (at least with respect to people of African descent), gender, and sexuality are concentrated in strong interdisciplinary departments as well as widely integrated into the general curriculum. Qualifying such markers of success, it is also the case that the faculty is still experimenting with new ways of addressing the educational needs of its diverse student body. Issues of class and caste remain a salient, often divisive matter among students, between faculty and administrators, and between staff and administrators. Students of all backgrounds continue to clamor for greater representation of Latino and Asian-American issues within the curriculum, and, with a few notable exceptions, most of the progress in diversifying the faculty, administration, and staff has been made at the level of visiting appointments or in the lower ranks of graded appointments. As more departments begin to move past token levels of minority representation, so too, have areas of friction and uncertainty grown -- around differing styles of interaction, about how best to mentor newcomers, and about how much of a role to give to diversity considerations in assessing professional competence. Although many departments seem to agree that their conversations with the SAPD over the last three years have challenged them to think more concretely about the role diversity could play in

their operations, there is as yet no clear set of guidelines about how or when such conversations should proceed or what weight the College as a whole has agreed to give to such considerations in the formal evaluative process.

My three years as Special Assistant to the President have given me a unique opportunity to understand how Amherst College runs. I will come away from these duties with a new appreciation of how hard Amherst employees at all levels work and how much goodwill there is across the board for diversity initiatives. But I have also come to understand how complex the trade-off between job openings, candidate availability, and hiring deadlines can be, and how time-consuming the integration of new diversity-related criteria into the recruitment and evaluation processes can seem to a busy department. For the Office of Diversity and Inclusion to help departments respond to these challenges and play more than a token role as an agent of change, it needs to have constant, visible support at the highest level – in the allocation of resources, in its staffing, and through the embedding of diversity policies into broader governance structures.

The College is set to launch a major capital campaign as well as to embark on several ambitious new programs around socioeconomic diversity, civic engagement, and pedagogical assessment in the months ahead. All of these initiatives enhance its appeal to an increasingly diverse group of students, alumni, employees, and donors. But the complex shifts in institutional culture needed to make these agendas successful will not happen swiftly or automatically. Faced with the disruption and disorientation – not to mention the extra work these shifts will entail -- many members of the Amherst community who genuinely support its diversity goals will become discouraged or disaffected. Department heads and supervisors will be ill-disposed to support an institutional culture that goes beyond the mere tolerance of difference, if they are asked to respond to demands that they embrace diversity without adequate preparation and support. The employees of this College take great pride in the work they do. They will have little patience for bureaucratic changes unless these changes help them do more effectively what they already do well.

The will is there. Yet all of us have felt the need for leadership – for someone whose sole responsibility would be advancing the diversity agenda to which so many of us ascribe – who has the vision and drive to lead the College in articulating a coherent diversity agenda, who has the training and experience to anticipate and defuse predictable or unexpected roadblocks as we move towards our goals, and who has the professional track record and personal qualities necessary to earn the respect and trust of the students, faculty, administrators, staff, and alumni of this institution. In this interim period of assessment and refocusing, my own contribution to this effort has been to start a moderately open-ended conversation about diversity and inclusion and to use the credibility and authority I bring with me from other assignments to get people who would not normally do so to participate in that exchange. I think I have had some success in this regard. The community now is ready to move from talk to action.

Rhonda Cobham-Sander
Special Assistant to the President for Diversity, Amherst College
September, 2007

Appendix 1: Faculty, Administrators, and Staff, as of 2007-08

	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Mixed	Totals	Disabled	EE Totals	Minority Percentages
Faculty*	9	7	9		25		169	14.8%
<i>Visiting Faculty</i>	2	1	4		7		25	28.0%
Lecturers/coaches <i>(Visiting Lecturers, coaches)</i>	1	4	10		15	0	43	34.9%
Administrative	12	0	2	1	15		127	11.8%
Staff	1.5	12	14		41	1	461	8.9%
Totals (Regular EEs only)	37	23	35	1	95	1	800	11.9%
<i>Totals (Visitors only)</i>	2	1	4		7		25	28.0%
Grand Totals	39	24	39	1	102	1	825	12.4%

* Faculty includes the PRO's and Post 70 counts

Percentages

Faculty*	5.3%	4.1%	5.3%	0.0%
<i>Visiting Faculty</i>	8.0%	4.0%	16.0%	0.0%
Faculty/TA	2.3%	9.3%	23.3%	0.0%
<i>Visiting Lecturer</i>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Administrative	9.4%	0.0%	1.6%	0.8%
Staff	3.3%	2.6%	3.0%	0.0%
Totals (Regular EEs)	4.6%	2.9%	4.4%	0.1
Grand Totals (Including Visiting)	4.7%	2.9%	4.7%	0.1

Acknowledgements

In the course of the last three years, I have been overwhelmed by the generosity with which my colleagues across the College have responded to my requests for assistance: Bill Barlow, Jaqui Bearce, Irene Berwick, Jim Brassord, Linda Bisi, John Carfora, John Carter, David Cox, Charri Boykin East, Sherre Harrington, Michael Hawkins,, Bekki Lee Ron Lembo, Marian Matheson, Katie O'Hara Edwards, Nancy Ratner, Ron Rosbottom, Peter Shea, Joy St. John, and Ruth Thornton, as well as successive officers of the ACPP, all have shared with me their considerable institutional experience in dealing with various issues of diversity. Stephen Butler, Katie Bryne, Mica Eberbach, and Pat Long have made it their business to shoulder new responsibilities and to acquire new expertise in order to enhance the ability of the Human Resources Office to address diversity goals. The College also employs a number of faculty, administrators, and staff members of all races, whose professional expertise with respect to diversity goals is underutilized at present. Several of these individuals have indicated their interest in sharing with other employees the diversity training they have benefited from on the planning boards of their home communities, or in the working groups organized by my predecessor, Hermenia Gardiner. Many of our newest colleagues, especially the recent hires in math and science and in the Advancement Office, continue to astonish me with their grasp of the ways in which diversity concerns affect their fields and the energy with which they have taken the initiative to address these concerns within their departments. I'm confident that all these individuals will support the efforts of the next Diversity Officer.

Original Message

From: Martha Umphrey

Sent: Monday, March 03, 2008 4:51 PM To: Anthony Marx

Cc: Robert Sweeney; Susan Niditch; Patrick Williamson; Leah Hewitt; Nancy Ratner; Benjamin Bishop 09; Rohit Raj 08; Stephanie Gounder 08; Martha Umphrey

Subject: CEP update

Dear Tony -

In light of our conversation at Friday's CEP meeting, I thought it might be useful to clarify for you where our CEP work has taken us so far this year in the areas of writing and the First-Year Seminar.

Writing generally:

In light of the recommendations we received from last year's Ad Hoc Committee on Writing, which as you know explicitly recommended against proposing a College-wide writing requirement at this moment, we have worked closely with Greg to move forward with an expansion and intensification of writing instruction at the College. In particular, we have initiated and enabled conversations with Jyl Gentzler and Michele Barale about how to build a culture of writing here in ways that can enhance the already remarkable work they and others are doing with faculty and students. We're very excited and grateful that Greg was able to find resources to put behind their efforts and continue to work closely with them in a number of areas, and we're happy to see that the Writing Center is on the cusp of reorganizing its operations and mission and look forward to working with Michele as is appropriate.

We have also consulted with Michele and Jyl at some length about defining writing attentive and writing intensive courses, and are working at least provisionally with the definitions they developed in conversation with faculty in their writing seminar and with other colleagues teaching 01 courses:

Writing Attentive Courses: Any course in any discipline can define itself as Writing Attentive (W) if it has as one of its conscious and stated objectives the improvement of students' critical writing, whether that writing is highly discipline-specific (e.g., a lab report) or broader in its application. Whether a course counts as a W course is determined not so much by the number of pages of writing students produce as by the uses to which that writing is put. In particular, writing assignments should be used at least in part for the purpose of improving students' writing skills rather than solely as evidence of their mastery of course content. Accordingly, in W courses, students can reasonably expect to receive extensive feedback not only on the content but also on the form of their writing. This feedback might be given in a variety of ways, e.g., written comments, one-on-one paper conferences, and/or classroom discussion of samples of student writing.

Writing Intensive Courses are designed specifically to meet the needs of students whose secondary education did not adequately prepare them for writing at Amherst College. Students who take these courses will be taught the fundamentals of academic writing: thesis development, the use

and citation of secondary sources, cogent argumentation, effective organization, the construction of coherent and unified paragraphs, and the crafting of complex yet clear sentences whose grammatical structure accurately mirrors the logical relations between the ideas they express. Though a significant amount of class time will be devoted to writing instruction, these courses are based squarely within a particular discipline and will count toward the major in the department in which they are taught.

We intend to use the latter to guide us as we recommend new FTEs in line with CAP priorities, and the former to guide faculty who will attach keywords to their courses once the online registration system has come online.

Online Registration:

We spent quite a bit of time this past fall discussing how best to use the new capabilities of an online catalog and online registration to enhance advising and augment the CEP's knowledge of curricular activity. After consulting with department chairs, and with IT and IR, we have decided to move forward in a two-step process.

- this spring, develop a set of practical keywords, generated both by faculty and out of current practices, that advisors can use to help students find courses that can move them beyond their comfort zones, improve their writing, and so forth. That list is essentially ready to go now that we have completed the new course approval process. "W" courses will most likely be listed as "writing" in the keywords dropdown list, and will be defined as indicated above.
- augment that core list next year once we see how it works both practically and conceptually, as faculty accustom themselves to the new technology and both advisor and College needs become clearer.

We thoroughly discussed ways that we might construct a set of more general rubrics that would help to map the entire curriculum in accord both with the six liberal studies areas listed in our catalog and with stated CAP priorities (e.g., interdisciplinarity, global comprehension, etc.). Having generated a preliminary list on that basis, we all concluded that the catalog categories were designed without regard to the practical activity of sorting through the wide variety of courses offered here, and were impossible to translate effectively into an online system. Further, we are not as yet convinced that it would be either useful or wise to devise a general curricular mapping system - especially a normative one that would require that we police a variety of definitions (i.e., come up with a concrete definition of "quantitative literacy" or "interdisciplinary" and then decide which courses do or do not qualify). That is a very labor intensive and tricky process that would require a strenuous and ongoing commitment. Certain keywords, particularly "writing" and perhaps others, will require such a commitment, though, and we should and will take on that circumscribed task.

First-Year Seminars

We received the report from the First-Year Seminar Committee on January 23, not knowing it would be placed on our agenda this spring, and took up the question substantively at our first meeting of the semester, on Feb. 1. To accommodate your schedule, we postponed meeting with the FYS committee until last Friday, at which point I had hoped we could jointly craft a process to move forward expeditiously with a review and reconceptualization of the First-Year Seminar regime. Frankly, we did not accomplish as much as I had hoped at that meeting; but after you left we did ask Greg to request that the C6 charge the FYS Committee with the task of proposing changes to our current system, and Buffy and I agreed to meet this week separately to be sure the two committees stay in touch as they begin their work. I'm confident that they and we on the CEP will take up this project with imagination and energy.

Of course all this activity is ongoing, even as we move into FTE season and on top of other tasks (reviewing the honors system, proposing revisions to the drop-add process, meeting with departmental external reviewers, preparing for reaccreditation and the April trustee meeting, entertaining proposals for new majors, reviewing FIF proposals, and so forth). Knowing that it can be difficult for any of us to keep track of the high level of activity occurring at the College these days, I hope this update is useful to you. If you would like to discuss the particulars in more detail or have further questions or concerns about any of these subjects or about faculty governance more generally, I might suggest that you contact me directly, since I believe that chairs are the appropriate and most effective relay of first choice between the administration and facultygoverned committees. Certainly such conversations can help avoid misunderstandings and open up space for negotiation, planning, and generous engagement.

I hope the reaccreditation process we are undergoing is fruitful for all of us as we continue to address some very difficult curricular questions, and look forward to continuing our work on these and other issues.

All best, Martha

Martha Merrill Umphrey

Associate Professor
Department of Law, Jurisprudence and Social Thought

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From: Anthony Marx
Sent: Wednesday, March 12, 2008 10:21 AM
To: Martha Umphrey
Cc: Robert Sweeney; Susan Niditch; Patrick Williamson; Leah Hewitt; Nancy Ratner; Benjamin Bishop 09; Rohit Raj 08; Stephanie Gounder 08; Gregory Call
Subject: RE: CEP update

Dear Martha:

Thanks for your helpful email. I know there is a lot going on for both of us, and I am most grateful for all your efforts on these fronts. I also appreciate the efforts of the CEP and of the faculty as a whole, respect the faculty's crucial role in curricular matters, and do see the progress that is being made. There is no doubt that we are moving, as we must, though I also see the difficulties and complexities. I also agree that being in touch with the CEP is essential, which is why I was glad to come to the meeting, and grateful for your further update and clarification. In the same spirit of keeping lines of communication open and working, I thought it might be useful for me to share some further thoughts, which I present simply as my own views.

In terms of writing, again I appreciate the on-going efforts of many committees and colleagues to work through this issue, mindful of faculty concerns that I not overstep on this particular front. I understand that the Ad Hoc Committee last year did not put forward a writing requirement, but I do worry that has caused something of a governance conundrum. As you know, the recommendations of that committee have largely all been acted on, leaving us still with the need for the proposal that the faculty requested in the first place and on which they cannot act until a process brings such a proposal forward. We need a clear plan, within our governance structures, to get the faculty what it requested for further deliberation, even as we continue to build up our capacities.

I am glad to learn we will go ahead with the W designation, though I do think we need to be as specific as we can be about what qualifies for that designation. Being clear seems only fair to the students who will be so advised by this designation and to the faculty seeking to give helpful advice. I thought Jyl and Michele put forward a workable proposal for what would qualify more specifically.

I agree that the intensive writing courses are important, though I am concerned about the large number of students who have been advised to take them but then don't. This presents a serious challenge for us as educators. And while the FTEs for writing were meant, in part, to help staff such courses, the FTE allocation was justified by the notion of a more extensive and complete approach to writing as discussed by CAP and the faculty. As much as I want to support the writing intensive courses, and I do, I worry about allocating crucial FTE resources without having a sense and agreement on the larger approach of which writing intensive courses will surely be a part, but only a part. At a minimum, I need to understand better what the process is for developing that more complete vision/plan, even as we consider how to staff writing intensive courses.

I also appreciate the effort to develop a keywords system to help advising, but here I also am not sure of the way this might develop. The Committee of Six said we should just go ahead using the categories in the catalogue, approved by the faculty. I understand and appreciate that the CEP found those wanting, but I do worry about a solution that has no particular guidelines for such categories. Keywords, if I understand that notion correctly, are not the same, for there will be huge variation depending on what words faculty use in course descriptions. I don't think the solution requires a general curricular mapping system. If we don't want to note humanities, social science, etc. as being too blunt a measure and, in any case, too obvious to be very helpful, that is fine. But I thought we were headed toward categories such as: arts, languages, foreign cultures, quantitative, and/or lab, in addition to writing. Those would help us advise students who are avoiding these areas of the curriculum (without requiring any distribution, but further raising the issue to inform advising) and allow us to track which students and how many are avoiding each area or combined areas. Perhaps a compromise would be to offer a list of keywords we are all focused on, as per above, so that faculty can be sure that they are or are not signaling when particular areas or skills are being addressed in their courses.

I look forward discussing next steps on First-Year Seminars with the Committee of Six.

I hope you also find it helpful for me to be as clear as I can be about my concerns.

Yours, Tony