

### **Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, November 13, 2006**

The twelfth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2006–2007 was called to order by President Marx in his office at 3:30 P.M. on Monday, November 13, 2006. Present were Professors George, Hilborn, O’Hara, Parker, Schneider, and Woglom, Dean Call, President Marx, and Assistant Dean Tobin, Recorder. The minutes of October 23, October 30, and November 3 were approved.

Under “Announcements from the President,” President Marx asked the Dean where the discussion stands about the proposal that Amherst staff members be permitted to enroll in credit-bearing courses at the College. He was queried about the status of this proposal at an open meeting that he had with staff members on November 8. The Dean informed the members that, last year, the Committee of Six and the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) recommended that staff members be permitted to enroll in courses if they receive the approval of the faculty member teaching the course and if this approval is communicated in writing to the Registrar prior to enrollment. Dean Call said that he believes that the CEP still needs to give its final approval and that he would check to see when the committee plans to revisit this issue.

Dean Call shared with the members three letters (appended) sent to the Committee by the CEP. The Committee discussed first the CEP’s suggested changes to Professor George’s proposal that the section of the College Catalog on Examinations and Extensions (page 56) be clarified. After some discussion, the members agreed on the following language, which incorporates the CEP’s changes and some small additional revisions, and asked the Dean to share the following revised version (with all changes in bold capital letters) with the CEP:

Examinations are held at the end of each semester and at intervals in the year in many courses. At the end of each semester, final grades are reported and the record for the semester is closed. In conformity with the practice established by the Faculty, no extension of time is allowed for ~~intraterm~~ papers, examinations, and ~~incomplete~~ laboratory or any other course work, **OTHER THAN FINAL EXAMINATIONS, PAPERS, AND PROJECTS** beyond the date of the last scheduled class period of the semester unless an extension is granted in writing by both the instructor and Class Dean. **LIKewise NO EXTENSION BEYOND THE LAST DAY OF FINAL EXAMINATIONS IS ALLOWED FOR SCHEDULED, SELF-SCHEDULED OR TAKE-HOME EXAMINATIONS TO BE TAKEN DURING THE FINAL EXAMINATION PERIOD, INCLUDING FINAL PAPERS AND PROJECTS DUE DURING THE EXAMINATION PERIOD, UNLESS AN EXTENSION IS GRANTED IN WRITING BY BOTH THE INSTRUCTOR AND CLASS DEAN.** Only for medical reasons or those of grave personal emergency will extensions be granted beyond the second day after the examination period.

The Dean agreed and confirmed for the members that a vote of the full Faculty is not required to revise this language since it is meant only to communicate current policy.

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The Committee next discussed the CEP's letter regarding the revised charge to the committee and the Committee of Six's concerns about the proposal to add a researcher as a member ex officio of the CEP without vote. Professor George said that he feels strongly that a researcher should not be added to the committee's membership. He offered the examples of several administrators who play crucial roles in the work of faculty committees (the Fellowships Coordinator, for the Committee on Student Fellowships, and the Assistant Dean of the Faculty, for the Committee of Six) who are not members of the committees that they support. Professor George commented that, even without vote, as a member of the committee, the researcher would play a role in implementing educational policy, which he feels is not appropriate and is unprecedented. He noted that senior administrators are asked to serve on some committees because they are involved in making and implementing policy. He offered the example of the Treasurer and Director of Human Resources serving, ex officio, on the Committee on Priorities and Resources and the Associate Dean of Students/Associate Director of the Career Center serving, ex officio, on the Committee on Health Professions. Professor George noted that students serve on some faculty committees because they are affected by the decisions and policies made by these committees.

Professor Schneider said that he was persuaded by these examples and arguments and that he agrees that the researcher should not be a member of the CEP. Professor Parker commented that, for reasons of equity in the way faculty committees are structured, he concurred that the researcher should not be on the CEP. He suggested that the role of the researcher be written in to the CEP's charge as a way of ensuring that this position is regularized. The Committee agreed to modify the language (the Committee of Six's most recent changes in bold capital letters) in the following way and asked the Dean to share it with the CEP:

**I. The Committee on Educational Policy.** The Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) is composed of five faculty members, each serving a three-year term; THE DEAN OF THE FACULTY, *EX OFFICIO*, WITHOUT VOTE; ~~A RESEARCHER FROM THE DEAN'S OFFICE, EX OFFICIO, WITHOUT VOTE;~~ and three student members, each serving a two-year term. The Humanities, the Social Sciences and the Natural Sciences must be represented on the committee, by both faculty members and student members. Each year the committee chooses its own chair ~~and secretary~~ from among its five faculty members; **A RESEARCHER APPOINTED BY THE DEAN OF THE FACULTY INFORMS AND SUPPORTS THE WORK OF THE CEP AND THE RESEARCHER SERVES AS COMMITTEE SECRETARY.** The chair sets the committee's agenda. Nominations of the faculty members for the Committee on Educational Policy are made by the Committee of Six and reported to the Faculty in advance of the Faculty meeting at which they are to be elected.

The Committee on Educational Policy is expected to ~~study~~ REVIEW AND EVALUATE, AND TO REPORT TO THE FACULTY ON, the general educational policy of

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the college; to consider suggestions from departments or from individual Faculty members or students relating to changes in educational policy, including proposals for new courses, new programs, and altered major programs or honors requirements; and to make recommendations to the Committee of Six and the Faculty. ~~In addition,~~ The Committee on Educational Policy advises the President and the Dean of the Faculty about the allocation of TENURED AND TENURE-TRACK faculty positions to departments. IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FTE SUCH ALLOCATIONS, THE COMMITTEE CONSIDERS THE CURRICULAR NEEDS OF INDIVIDUAL DEPARTMENTS AND THE COMMITMENT OF DEPARTMENTS TO OFFER COURSES THAT MEET IDENTIFIED COLLEGE-WIDE PRIORITIES AND CURRICULAR NEEDS.

Turning to the last of the letters from the CEP, the members noted that they had already addressed the questions (as discussed in the minutes of October 30, which had yet to be sent to the CEP and the Faculty as a whole) raised by the committee in its letter regarding the role of the CEP in the process of refining the relevant recommendations of the Committee on Academic Priorities (CAP) and the need to return to normal channels of faculty governance after a lengthy period of planning and ad hoc structures. In terms of questions about the CEP's role in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on Writing and the Ad Hoc Committee on the Evaluation and Improvement of Teaching, the Committee of Six has agreed that the CEP and the Ad Hoc Committee on Writing should work together on a writing proposal and that the Ad Hoc Committee would issue a report that would go to the CEP. The CEP would deliberate on the report and then forward it, with its recommendations, to the Committee of Six. In turn, the Committee of Six would review the proposal and forward it to the Faculty for a vote. In terms of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Evaluation and Improvement of Teaching, the Committee of Six has agreed that it would be beneficial to have the CEP deliberate on the Ad Hoc Committee's report before the document comes to the Committee of Six.

Professor Woglom, while agreeing with the process described above and acknowledging the need to return to the normal practices of faculty governance, raised some concern about delays and logjams that might be caused by the unusually high volume of issues that will be funneled through the CEP. Professor O'Hara agreed and suggested that specific timetables should be set for the ad hoc committees' reports to the CEP, and for the CEP's report to the Committee of Six. Several members of the Committee expressed concern that, under the current schedule (both committees have been asked to complete their work by the end of this academic year), proposals regarding writing and senior teaching evaluations would not come before the Faculty for conversations and votes during this academic year. Professor Hilborn noted that the ad hoc committees would certainly have interactions with the CEP and conversations with the Faculty this year, as the committees develop proposals. Professor Woglom said that, even if this is the case, he is concerned that momentum will be lost if the Faculty waits until a year from now to take action. He worries about the effect that such a delay will have on the Board's

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deliberations about the funding goals of the upcoming capital campaign. President Marx noted that he is mindful of the time that is needed for the ad hoc committees to do their work, and he agreed that it would be helpful for the Board to have any further indications of the Faculty's plans and implementation that can be provided this year, if possible. Professor Woglom wondered if at least one proposal could come before the Faculty this year. The other members agreed and asked the Dean to convey the Committee's view to the CEP. He agreed to do so.

The Dean next discussed with the members a question about the ballot for the upcoming Committee of Six election. The members asked the Dean about the precedent for allowing eligible colleagues to come off the ballot. He responded that to his knowledge colleagues have been removed for medical reasons only. Professor Woglom noted that there have been some exceptions to this rule in the past. Professor Schneider raised questions about the exemption policy, which he views as outdated in light of the College's raised expectations in recent years for Faculty to engage in their scholarly fields in broad ways. Professor O'Hara suggested that each faculty member should have the opportunity, once in a career at Amherst, to be taken off the ballot for extraordinary circumstances. Professor Hilborn said that any number of faculty members take on professional obligations and offered the example of journal editorships. He feels that those who take on such positions should be responsible for balancing their professional obligations with their responsibility to serve the College. The Dean noted that he has had conversations with colleagues about their potential service on the Committee when they are facing unusual challenges, and he said that he is often able to provide support under such circumstances. The members agreed that this is a weighty issue and that they might discuss it more generally in the future.

The members turned to personnel matters.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Gregory S. Call  
Dean of the Faculty

AMHERST COLLEGE  
Department of Anthropology and Sociology

November 6, 2006

The Committee of Six and  
Gregory A. Call, Dean of the Faculty

Dear Colleagues,

The Committee on Educational Policy has reviewed the proposed change in the "Examinations and Extensions" section of the Amherst College Catalog. We believe that the underlined addition, while important, renders the paragraph-confusing. The third sentence seems to say that no extensions may be granted past the last day of classes for "examinations" or "papers" of any kind without written permission. The fourth sentence clearly implies that some papers and examinations may rightly be completed during the final examination period after classes have ended.

Accordingly we suggest adding to the third sentence after "or any other course work" the phrase "other than final examinations and final papers".

Sincerely,

Jerome L. Himmelstein  
Chair, Committee of Educational Policy

AMHERST COLLEGE  
Department of Anthropology and Sociology

November 6, 2006

The Committee of Six  
c/o Dean of the Faculty

Dear Colleagues:

The Committee on Educational Policy has discussed further the revised charge that the Committee of Six has submitted to us. We understand that several of you have concerns about a "Researcher" being written into the charge as an "ex officio" member of the CEP.

The CEP recommends strongly that the charge remain as currently written. The new responsibilities of the CEP require that the committee have a Researcher available on a regular basis and that this position be institutionalized. Our experience so far is that the Researcher is an integral member of the committee, central to our ongoing deliberations. Making the Researcher a member "ex officio, without vote" is the most straight-forward way to insure that the CEP will have this position available on an ongoing basis and to accord the person holding this position the status she/he deserves.

We are not concerned with the balance on the CEP being somehow tipped away from its faculty members with the addition of an extra ex officio member. We should note that in addition to student members, the Committee on Priorities and Resources has five ex officio members. The current Chair of the CEP, who served on the CPR during 1998-2000, does not recall any dilution of faculty governance as a result.

We look forward to reaching a consensus with you on this matter and forwarding the CEP's new charge to the Faculty.

Sincerely,

Andrea Gyorody '07  
William Havemann '07  
Jerome L. Himmelstein, Chair  
Helen Leung  
Susan Niditch  
Rohit Raj '08  
Robert Sweeney  
Martha Umphrey

AMHERST COLLEGE  
Department of Anthropology and Sociology

November 6, 2006

The Committee of Six  
c/o Dean of the Faculty

Dear Colleagues,

The Committee on Educational Policy met with the President and Dean on October 27. We readily agreed that all proposals regarding the curriculum and pedagogy should go through the CEP, whatever their source and whether or not they are CAP-related. The CEP will discuss these proposals, suggest changes where appropriate, forward them to the Committee of Six, and present them to the faculty. We all agreed that it is time to re-assert the normal channels of faculty governance on curricular and pedagogical issues after a long period of special committees, working groups, and the like.

One issue that we discussed at length was whether or not proposals on requiring student evaluations of senior faculty are a curricular/pedagogical issue. The CEP strongly believes that they are. We note that the ad hoc committee considering this issue has the broader charge of examining the "improvement of teaching" as well. Whether this committee decides that requiring student evaluations of senior faculty is part of improving teaching or in some sense is a separate issue, they are making a pedagogical decision. That is, they are deciding what the improvement of teaching does or does not include.



The CEP looks forward to taking on the expanded responsibilities that the CAP and the Committee of Six have given us.

Sincerely,

Andrea Gyorody '07  
William Havemann '07  
Jerome L. Himmelstein, Chair  
Helen Leung  
Susan Niditch  
Rohit Raj '08  
Robert Sweeney  
Martha Umphrey