

**Committee of Six Minutes
of Monday, April 23, 2007**

The thirty-fourth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2006-2007 was called to order by Professor S. George in Merrill 507 at 3:00 P.M. on Monday, April 23, 2007. Present were Professors S. George, O'Hara, Parker, Schneider, Sinos, and Woglom and Assistant Dean Tobin, Recorder. The President and the Dean were absent because they were attending meetings of the Board of Trustees in Washington.

The members reflected on the proceedings of the Faculty Meeting of April 17 and expressed regret that the motions that they had forwarded to the Faculty had generated confusion and a lack of clarity for many colleagues. The Committee discussed the possible interpretations of the Faculty's vote (seventy in favor and twenty-three opposed, with seven abstentions) on an amended version of Motion Two, which read as follows: "The Faculty wishes to retain the current language of the *Faculty Handbook* and the Dean's letter about promotion."

Professor George said that his interpretation is that, with its vote, the Faculty has indicated that there should not be any change to the current *Handbook* language. Professor Sinos noted that, even if the current *Handbook* language remains, thanks to the Ad Hoc Committee on Promotion's report and the Faculty's discussion, many colleagues now have a better idea of what is entailed in the promotion process. She also expressed regret, as did Professor Schneider, that the Committee of Six had acted as a buffer of sorts to the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Promotion. Several members commented that the Faculty Meeting discussions about promotion would have benefited from early and direct consideration of the ad hoc committee's proposals.

Professor O'Hara, Professor Schneider, and Professor Parker disagreed that the vote at the Faculty Meeting necessarily means that the Faculty is not interested in considering small changes in the language of the *Handbook*. While acknowledging that it is difficult to interpret the vote because the Faculty did not have time to consider motion 3A, these members interpreted the implication of the passage of Motion 2 to be possible support (in the form of the "yes" votes) for having promotion practice more closely aligned with promotion policy. (Motion 3A read as follows: "Do you favor making any additions to the *Faculty Handbook* language regarding promotion?") Professor O'Hara said that, in her view, some of the "yes" voters might be indicating that they would like to see small changes in *Handbook* language to accomplish this goal. Professor Schneider agreed, offering as examples the possible inclusion of language that would allow for having colleagues outside the candidate's department serve on his or her promotion committee, the option for the candidate to initiate the promotion process, and the opportunity for the candidate to submit a letter on his or her behalf. He noted that both of these proposals were included in the ad hoc committee's report. Professor Sinos wondered if the current language would provide for maximum flexibility and that, by putting all possibilities in black and white, limitations might be set. She said that she fears that continuing the promotion discussion at the next Faculty Meeting could defer other important business before the Faculty. She worried that too much of the Faculty's time has been taken up with this issue already.

Professor Schneider expressed the view that it would be disingenuous for the Committee not to bring a proposal before the Faculty, particularly since the Committee of Six was at fault for the lack of clarity that resulted from voting on the motions thus far. Professor George said that

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the vote on Motion 2 was a vote against change, but said that any new motions should be tied to the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Promotion. Professor Woglom wondered if the minutes of the Committee's discussion would be sufficient to inform the Faculty that the Committee of Six had considered whether to propose small changes to the *Handbook* language. Most other members felt strongly that the Committee should craft a motion. Professor O'Hara said that she was particularly interested in putting before the Faculty for a vote the proposal that colleagues from outside the candidate's department could serve on his or her promotion committee. She noted that this would be a good change now and for the future, as departmental structures become more porous and faculty research becomes more interdisciplinary. After further discussion, the Committee voted five in favor and one opposed (Professor George) to forward the following motion to the Faculty:

Proposed new language (changes in bold) to become effective in the academic year 2007-2008 at *Faculty Handbook* III., G., Promotion.

G. Promotion

A member of the Faculty appointed initially as an Assistant Professor and subsequently granted tenure will be promoted to the rank of Associate Professor, effective the start of the academic year following the tenure decision.

A member of the Faculty appointed initially as an Associate Professor without tenure and subsequently granted tenure will continue as an Associate Professor with tenure until ~~a recommendation is made by his or her department(s) for promotion~~ **promoted** to the rank of Professor.

Promotion to the rank of Professor ~~usually may originate~~ **with the candidate** and usually occurs between six and eight years after the tenure decision, ~~although a department may present a candidate in the fifth year.~~ **A candidate's promotion committee consists of all full professors in his or her department(s) and may include up to two other full professors from the College Faculty, chosen by the candidate in consultation with the Dean of the Faculty. The chair of the promotion committee is selected by the Dean.** A letter from the ~~department chair of the promotion committee~~ **of the promotion committee**, and signed by all **members of the committee**, ~~full Professors in the department~~, discussing the candidate's scholarly or artistic **growth and** achievement, teaching performance, and College and professional service, should accompany all recommendations for promotion to the rank of professor. **The candidate may also submit a letter on his or her behalf.**

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In cases where there are fewer than two tenured full Professors in the candidate's department, the Dean of the Faculty and the Committee of Six will appoint an ad hoc committee of tenured full Professors from related departments to serve as the **review promotion** committee. Should the department have one member at the tenured rank, he or she will also serve. **The promotion committee may include up to two full Professors chosen by the candidate, in consultation with the Dean.** The Committee of Six reviews all candidates for promotion. The President formulates the various recommendations and presents them to the Board of Trustees, together with his or her own views. All promotions must be voted by the Board of Trustees.

The members then voted five in favor, none opposed, with one abstention (Professor Woglom) on the substance of the motion.

The Committee next turned to a consideration of the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Student Evaluation and the Improvement of Teaching (CEIT) and the motion put forward by the committee. Professor Woglom commented that it might be advisable for the Faculty to consider the CEIT's report before it takes up the issue of promotion, thereby ensuring that a discussion of the report is not displaced by a lengthy consideration of the promotion issue. Professors Parker and Schneider favored putting the promotion motion first on the agenda, in an effort to resolve the promotion issue. Professor Woglom suggested that, if promotion were to be discussed first, a thirty-minute time limit should be recommended to ensure that there is sufficient time to begin consideration of the CEIT report.

The Committee agreed (by a vote of six to zero) that the motion forwarded to them by the CEIT should be forwarded to the Faculty. Professor O'Hara said that, since it now appears that retrospective letters would not be part of the process of promotion to full professor, she wondered whether the CEIT's proposals should apply to associate as well as full professors. It was agreed that Professor George would inquire whether the CEIT would agree with this change and that the Committee would include the term "tenured faculty members" in the motion unless the CEIT had a strong objection. The Committee also agreed that, if the Faculty votes to include retrospective letters as a part of procedures for promotion to full professor, the language of the CEIT motion should be changed, so that associate professors are not subject to two different forms of teaching evaluation. Professor Parker left the meeting at 4:00 to attend a thesis defense.

Professor George raised concerns about the provision in the motion that requires faculty members to inform the Dean of the Faculty when they decide to evaluate their courses and of the identity of their Teaching Instruction Partner(s). Although the Faculty, with its vote on the report of the Committee on Academic Priorities, did narrowly endorse some form of required evaluations, he said that he remains skeptical about whether it is necessary or even beneficial to increase administrative involvement in teaching evaluation of tenured faculty. Professor Sinos agreed, viewing the CEIT's proposals as steps in the direction of greater bureaucracy at the College. She said that measures to evaluate the teaching of full professors will create a false

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sense of equality because teaching would be evaluated for different purposes, depending on whether a faculty member was at a point before or after tenure. Professor Woglom disagreed, noting that while he does not favor these proposals per se, he supports peer review and would therefore vote for this motion. Professor O'Hara said that she supports the CEIT's proposals and feels that it is important to have a sound set of guidelines for evaluating the teaching of faculty members post-tenure. While some aspects of the proposal may need to be changed, she is reassured by the fact that the procedures will be reviewed and amended.

The Committee then voted two yes (Professors O'Hara and Woglom), two no (Professors Sinos and George), one abstention (Professor Schneider) on the content of the following motion:

Proposed new language (in bold) to become effective in the academic year 2007-2008 at *Faculty Handbook IV., B., Teaching and Advising*, to follow 1. and replace the current number 2. The current language of the subsequent paragraphs under B would remain, but the numbering would change as indicated in bold. It is agreed that the Faculty will assess the value of this program six years after its implementation.

B. Teaching and Advising

1. Teaching Load. Amherst tries to keep the teaching load at a level that permits the Faculty to devote considerable time outside of class to students and to scholarly or creative work. Generally, Faculty teach two courses each semester. Departments have historically adapted this norm to their individual circumstances. Faculty are encouraged to teach outside their own departments through participation in interdisciplinary and interdepartmental courses and seminars.

2. Teaching Evaluations of Tenured Faculty Members

Each tenured faculty member (other than those on phased retirement) evaluates his or her teaching in three courses every three years. (Those holding half-time FTE appointments evaluate one course every two years.)

At the beginning of each year, tenured faculty members decide which, if any, courses to evaluate that year. If they do choose to evaluate, they decide who their Teaching Instruction Partner(s), also a tenured faculty member, will be. These decisions, and only these decisions, are communicated to the Dean of the Faculty. (Teaching Instruction Partners may be drawn from departments other than a tenured faculty member's own. A tenured faculty member may choose one or more Teaching Instruction Partners for each course to be evaluated, and a tenured faculty member may select different

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Teaching Instruction Partners for different courses. Finally, a tenured faculty member's relationship with his or her Teaching Instruction Partner(s) need not be reciprocal or enduring.)

Evaluation forms, whose content is to be determined by the tenured faculty member, are unsigned and may be administered over the Web or on paper. Evaluation forms are normally destroyed after the following semester.

During the semester following the one in which a course is evaluated, the tenured faculty member and his or her Teaching Instruction Partner(s) have a conversation, informed by student evaluations, about the pedagogical issues raised by the course.

3. Advising. All members of the regular Faculty, except first-year faculty, participate in College advising for underclassmen and in advising students majoring in their departments.

4. College Advising. The Dean of ~~Freshmen~~ **New Students** assigns all entering students to a member of the Faculty who serves as that student's College advisor for his or her freshman and sophomore years whenever practicable. College advisors are responsible for discussing their advisees' programs of study with them, paying attention to the advising guidelines published annually in the *Catalog*. They are also asked to consult with their advisees' class deans, especially, but not only, if one of their advisees appears to be experiencing academic difficulty. A number of academic support services are available through the Dean of Students Office.

5. Major Advising. All faculty members, except first-year faculty, have the responsibility for advising students majoring in their departments about general curricular matters, matters related to the major and senior honors work.

The members then voted five in favor and zero opposed to forward the Faculty Meeting agenda to the Faculty.

The meeting adjourned at 4:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet S. Tobin for
the Committee of Six