

**Committee of Six Minutes
of Monday, February 26, 2007**

The twenty-seventh 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 26, 2007. Present were Professors George, O'Hara, Parker, Schneider, Sinos, and Woglom, Dean Call, President Marx, and Assistant Dean Tobin, Recorder. Changes to the minutes of February 19 were given to the Dean.

President Marx began the meeting by suggesting that the Committee review once again the preliminary assessment (the so-called "roadmap") created by last year's Committee of Six, of which bodies should be charged with considering each recommendation of the Committee on Academic Priorities (CAP). The purpose would be to ensure that the assignments, as currently outlined, will facilitate the consideration of the pieces of the report as they may relate to one another, whenever such a coordinated review would be desirable. Dean Call asked the members to think about possible ways to facilitate having faculty committees work together when considering interrelated CAP recommendations. The members agreed that reviewing the preliminary assessment would be valuable.

Continuing his remarks, the President informed the members that Michael Kiefer, the College's Chief Advancement Officer, has decided to step down on June 30 of this year. President Marx explained that Mr. Kiefer would like to pursue his interest in international affairs, rather than direct a second capital campaign at Amherst. At the President's request, Mr. Kiefer will serve as Special Advisor to the President for an indefinite period beginning July 1, 2007, in order to ensure a smooth transition for the next person in his role. President Marx informed the members that he would chair the search committee for Mr. Kiefer's successor and asked the Committee for suggestions of faculty colleagues who might serve on the committee. He noted that the title of Chief Advancement Officer was an unusual one within the profession and asked the members for their thoughts about the possibility of changing it to Vice-President for Advancement or Vice-President for Development, in an effort to convey fully the level and range of responsibilities associated with the position. The Committee expressed the strong preference not to adopt the title of Vice-President because of the lack of clarity that might result in terms of the individual's position within the organizational hierarchy of the College—particularly since none of the other senior officers of the College are vice-presidents—and because of the more corporate tone of the title. The President thanked the members for their advice.

Under his announcements, Dean Call informed the Committee that Professor Yarbrough has brought to his attention difficulties that she is encountering when colleagues regularly run over their assigned class times, thereby making it impossible for even the most conscientious students to arrive at the next class on time. She has communicated that she and many other faculty members often give short quizzes or other timed in-class assignments at the beginning of class. So when a student arrives late, it causes both inconvenience and potential grade consequences for the student. The members agreed that extending lectures should be avoided and asked that faculty colleagues end their classes on time.

Under "Questions from Committee Members," Professor Parker asked about how the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) imagines shifting its focus from considering FTE

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allocation on an annual basis to planning for the allocation, in a coordinated way, of the anticipated new FTEs over a period of six to eight years. He noted that, while departments undertake long-range planning when formulating FTE requests, the CEP, whose membership changes from year to year, has only considered the requests that come before it during a given year. Professor O'Hara said that conversations about longer-range planning for FTE allocation should occur as the "roadmap" for implementation of CAP recommendations is considered and faculty committees continue their deliberations. Professor Woglom commented that it may be difficult for the CEP to plan, in some cases, before it receives the reports of committees, in particular those of the groups considering recommendations surrounding writing and quantitative skills. Professor Parker said that, perhaps, appointments should be conceived in ways that are atypical, suggesting that there might be division-wide consideration of FTE allocation over the six- to eight-year period. President Marx and Dean Call agreed and asked the Committee to consider ways of bringing departments together to facilitate conversation. Professor Woglom said that he did not see the need for imposing a formal structure on the Faculty, since he believes that such conversation would arise organically. He cited the examples of faculty members in the sciences and the arts, who have had division-wide discussions that were prompted by the CAP Report. Professor George responded that the science faculty, at least, had come together at the invitation of Deans Call and Griffiths.

Other members agreed that faculty members are busy, and that it would be useful to organize ways for interested groups to come together to discuss fleshing out and implementing College-wide priorities. Professor O'Hara noted that Professor Cox, as part of his role as Thalheimer Professor (a three-year appointment that rotates among tenured faculty members across the divisions), has helped to facilitate such discussions about quantitative areas. Thalheimer Professors are selected for their dedication to teaching and to academic support in the liberal arts and at Amherst. The Thalheimer Professor is given a small fund to support a regular seminar or lunch for faculty members who are thinking about pedagogy. Professor O'Hara suggested making additional appointments following the Thalheimer model across divisions, and that such colleagues could organize and lead the type of discussions under consideration. President Marx and Dean Call expressed interest in such a plan.

Continuing with "Questions from Committee members," Professor Woglom expressed concern about the volume of general College mail that he is receiving that is not relevant to him and which he routinely throws out. He wondered if there might be a way to opt out of receiving categories of mail in order to save time and paper. Dean Call noted that the adoption of the new content management system over the course of the next year or so will allow users to choose which categories of communications they wish to focus on in the College's electronic environment. While agreeing that it is important for the College to streamline communications, the President said that care should be taken so that the spirit of the liberal arts is respected. Receiving a notice of an interesting lecture about a subject far afield from one's own might prompt someone to attend, for example. A notice of a vacancy in a department outside one's own might prompt someone to tell a friend or colleague about the position, potentially

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broadening the pool of applicants. He suggested that Professor Woglom, over the next week or more, put in a box all general College mail of a type that he would hope never to see again. The contents could then be reviewed and solutions for this problem could be considered, the President said.

Professor Woglom next brought to the attention of the Dean and the President concern about the procedures for authorizing students to participate in study-abroad programs that have not been approved by the College. At present, he spends a great deal of time vetting such programs at the request of economics majors who wish to participate in them and determining questions relating to whether credit will be granted on a College-wide or departmental level. Given that he has a large number of advisees, these deliberations have become quite time-consuming, he said, and he does not think that this is an effective use of his time. Professors Sinos and O'Hara and Dean Call said that their departments are eager to play a key role in this process. They agreed that faculty members in departments, such as Economics, that have a larger number of majors studying abroad could become unduly burdened if they are frequently asked to evaluate study-abroad programs that have not been approved by the College.

Dean Call noted that in the spring of 2005, the Committee of Six created the Ad Hoc Committee on Study Abroad (three members of the Faculty, each from a different department, and the Study-Abroad Advisor and the Registrar, ex officio). The committee's charge includes shaping policies and procedures for evaluating and approving study-abroad programs for Amherst students and assisting the Registrar and the Study-Abroad Advisor (this part-time position has now been expanded to a full-time position and has been re-named the Director of International Experience) when questions regarding the appropriateness and academic rigor of programs arise. Noting that in 2003-2004, 85 percent of Amherst students who studied abroad did so in Europe, Australia, or New Zealand, President Marx said that the committee has also been asked to work to expand the range of countries and cultural areas and linguistic opportunities offered to Amherst students who wish to study abroad. The committee was asked to make particular efforts to identify established and emerging programs in Asia, Latin America, South Asia, and Africa and to encourage study also in these areas, the President said. Dean Call noted that in the fall of 2007, the Ad Hoc Committee will report on its experience and the Committee of Six will evaluate whether the committee should become a standing committee of the Faculty. At the time that the committee was established, the Committee of Six agreed that departments should continue to make decisions about which courses receive credit toward their majors. Dean Call said that he would contact the committee and the new Director of International Experience, Janna Behrens, to ask for suggestions about how to provide additional support for departments with a large number of majors studying abroad, particularly when they wish to do so through programs that are not currently approved by the College.

Continuing with "Questions from Committee members," Professor O'Hara asked the President if he would provide information about the recently announced gift of \$6 million to the College. President Marx said that Arthur W. Koenig '66 has generously pledged \$1 million annually over at least the next six years to create the Koenig Scholarship Fund, which will bring

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talented low-income students from Latin America and Africa to Amherst, provide academic support for them, and sponsor annual recruitment trips from the College to those regions. The Koenig Scholarship Fund will designate up to five Koenig Scholars each year, focusing particular attention on the most talented and needy students from Latin America and Africa, President Marx said. Admissions decisions would be made according to the regular process, and where aid is merited on the basis of need, a Koenig Scholarship might be awarded. The President noted that the College often provides aid to students from Africa and Latin America and that the Koenig Scholarships would provide support for this effort. In the event that Amherst does not recruit five talented, low-income students from Latin America and Africa in any entering cohort, the College will consult with the donor to establish whether program funds may be carried forward to support Koenig Scholars or may be expended in support of financial aid for other needy international students.

Professor Sinos next asked about how plans for the future of the Frost Library were proceeding. Dean Call noted that a small Library Planning Group, composed of Amherst faculty members and administrators, structured and led a campus conversation last year about the long-range future of the Amherst College Library. That group's report was reviewed by the CAP. At present, the Dean is awaiting a recommendation regarding the next stage of the planning process from Sherre Harrington, Librarian of the College, and Jim Brassord, Director of Facilities and Associate Treasurer for Campus Services. President Marx noted that the library is tentatively included in the budget for the upcoming campaign, but that money cannot be raised until a clear vision emerges for the library. Answering the question of what the library will need to be ten years from now is critical and challenging, he said, while noting that the library should be the intellectual center of the campus and that he is eager to raise money for the transformation of Frost once a plan is in place. The Committee then turned to personnel matters.

Professor Parker next asked if he could convey concerns that have been shared with him by faculty colleagues about the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Promotion. He said that, while he does not defend the status quo and believes that there are difficulties with promotion as it is now carried out, he views the report as a response to problems faced by the Committee of Six with respect to the gap between *Faculty Handbook* language and actual practice. The criteria for promotion are understandably of concern to a Committee that needs to know what it's doing when it evaluates the work of tenured associate professors, but the issue faced by the Faculty more generally has to do with sustaining the intellectual and creative life of its members over the longer haul from tenuring to retirement. Does the promotion report serve that latter goal, he asked.

Professor Parker continued, noting that the promotion report itself acknowledges that "there is a limit to how much a one-time event such as promotion can do to support faculty growth or serve institutional needs" (page four). He added that there is only one sentence in the report under "The role of promotion in the continued development of the Faculty" (page eleven). The report, he contends, seeks to make the moment of promotion more meaningful by increasing the level of evaluation. However, the recommendations of the report on pages five through seven

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seem to make the criteria of promotion—the basis for the evaluation—no clearer to him than what exists at present. Professor Parker reported that he has heard some faculty say that, if we're going to have to change our promotion procedures, this report is less draconian than it might have been, which is hardly an endorsement of its principles. Many responses that have been shared with him are more strongly negative and have been along the lines of the following: Why is this the moment for a new policy and practice when so much else is changing for faculty in the wake of the CAP Report? Many colleagues, he said, view the proposed changes in promotion practice as more far-reaching than the many recent changes in the faculty culture of Amherst. For newly tenured associate professors, the recommendations seem to be more of a stick than a carrot, he said. There is nothing mentioned about expanded research money, or course relief for chairs, onerous committee work, and editorships—all of which are customary at research universities—and some colleagues question whether faculty are now to be judged by university standards of productivity but without comparable kinds of support. He said that many fear that the report's recommendations would increase Amherst's already-formidable bureaucracy. They wonder whether associate professors will pull back from institutional commitments in order to concentrate on research and teaching. They wonder whether research and teaching during this newly expanded probationary period will be less experimental and more disciplinary in orientation. They wonder whether competition among associate professors will be fostered at the expense of community. They wonder whether self-surveillance, anxiety, and enforced timidity will continue past tenure, with those who have postponed having families experiencing the hardest hit. Finally, Professor Parker said, they wonder if these recommendations are the start down a slippery slope that will lead to regular post-tenure review and merit pay.

The President suggested that all members think about Professor Parker's comments and respond at the next Committee of Six meeting.

With little time remaining, the members agreed to discuss at their next meeting how best to structure the consideration of the promotion report at the next Faculty Meeting. Professor Schneider said that he got the sense from the last faculty meeting that there should be more discussion, perhaps in a committee-of-the-whole format, before motions are formulated. Professor Woglom suggested that it might be best to take a straw vote to determine whether the Faculty feels that promotion procedures should be reviewed, without getting into the specifics of the promotion report. President Marx suggested that the Faculty should consider this important issue fully. Professor O'Hara said that she thinks that it would be useful to consider promotion before the issue of teaching evaluations for tenured professors comes before the Faculty.

The President noted that some faculty members have argued that if the promotion process has become a rubber stamp, we should call it what it is and view it as such. In his view, this approach risks raising concerns about the long-term health of the institution. Just as serious reviews for reappointment and for tenure help to ensure the continued high quality of the Faculty, the same should be true for promotion. Formalizing promotion as a moment without substance makes the College vulnerable to the charge of insularity and does not allow for the recognition of distinction. While remaining cognizant of the values of the College and its sense of community,

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President Marx said that reappointment, tenure, and promotion are critical opportunities for advising, feedback, and signaling, and for recognizing accomplishment, and should be used as such.

The meeting adjourned at 6:10 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Gregory S. Call
Dean of the Faculty