

**Committee of Six Minutes  
of Monday, January 29, 2007**

The twenty-third meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2006-2007 was called to order by the President in his office at 3:30 P.M. on Monday, January 29, 2007. Present were Professors George, O'Hara, Parker, Schneider, Sinos, and Woglom, Dean Call, President Marx, and Assistant Dean Tobin, Recorder.

The Committee discussed and then approved the minutes of the meeting of December 20, which included final discussions regarding tenure this year. In this context, Professor George informed the President that some assistant professors who would be coming up for tenure in the next several years have shared with him their concern that, since there have been only positive decisions for the past two years, there may be some pressure to have some negative decisions in upcoming years. President Marx replied that tenure decisions will continue to be based on the merits of the individual cases and that there is no quota for positive or negative decisions.

At the structural level, the President said that it is essential for maintaining the high quality of the Faculty that the College be confident that it is using the best system for determining which faculty members should be tenured and which should not. The Committee agreed to review at a future meeting Amherst's tenure process and to discuss, at a procedural level, ideas for improving the system.

President Marx next raised several issues for the purpose of seeking the members' advice. He discussed with the Committee a proposal from the Faculty Committee on Admission and Financial Aid (FCFA) that the committee and the admission office be given the flexibility to add student spaces in next year's first-year class for students with admission academic reader ratings of one or two. The President noted that, in the last several years, not all such students had been admitted. There should also be further discussion about the expressed view of some faculty members that the College should begin developing, sooner rather than later, curricular and co-curricular proposals to meet the needs of less well-prepared students, an issue that has been discussed by the Faculty for some time. Finally, the President said, questions of procedure have arisen surrounding the best ways to prioritize and implement CAP recommendations.

Discussion focused first on the resources that would be needed if the size of next year's first-year class is increased. Dean Call said that the Trustees have agreed that additional resources would be provided to support supplemental visiting faculty members. This would be a necessary step even if the FTE cap is raised; if requests for new FTEs are granted this year, searches could not be conducted until 2007-2008 and new faculty would not begin working until 2008-2009.

Professor George asked what the procedures would be for raising the FTE cap and making proposals for FTEs. He commented that the idea of allocating some FTEs for specific CAP recommendations, on an unexpected schedule, might imply that a major CAP initiative is moving forward irregularly, and without going through the proper channels of faculty governance. He feels that there could be a perception among the Faculty that certain CAP recommendations and departments are being privileged over others. Professor George noted that, if eighty more students are added over the next four or more years, eight to ten of the eighteen FTEs will need to be allocated in order for the current faculty-student ratio to be maintained. He

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feels that having the implementation process unfold in this way would not be consistent with a college-wide process. The President responded that FTE proposals must come from the Faculty to the CEP, and that the FCAFA and admission office would determine the scale and pace of any increase in student enrollment, within the range proposed by the CAP.

Professor Woglom asked what the proper channels of faculty governance would be for raising the FTE cap. Would it be appropriate for the Faculty to vote to ask the Board to authorize two FTEs above the current cap to support the needs of less well-prepared students, he wondered. Professor O'Hara said that it is her impression that the CEP, according to its regular procedures, should advise the Faculty, in its letter to departments about FTE requests, about the CEP's willingness to accept proposals for replacement and new FTEs, with the possibility that some new FTEs would be available and that CAP priorities can be incorporated into proposals. Professor Woglom asked if the letter should say something to the effect that proposals with a quantitative emphasis that address the needs of less well-prepared students are particularly welcome. Professor Sinos said that she feels strongly that the CEP should not do so.

Continuing with the procedural discussion, Professor O'Hara said that the next step should be for the CEP to rank departmental proposals and make recommendations. The Dean noted that, as part of its regular process of ranking requests for FTEs, the CEP could rank requests for new FTEs over replacements, if it saw fit. The administration would consider the recommendations of the CEP and, if those recommendations included FTEs designated to meet some of the priorities identified in the CAP report, the administration would consider making a request to the Board to raise the cap this year by a small increment. The President and the Dean noted that these procedures would fall within the normal purview of the CEP. Professor Sinos said that the CEP should not determine which requests it will receive by encouraging departments to make FTE requests that would target particular CAP recommendations. Several members argued that it would be unfair and disingenuous to have faculty members devote their energies to making FTE requests that do not focus on the needs of less well-prepared students, if there is agreement that this is the CAP priority that should be implemented first.

President Marx said that the Board, the Dean, and he are trying to be responsive to faculty members who have said that they are ready to move forward to meet particular curricular needs and to consider adding to the faculty ranks. The Faculty has focused on these needs as part of the CAP process in prior years. Until this point, the specifics of how FTEs would be phased in have not been discussed, and this part of the process is still emerging, based on these sorts of conversations. However, one thing that is clear to all is that the allocation of FTEs should be educationally driven and should not be so rigid as to be only a function of the faculty-student ratio. He noted that the proposed increase in Faculty is proportionally twice that of the proposed increase in students.

Professor Woglom concurred, while agreeing with Professor George that adding students puts a larger burden on the Faculty and that FTEs must be added to keep up with the growth of the student body. President Marx wondered if the FCAFA might be asked to slow things down a bit and to aim for an eventual twenty students more per class over a seven- or eight-year period,

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allowing for assessment over that time. Such a schedule would allow more time to phase in FTEs while improving the current student-faculty ratio. Professor O'Hara noted that, once admission criteria are set, students can be added quickly, but that, appropriately, the process of adding faculty members is much more complex and time-consuming. The Committee agreed that the pacing at which additional students and faculty would be added would be critical.

Professor Woglom asked when a request for additional FTEs could be brought to the Board. He suggested that, in April, the administration should ask the Trustees if they would approve additional FTEs devoted to the needs of less well-prepared students. President Marx said that he believes that the Trustees will not guarantee lifting the FTE cap without specific proposals being brought forward to the administration. However, in April, he could inform the Board that, if the CEP is moving in the direction of recommending specific FTE requests that would result in the need to raise the FTE cap, it should be prepared to make a decision in May about lifting the cap.

Professor Sinos reiterated her belief that it is inappropriate for either the CEP or the Board to say that they will only entertain a certain kind of proposal. It is the Faculty's prerogative to bring to the CEP any requests it sees as valuable to the curriculum, she said. President Marx responded that it will be up to the CEP to decide whether requests that focus on meeting the needs of less well-prepared students should be a priority. Professor Schneider suggested that, because the process of requesting FTEs seems unusual because of the possible availability of additional FTEs, it will be important to communicate with the Faculty about the process in a full and timely manner. The President and the Dean agreed.

Returning to a previous conversation, Professor George expressed the view that, within the framework of eighteen additional FTEs, a multi-year approach that includes all of the priorities identified in the CAP Report should be taken. It will also be important to coordinate any increases in the size of the student body with increases in the size of the Faculty. Professor Woglom agreed that such an approach would be appropriate, noting that the implications of adding twenty more students per year over a period of years should be thought through. The President said that he is confident that the Board would acknowledge the need for increasing the size of the Faculty and the student body in a coordinated fashion. Professor Woglom asked over what period the Board would allocate the eighteen FTEs and when they would decided to do so. The President said that it is his impression that the Board will possibly make this decision in the fall, and the Dean said that it should take six to nine years to phase in the FTEs, if two or three are allocated each year.

The Committee agreed that it should meet with the FCAFA to discuss previously raised questions about this year's applicant pool and its least-prepared students and the proposal to add up to twenty additional students and the composition of those students. Professor O'Hara expressed her concern that reserving these additional slots for students ranked as academic ones and twos would exacerbate bimodality problems in the classroom. The Committee agreed to suggest that the FCAFA may want to consider slowing the pace of the anticipated growth of the student body.

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The members concurred that spreading the increase out over a longer span of years would allow FTEs to be phased in more gradually and in accordance with college-wide priorities. Professor Schneider said that the College should be aware that small changes in the student body can have major ramifications. He suggested that it might be best to add ten students to next year's first-year class and then to evaluate the effects of doing so. Some members argued that, if the student body is to be increased by eighty students, it should be done over eight years so that the phasing in of FTEs keeps pace with the growth of the student body. The President said that the CEP should closely monitor the situation and would be able to make adjustments in any schedule for implementation. President Marx noted that it is the College's hope, through networking efforts and by casting a "wider net" to raise the floor in all categories, without decreasing the diversity of the applicant pool. Professor O'Hara said that it will be important to monitor carefully the performance of students at Amherst. The President agreed, while noting that there are challenges ahead in terms of how best to measure accurately student success at Amherst.

In connection with the conversation about the needs of less well-prepared students, Professor Parker asked the Dean if the minutes of the meeting that the President and the Dean had recently with some faculty members and senior administrators in the sciences could be shared with the full Faculty, since he thought that colleagues would find the conversation informative. The Dean said that he would ask the meeting's participants if those minutes could be appended to the Committee of Six minutes. The Dean noted that he had had a follow-up meeting with some members of the original group, and that plans were now under way for a quantitative course for first-year students that would be taught by two colleagues.

Dean Call next made a series of announcements. He proposed that the College Council report for 2004-2006 be sent to the Faculty. The members agreed and said that they would discuss the report at an upcoming meeting. Professor Parker asked that the Committee be provided with the current language of the *Student Handbook* that focuses on fraternities. The Dean agreed. He next discussed with the Committee issues about security and anonymity in regard to electronic voting for the Committee Six that were raised by Professor Kaplan (appended) in a letter to the Committee. Dean Call noted that he is confident that the Department of Information Technology, at his specific request, has designed a voting system that protects the anonymity of those voting in Committee of Six elections. The Dean of Faculty's office only has access to vote totals and cannot determine which faculty members have voted, let alone their selections. Professor Schneider asked if the email addresses of voters can be linked to their votes by anyone at the College. The Dean said that he will convey that question to Peter Schilling, Director of Information Technology. He suggested that Mr. Schilling speak with Professor Kaplan about the voting system and that Mr. Schilling provide the Committee with a statement, for inclusion in the minutes, about the protections that have been put in place for electronic voting. The members agreed.

Dean Call brought to the Committee's attention that, in accordance with decisions made last year about the Schupf Scholars program, one or two current first-year students would soon be named Schupf Scholars.

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Under “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Sinos asked for clarification about the title of Lecturer at the College. Dean Call said that he could certainly understand how there might be some confusion about the title, particularly during this time of regularizing processes and parameters surrounding non-tenure-track positions. He explained 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 a few departments have fallen into arrangements in which long-term visitors staff their regular curriculum. The College has taken steps to move away from long-term visitors. Instead, departments have been asked either to request long-term lectureship positions or, if they deem it more appropriate, to make FTE requests for a tenure-track positions. 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. Professor Sinos asked if having Lecturers is an option for all departments. The Dean said that any department is welcome to request a Lecturer position. Visiting Lecturers, on the other hand, are colleagues who teach on a per-course, non-benefitted basis for the College. If colleagues from another Five-College institution teach courses at Amherst, they are granted a visiting professor’s title at the rank that they hold at their home institution.

Dean Call next asked the members for suggestions for the Memorial Minute Committee for Theodore Greene ’43, Winthrop H. Smith ’16 Professor of History, Emeritus, who died January 15. The Committee then reviewed one course proposal forwarded from the CEP and voted unanimously to send it to the Faculty for approval. The Dean discussed with the members possible dates for faculty meetings. Given the need to complete a great deal of business this term and the conflict with our usual dates and Passover, as well as spring break, the Committee agreed to consider having faculty meetings on the second and fourth Tuesdays of some months, and on the first and third Tuesdays of other months, and to try having one meeting in May at mid-day. Since the schedule is unusual, the members asked the Dean to communicate the schedule to the Faculty as soon as possible, and he agreed. The Faculty will be asked to hold the following dates for possible faculty meetings: February 20, March 13 (second Tuesday), March 27 (fourth Tuesday), April 10 (second Tuesday), April 17, May 1, May 18 (Friday, 12 noon, lunch to be provided, location to be announced), and May 24 (Thursday, 9:00 A.M.). The Committee then turned briefly to personnel matters. The Committee then set dates to be held for additional Committee of Six meetings, should they become necessary. The members also agreed to meet on Mondays at 3:00 during the spring semester. Dean Call told members that the Registrar had forwarded a thesis written by a member of the Class of 2007E for consideration for *summa*. A member volunteered to read the thesis for the Committee.

The Committee turned to a draft of the Faculty Meeting agenda of February 6. After some discussion, the members agreed that it would be important for the Faculty to continue the discussion regarding admissions that it began at the December 5 meeting and to have the

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opportunity, in particular, for colleagues to respond further to the presentations given then. Most members of the Committee felt that it would also be helpful to have an initial discussion about the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Promotion, with introductory remarks by the members of the committee. Professor George raised concerns about having a faculty meeting in which motions are not being put before the Faculty for a vote. He said that if discussion is the only item on the agenda, an open meeting would be preferable. Professor Parker worried that colleagues might not have had time to prepare for a discussion about the promotion report, which was only recently distributed to the Faculty. He also argued that the Faculty would benefit from more instruction about admissions issues, while they now have information in hand about promotion in the form of the report. Professors Woglom and Schneider each said that it would be desirable for the Faculty to become better informed about both issues through discussion. The Dean noted that the discussion of the promotion report could inform the Committee's process of formulating motions based on the promotion report, and most members agreed. The members then voted four in favor, with two abstentions (Professors George and Parker), to approve the faculty meeting agenda and to forward it to the Faculty.

The meeting adjourned at 6:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dean of the Faculty

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December 21, 2006

Committee of Six  
Amherst College  
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To the members of the Committee of Six:

I am troubled by our new, online method of voting for members of the Committee of Six. Specifically, I am concerned that voters are anonymous not because the voting method guarantees it, but rather because the Office of The Dean of The Faculty promises that it will not collect or examine our names. I find this potential loss of anonymity unacceptable, and I urge the Committee to examine this issue.

Please notice that I am not concerned with this Office of The Dean of The Faculty. I do not suspect its current members, nor any member of the administration or staff, of any wrongdoing in conducting these elections. However, the College's policies should not be specific to the people currently holding particular positions.

How important is anonymity in our voting? Observe our practice during Faculty Meetings, where a single person's request for a paper ballot must be honored without discussion, justification, or further approval from the body or chair. Whether that person's concern is founded in a real risk of being associated with a particular vote is irrelevant; we avoid the undue influence of perceived concerns associated with a "named" vote by offering an anonymous option at the slightest suggestion. This same respect for anonymity should apply to all faculty votes, ensuring that voters make unfettered choices.

I am particularly concerned about the participation of the untenured members of the faculty. They may reasonably feel more at risk in expressing their choices than other faculty and may alter their voting behavior because their identities could be associated with their votes. The tenure-track members of our faculty have perhaps the greatest interest in the selection of C6 members, for that committee is the one charged with reappointment and tenure evaluations. We should expect and encourage junior faculty to participate as fully as possible in governance, and I would not want the convenience of online voting to outweigh the importance of their participation.

I understand the desire for greater participation that online voting may yield. Thus, I do not expect an abandonment of online voting. However, online voting can be anonymous, and I would be happy, upon request, to describe specific, realistic mechanisms by which it can be achieved. Since anonymity is possible and, I believe, critical, I ask that the Committee of Six raise this topic with the administration. I consider this issue sufficiently important that the use of online voting should be suspended until issues of voter anonymity have been sufficiently remedied.

Sincerely,

Scott F. Kaplan  
Assoc. Professor of Computer Science