

**Committee of Six Minutes
of Monday, February 19, 2007**

The twenty-sixth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2006-2007 was called to order by the President in his office at 3:00 P.M. on Monday, February 19, 2007. Present were Professors George, O'Hara, Parker, Schneider, Sinos, and Woglom, Dean Call, President Marx, and Assistant Dean Tobin, Recorder.

The members turned briefly to a personnel matter.

Under "Questions to the Administration," Professor George began a discussion of the expedited process used by the Committee to approve minutes the week before faculty meetings. He said that Committee of Six members were being asked to appear in Converse on short notice, at times when some were scheduled to be in classes or labs. When minutes are released following individual editing, he said, there is no genuine Committee approval of minutes, since the first members to read and comment on draft minutes do not see changes made by those who come later. He asked whether minutes from a Committee of Six meeting in the week prior to a Faculty meeting could be approved by the whole Committee of Six on the day before the Tuesday Faculty Meeting, and then read at the Faculty Meeting, as has sometimes happened in the past. It was agreed that, although the timing is very tight and the quick turnaround is a strain on everyone involved, it is important for the Faculty to be kept informed of the Committee's discussions in the most timely manner possible. The President offered, and the Committee agreed, to have the draft minutes delivered to the members so that the Committee would not be required to come to Converse to read the minutes, as has been the practice.

Professor Parker next asked about plans to attach to the Committee of Six notes taken at the January 17 lunch on science teaching, so as to inform the full Faculty about that meeting. The Dean said that he would seek the permission to do so from those who had been in attendance. Continuing with questions, Professor Schneider expressed concern about the add/drop period and students adding, as well as dropping, courses during this time. He asked whether faculty concerns about this period have been communicated broadly to students. The Dean noted that students are informed of faculty sentiments regarding the add/drop period during orientation and also said that the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) has been discussing possible improvements to the current system. Professor Parker commented that the student "shopping" appears to have gotten out of control. Some problems are caused when faculty members drop students from classes in the second week of add/drop, Professor Woglom noted, at which point some students need to add a course. Professor Sinos said that a portion of the student body does not register for classes by the third week. Professor Schneider said that it is his hope that the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) or the Dean of Students would simply encourage all students to make plans and contingency plans to avoid, as much as possible, adding courses they had not attended in the first week.

Continuing the discussion, Professor Parker raised issues surrounding the scarcity of class meeting times. President Marx responded that the CEP had considered a proposal that each department be required to use all available time slots. Dean Call noted that the CEP instead asked departments to spread their classes across time slots voluntarily. The committee decided that class scheduling by department should be posted on the Web and that departments would be

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asked to consult those postings when formulating their schedules. This information is now available at <http://www.amherst.edu/~oir/>, and the CEP plans to see if the distribution of classes across time slots has changed since this information became available. President Marx said that he looks forward to learning about the results of the CEP's analysis and suggested that, perhaps, there could be a more effective flow of information to students about the add/drop period. He asked that the Committee of Six discuss issues relating to the add/drop period at a future meeting, and the members agreed. The President also said that it is his hope that an online system of registration and advising would be implemented by the College to aid students and faculty with the process of course selection. He believes that an electronic system that could offer the same options and level of human interaction as the current paper system would also provide additional information in a variety of formats and would be more efficient.

The members next considered how best to structure discussion at the upcoming Faculty Meeting. In addition to having a full discussion and vote on the faculty resolution proposed by the Committee of Six, the members agreed that it would be their hope that time would permit the members of the Ad Hoc Committee on Promotion to offer a report on their work. The members discussed Professor Olver's suggestions (appended to the February 12 Committee of Six minutes) for organizing conversation about the report. Several members noted that the promotion committee probably had its own plan for how to convey its work, which should be respected. At the same time, other members pointed out that it will ultimately be the Committee of Six's role to organize faculty discussion. Professor Woglom suggested that any structure should not be too open-ended, so that faculty discussion is focused. The members agreed that the promotion committee's report to the Faculty and the Faculty's response should guide future faculty discussion of the report and the drafting of motions by the Committee. In regard to the Faculty's consideration of the resolution proposed by the Committee of Six, Professor Parker asked what the next steps would be should the resolution pass. The President said that, since the Faculty Committee on Admission and Financial Aid (FCAFA) has already received approval from the Board regarding the financial portion of the proposal, the FCAFA would be able to move forward with implementing the proposal in the deliberate and coordinated manner outlined in the resolution.

The President next provided responses to a number of questions posed to him by Professor George about the effects of increasing the number of international students. The President noted that international students major in departments in the same proportions as U.S. students, with the exception of Economics, which has a higher international enrollment. Professor George expressed his hope that data could be provided on how international students distribute themselves by course enrollments in comparison to U.S. students. President Marx said that he would research that question. Professor Sinos commented that she also wonders whether international students distribute themselves across the curriculum. Dean Call noted that one indicator of academic breadth among international students is that they double major in approximately the same proportion as U.S. students. Continuing his responses, President Marx noted that 41 percent of international students have an academic reader rating of one, and 30

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percent have an academic reader rating of two. International students, the President commented, account for the highest proportion of academic ones of any category of students at Amherst and the highest proportion of academic ones and twos of any category of students at Amherst other than Asian students.

In response to Professor George's question about whether admitting more international students with financial need will lead to greater disappointment about their inability to enter U.S. medical schools, the President said that a minority of students are pre-med and some international students expect to attend medical schools in other countries. In terms of the cost of becoming need blind for international students and increasing the number of such students from approximately six percent to approximately eight percent of the student body, the cost would be about a \$1.6 million addition to the College's overall annual financial aid budget of more than \$20 million, the President said. Continuing with his responses, the President noted that MIT, Harvard, Yale, Williams, and Middlebury are among the peer institutions that offer need-blind admission for international students.

Professor George expressed concern about the proposed increase in international students, including the cost of the proposal to become need blind for international students. He said that, in his experience, many international students understandably do not know about liberal arts education and come to college in this country for vocational purposes. Professor George commented that many international students, again entirely understandably, appear to stay in the U.S. after graduation and do not bring their training and talents back to their countries of origin. Professor Parker suggested that Professor George's experience with international students might be discipline-specific and noted that his sample size is small, in any case. Expanding the number of international students does not seem to serve the College's primary mission, Professor George said. He found it remarkable that Amherst would increase its reliance on other countries to provide academically outstanding applicants, when less than half of one percent of all U.S. students who apply to college in a given year apply to Amherst College. Professor George wondered whether we are increasing our percentage of international students as an alternative to attracting top U.S. applicants. President Marx reiterated that educating the most talented students and transcending any barriers to such inclusion is a fundamental part of Amherst's mission. He noted that international students who would otherwise be accepted are currently being denied access to an Amherst education purely for financial reasons.

The members turned to personnel matters.

Dean Call next discussed with the Committee possible ways of selecting one or two Schupf Scholars from the current first-year class. It was agreed that the Dean should write to the Faculty to ask colleagues to nominate their most stellar first-year students and that he should also review nominees' transcripts.

The Committee turned to an email (appended) sent to the members by Professor Upton. The members considered Professor Upton's suggestions regarding "freeing up" FTEs. In regard to the idea of having "remedial teachers" on term contracts, the members agreed that the Faculty, in its discussions last year about needs surrounding quantitative skills and writing, expressed

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clearly that it would not delegate its teaching responsibilities in these or other areas. The President noted that the College is in the process of making a commitment to providing additional resources to support less well-prepared students, both through faculty FTEs and additional staffing. In response to Professor Upton's proposal that faculty who are administrators relinquish their tenured FTEs if they serve in administrative roles for more than three years, the Dean brought up questions of practicability and timing, while recognizing that the issue raised was an important one and that it might be discussed in the future. Finally in regard to Professor Upton's suggestion regarding faculty retirements, the Dean noted that, under the College's phased retirement system, the FTEs of participating colleagues who are age sixty-two or older are returned to the FTE pool. If they are age sixty or sixty-one, half of the FTE returns to the pool. The President asked about whether the College should be open to proposals from senior faculty members to retire by a date certain if the College would provide a bridge appointment in their department(s). Under this scenario, a new FTE would be allocated, and a search would be run, before the senior colleague retired. President Marx noted that such a system would be particularly beneficial for departments that are facing multiple retirements, and he commented on the value of having senior faculty members aid in building the future of their departments through their participation in the selection and mentoring of new tenure-track colleagues. Any retirements under this program would be entirely voluntary, and of course no one would be pressured to retire, President Marx emphasized. Professor O'Hara asked if such bridge appointments would represent an end run around the CEP. The President and the Dean said that any bridge appointment would go through the normal channels, meaning that a proposal would be made to the CEP.

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Gregory S. Call
Dean of the Faculty

-----Original Message-----

Appendix

From: Joel Upton

Sent: Friday, February 02, 2007 2:08 PM

To: Stephen George; Patricia O'Hara; Andrew Parker; David Schneider; Rebecca Sinos; Geoffrey Woglom

Subject: thoughts

Dear Colleagues,

Please forgive me for adding even a minute to your already unbearable burden. As my only representatives to the Administration, I turn to you to relay some thoughts concerning the Faculty that may have general interest.

George Kateb used to say roughly, as I remember it, that the Curriculum is the Faculty and therefore the Faculty is the College. Given the vast changes occurring at the College, is it appropriate to ask the Committee of Six to consider the wisdom of a more organized conversation with the whole faculty concerning the composition and the character of the "Faculty?"

The composition of the Faculty is currently elusive, at least to me. There are FTE's, PIF's, short, medium and long term visitors, residents, fellows, and now intimations of colleagues with more elaborate term contracts. Some of these positions are clearly vetted by the CEP and others appear more informally. In a relatively small faculty (roughly 90 of us present in any given semester), the condition of such a multi-tiered faculty would alone seem worthy of careful reflection.

The current character of the faculty might also be worthy of some reflection. The review procedures for recruitment, promotion and continuing service are, in my opinion, problematic. As a general observation, it is my sense that a trusting, mutually supportive environment of growth and promise has evolved into one of fragmentation, competition and surveillance. David Hall's letter to you pointed to one aspect of this new ethos.

A second area of potential conversation concerns the frequent refrain about the severe limitation of available FTE's and the extraordinary demands on a most scarce resource. My own department is suffering extended torture for students and faculty because of an unarguable lack of FTE recognition and support. Is it possible that the Committee of Six might entertain several overlooked sources for those FTE's which have traditionally been and presumably will continue to be the vibrant independent core of the Faculty/College?

Three possibilities:

1. All remedial teachers employed to assist the College's laudable economic/social/diversity outreach program would hold term contracts, thereby freeing up several FTE's, even as we devote considerable resources to all existing remedial problems for all of our students.
2. All faculty occupying positions in the Administration after three years of service would either return to full-time teaching or relinquish their tenured FTE in favor of a term contract. Something similar to this possibility once existed for those faculty members who wished to leave the College for a trial period of three years to pursue a different line of work while retaining their tenured appointment at the College.
3. Senior faculty members approaching retirement might be incentivized to consider exchanging their tenured appointment for a fixed-term contract. This arrangement might be imagined as a variation on the existing phased retirement plans.

Although I am certain the Committee of Six and the Administration have discussed similar ideas, is it possible that these issues might benefit from a more publically focused conversation.

Best regards,
Joel