

Committee of Six Minutes of Friday, November 17, 2006

The fourteenth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2006–2007 was called to order by President Marx in his office at 3:00 P.M. on Friday, November 17, 2006. Present were Professors George, Hilborn, O’Hara, Parker, Schneider, and Woglom, Dean Call, President Marx, and Assistant Dean Tobin, Recorder.

The meeting began with the Dean informing the members that the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) has approved the most recent version (see minutes of November 13) of changes to the section of the College Catalog on Examinations and Extensions (page 56). In addition, the Dean announced, the CEP voted to permit Amherst staff members to enroll in courses for credit, 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. The members expressed their pleasure with the decision. The Dean reported that the CEP also reviewed the most recent version (see minutes of November 13) of the enhanced charge to the CEP and now plans to offer an amendment to the charge to make the Researcher a member ex officio of the committee. The CEP informed the Dean, who absented himself at the CEP’s request during the committee’s discussion of this issue, that writing the Researcher into the charge, as proposed by the Committee of Six, does formally give the CEP the ongoing services of a Researcher, but it does not do justice to the role the Researcher has played and will have to play on future CEPs. In the CEP’s view, the Researcher is not someone who does work on an ad hoc basis for the committee, but instead is an integral part of what the CEP does and is. The members of the Committee of Six said that they do not see the necessity of making the Researcher a member of the CEP. The Committee then voted six to zero in favor on the content of the enhanced charge to the CEP and six to zero to forward the motion to the Faculty.

Professor Schneider next thanked the Dean for inviting the Faculty by email to host students who would be remaining on campus for Thanksgiving. The Dean said that Rachel Cardona, Special Projects Fellow in the Office of the President, has informed him that all the students have been matched with members of the Amherst community, and he thanked colleagues for celebrating the holiday with them.

Under “Questions to the Administration,” Professor George said that there is some concern on the part of the Faculty that tenure decisions might not be made by the end of December. The Committee noted that a motion to extend tenure deliberations beyond December had failed to receive the support of the Faculty. The Dean said that the motion was voted down, but he recalled, as noted in previous years (2004-2005 and 2005-2006) Committee of Six discussions, that it has been determined that language in the *Faculty Handbook* does not preclude tenure deliberations from extending beyond December. The President and the Dean said that there has been no change in the commitment to complete tenure deliberations by December, if at all possible.

The members turned to personnel matters and then discussed a departmental issue.

Dean Call next discussed with the members the positions of lecturers, senior lecturers, and visitors who teach at the College, noting that he is interested in assessing the structure of these positions, not the colleagues who hold them. He informed the Committee that he has

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already discussed with the CEP the issue of regularizing processes and parameters surrounding these positions and setting term limits for some of them. The Dean said that coaching positions also fall under the category of non-tenure line teaching personnel.

In response to some members' questions of definition, Dean Call noted that visiting professors hold non-tenure-track positions with contracts that are renewable for up to three years, or occasionally four years, and who are often appointed to one-year terms. They generally teach two courses per semester and pursue scholarship. While such positions are designed to fill a temporary need, over time, the Dean said, a few departments have fallen into arrangements in which long-term visitors staff their regular curriculum, a situation that he feels is not in the long-term interests of the individuals or departments involved. The President noted that such long-term visiting positions could have been an end-run around the structures of faculty governance that determine how faculty lines should be distributed. Professor George asked if having such long-term visitors is a violation of the rules of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). The Dean replied that the AAUP would not support long-term visiting professorships, since they can evolve into mutually exploitive arrangements. Dean Call said that he has taken steps to move away from long-term visitors. Instead, he has asked departments either to request long-term lectureship positions or, if they deem it more appropriate, to make FTE requests for a tenure-track position. Professor Schneider indicated that, since his wife, Klara Moricz, teaches courses as a visitor at the College, he would not participate in this discussion.

Continuing with his review of position definitions, the Dean noted that Lecturers are hired on three-year contracts, generally teach three courses per semester, and, typically, are not evaluated on their scholarship. After two three-year terms, a lecturer may be eligible for promotion to Senior Lecturer, receiving a five-year contract. Lecturers typically teach regularly for the College. A similar model for coaches, who are hired through national searches, but with four three-year contracts leading, upon successful renewals, to a four-year contract, has now been implemented. After having their contracts renewed for twelve years, coaches are eligible for promotion from Coach to Senior Coach. Regularizing the process of appointing and evaluating coaches has been a focus of the Department of Physical Education and Athletics and the Dean. The President applauded their efforts in this regard, which have resulted in the implementation of a fairer and more professional process. The members agreed that regularizing the positions discussed by the Dean is a positive step for the College.

In the context of considering this array of positions and the Faculty's expression (during the process of the Committee on Academic Priorities last year) of support for building the Faculty by adding practicing artists, the Dean and the President asked the members to consider the pros and cons of adding non-tenure lines for practicing artists or tenure-track lines. They asked whether adopting an artist-in-residence model, which would include most of the privileges of tenured faculty members and a specific-length contract, might be most appropriate for some needs in arts departments. Professors Woglom and Schneider expressed support for exploring various types of appointments for practicing artists, while not precluding tenured and tenure-track appointments. These members agreed that the traditional tenure-track model can be a

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difficult fit for some practicing artists. Professor Schneider expressed the view that this is a vexed and complex question that requires substantial review and discussion. The Committee agreed, while expressing support for developing creative, but also effective, approaches to this issue. On a related matter, Professor O'Hara said that it is her hope that the College will continue to bring distinguished visitors here to teach. The President said that he supports having distinguished visiting scholars teach at Amherst for short periods, and that the concerns that have emerged surrounding visiting faculty positions relate to having visitors at Amherst for extended periods of time.

Continuing the conversation about faculty positions, Professor Woglom noted that the moment of lifting the FTE cap seems like a good time to be addressing these issues, since departments will be making additional FTE requests. He once again expressed concern that faculty members who become members of the administration remain included in the FTE count and that departments and students may suffer as a result. Professor Woglom suggested that, when a faculty member moves to the administration, he or she should no longer be included in the FTE count. When that faculty member returns to teach in his or her home department(s), his or her FTE would be added back to the FTE count, and one less FTE would be available from the FTE pool that year. He suggested that the President and the Dean ask the Board to consider additional FTEs as faculty replacements for colleagues who are currently serving in the administration. The Dean and the President said that they would consider this idea.

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Gregory S. Call
Dean of the Faculty