

**Committee of Six Minutes
of Thursday, December 7, 2006**

The nineteenth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2006–2007 was called to order by the President in his office at 4:00 P.M. on Thursday, December 7, 2006. Present were Professors George, Hilborn, O’Hara, Parker, Schneider, and Woglom, Dean Call, President Marx, and Assistant Dean Tobin, Recorder. The Committee turned to personnel matters.

In the time remaining, the Committee discussed the presentation made by Marian Matheson, Director of Institutional Research, at the December 5 meeting of the Faculty. Some members of the Committee expressed the view that the College should track the performance of students with the lowest scores on standardized tests to see if such students succeed at Amherst. Professor Woglom noted that he has done such studies for students who enroll in Chemistry 11, Math 11, and Economics 11, and that it would be a simple matter for the College to do such research more broadly. He noted that he is not in favor of an SAT cutoff, but he is concerned that the number of low scorers in the Class of 2010 is higher than it has been in recent classes.

The Dean commented that the Faculty Committee on Admission and Financial Aid (FCAFA) plans to examine the performance of student cohorts by reader rating to determine the distribution of academic achievement evident in each reader rating cohort. He suggested that, since it is clear that individuals may be approaching these data differently and that presenting different approaches can be confusing, it would be worthwhile for those faculty members and administrators who are working on this issue to agree about how the data should be presented. The Committee agreed and suggested that a meeting be organized of those who work with these data.

President Marx noted that it will be important to think carefully about the process of moving forward on the discussion of admissions issues. He commented that the College has made unprecedented progress in the realm of transparency regarding these issues, and that he is strongly supportive of having as full a discussion as possible. He noted concern about discussing a handful of current students (the so-called “low scorers”) on the floor of the Faculty, because they could be identifiable. Professor O’Hara said that she would be interested in having the Committee of Six meet with the FCAFA face-to-face to discuss these issues. The other members agreed that such a meeting should occur.

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Gregory S. Call
Dean of the Faculty