

**Committee of Six Minutes
of Monday, May 7, 2007**

The thirty-seventh meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2006-2007 was called to order by the Dean at 3:00 P.M. on Monday, May 7, 2007. Present were Professors George, O'Hara, Parker, Schneider, Sinos, and Woglom, Dean Call, President Marx, and Assistant Dean Tobin, Recorder. The members approved the minutes of the meeting of April 26.

Under "Announcements from the President," President Marx noted, in relation to a question asked at the Faculty Meeting of May 1 by Professor C. Dole, that the Board of Trustees is now considering the issue of retiree health benefits for faculty and staff hired on or after July 1, 2003. He informed the members that there had been nine public meetings on this subject, to which all employees who are being affected were invited. The President explained that, since Medicare does not provide comprehensive health insurance coverage, Medicare supplement plans (the current one offered by the College is Medex 3) are used to cover expenses not covered by Medicare. Employees hired on or after July 1, 2003, will be asked to share in the risk that medical costs will escalate in the future and in the cost of supplemental insurance, although the Board seems to be in agreement that the College should absorb the majority of that risk. At the informational meetings, an example was used with the College contributing 40 percent of the cost of supplemental insurance each year to a notional account for eligible employees while they are employed at the College, though the Board seems inclined to have the College contribute a larger share. Upon retirement, the funds accumulated during employment would be available to the retiree to pay for eligible medical expenses.

Under "Announcements from the Dean," Dean Call responded to Professor George's question, posed at the meeting of April 30, about rules governing the "double-counting" of courses toward two or more majors. The Dean said that Mr. Mager, the Registrar, has informed him that double-counting does not appear to be a problem. The Dean quoted from page 62 of the College Catalog as follows: "Students who elect a double major must present the signatures of both academic advisors when registering for each semester's courses and they must, of course, fulfill the graduation requirements and comprehensive examinations established by two academic programs. In addition, double majors may not credit courses approved for either major toward the other without the explicit consent of an announced departmental policy or the signature of a departmental chairperson."

The Dean informed the members that the Memorial Minute Committees for Calvin Plimpton, President Emeritus, and Theodore Greene, Winthrop H. Smith Professor of History, Emeritus, would read their memorials at the Commencement Faculty Meeting.

Under "Questions from Committee Members," Professor Parker noted, in reference to the current report of the Committee on Priorities and Resources (CPR) on grant-in-aid, that Professor Himmelstein's concerns about this benefit, which he raised on behalf of the CPR in 2000, do not appear to have been addressed point-by-point in the current report. Professor Parker praised both the 2007 and 2000 reports as thorough treatments of the subject. Dean Call noted that the CPR, over the years, has periodically reviewed this issue and said that different conclusions had been reached by different committees. He noted that benefits comparisons are very much a part of the employment decision-making process at this time, particularly for mid-career faculty and staff,

**Committee of Six Minutes
of Monday, May 7, 2007**

and many senior administrators. Professor O'Hara agreed that the current report is taking into account different considerations and a different climate than was present seven years ago.

Professor Schneider next explained that many members of the Faculty have been discussing via email the subject of merit pay. He was asked to inquire whether there is merit pay for faculty and, if so, what system is in place. The Dean replied that he takes some information into account when setting faculty salaries, but that such information affects salaries minimally. The relative differences in compensation among faculty who have the same number of years in rank are typically small, he said. He noted, however, that dating from the time of hiring, there are some differences in compensation that are field specific. President Marx noted that the largest salary differences are the result of retention efforts, which may not necessarily be the most equitable measure of merit.

Professor O'Hara asked what criteria are used to award named professorships. Dean Call first noted that additional salary is not associated with such professorships. He said that, when making nominations for professorships, he reviews individuals' overall contribution to the College, with an emphasis on scholarship. However, many professorships are discipline specific or have other criteria that must be taken into account. At times, there might be too many qualified individuals who meet the criteria for a particular professorship. If that is the case, professorships are sometimes left unfilled for a time, he said.

Professor Woglom commented that it would be helpful if the Dean would provide the Faculty with some data on faculty compensation over an extended period, perhaps based on time in rank. He suggested expressing the highest salary as a percentage of the lowest salary for a given time in rank and providing both the latest data and the data from 2002-2003. Comparable information from the same periods that would also be desirable would be the average salary for women faculty members divided by average salary for men, controlling for time in rank. The Dean said that he is interested in understanding the Faculty's preferences and would be happy to work with Marian Matheson, Director of Institutional Research, over the summer to determine a useful means of presenting information to the Faculty that would facilitate an analytic approach to this issue. He reiterated that, if a merit pay system were to be put in place, much more information would have to be collected regularly from the Faculty in order to assess merit. The President said that, while he encourages discussion about the process of faculty compensation, the Dean of the Faculty sets actual faculty salaries. Professor Schneider noted that many colleagues are opposed to having a system of merit pay.

The Committee next reviewed drafts of the Dean's letters to chairs and candidates concerning reappointment, tenure, and promotion.

The Committee next discussed the proposal (appended) from the Committee on Education and Athletics that the description of the committee's membership be changed in the *Faculty Handbook* from "two students elected by their peers" to the following: "two students (one man and one woman) elected by their peers from a slate consisting of the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, and a third appointed by the Student Government,..." No objections were expressed. The members voted six in favor and zero opposed to forward this motion to the

**Committee of Six Minutes
of Monday, May 7, 2007**

Faculty and six in favor and zero opposed on the substance of the motion. The Committee agreed that this motion should be put on the agenda of the Commencement Faculty Meeting on May 24.

Discussion turned to a proposal (appended) from the Faculty Computer Committee to revise its charge by adding another faculty member, making the term on the committee two years for faculty members, and adding a student member. One member of the committee, under the new charge, would serve as the faculty representative to the College's Internet Strategy Group. Professor George noted the importance of the work of the Faculty Computer Committee and its expanding workload and expressed support for adding an additional faculty member. Professor Woglom, while acknowledging the nature and scope of the committee's work, raised concerns about increasing the burden of the Faculty by adding to its committee work. Professor Schneider agreed. Professor George also felt, in general, that ways should be found to reduce the Faculty's committee work. The Committee was supportive of adding a student to the committee.

Professor O'Hara wondered if a staff member, perhaps an Academic Department Coordinator, should be added to the Faculty Computer Committee, since staff members are very involved with technology. The Dean said that staff members interface with this committee, he believes through other groups, particularly the Core Data Team. He said that he would check with Peter Schilling, Director of Information Technology, to confirm how staff members' technology interests and needs are represented. Professor George said that he thinks that it might be best for faculty members and administrators to set policy. The members voted five in favor and one opposed (Professor Schneider) to forward the motion to the Faculty to alter the charge of the committee. The Committee voted one in favor (Professor George), three opposed (Professors O'Hara, Schneider, and Woglom), and two abstentions (Professors Parker and Sinos) on content.

Turning to the Faculty Meeting of May 18, Professor George said that he would be concerned if the Faculty votes at that meeting on the motion to require teaching evaluation of tenured faculty members, because a mid-day meeting on a Friday is an unusual time to resolve a contentious issue on which the Faculty appears to be closely divided. Some colleagues who wish to be heard and to vote on this motion have longstanding commitments that will prevent them from attending this particular meeting, he said. Professor George noted that, if discussion on the motion seems to be ending among those present at the meeting, he plans to move to table further action on the motion until the Commencement Faculty Meeting on May 24. Of course, anyone could call the question, he said, but he would vote against it in order to make it possible to postpone the final vote to May 24. Professor Sinos agreed.

Noting that the time of the meeting had been shared with the Faculty in early February, Dean Call said that he feels that it is important to continue the discussion that was begun at the last Faculty Meeting. The President agreed, commenting that the Faculty had signaled, during the recent promotion discussions, in particular, that it wanted to concentrate on substance and to get through business. Professor O'Hara noted that, while the time of the Faculty Meeting is different, the proceedings of the Faculty Meeting are not.

**Committee of Six Minutes
of Monday, May 7, 2007**

Professor Parker expressed concern about recent attendance at Faculty Meetings. Professor Schneider agreed. While noting that it is desirable to have as many colleagues as possible at Faculty Meetings, the Dean said that recent vote totals are consistent with those of the last several years.

After deciding that the proposed mission statement should be discussed before Motion 2, the members voted six in favor and zero opposed to approve the agenda for the Faculty Meeting of May 18.

Turning to its review of the nominee for the Hitchcock Fellowship, the Committee voted six in favor and zero opposed to approve the nominee.

The Committee discussed briefly a letter (appended) sent to the members by Professor Rivkin, and the members agreed that the issue raised, the level of support offered through the parental leave policy, should be forwarded to the CPR.

Finally, the Dean, to inform the consideration of procedures for a Faculty vote this fall on a new major in Environmental Studies, reviewed with the members the votes that were taken when the Department of Women's and Gender Studies and its major were established. He noted that, when the Faculty approved the major, descriptions of foundational courses and a list of already offered courses that would fit within the major were provided. Once a major is approved, the Committee noted, curricular changes within the major come before the Committee on Educational Policy, not the Faculty as a whole.

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Gregory S. Call
Dean of the Faculty

AMHERST COLLEGE
Department of English

March 5, 2007

The Committee of Six
Amherst College
Amherst, MA 01002

Dear Colleagues:

I write on behalf of The Committee on Education and Athletics to request that "two students elected by their peers" in the description in the Faculty Handbook of our committee be changed to:

two students (one man and one woman) elected by their peers from a slate consisting of the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, and a third appointed by the Student Government,...

The most obvious motivation is evening out the numbers. With the addition there would be three representatives from each of our constituencies - the Faculty, the Athletic Department, and the Student Body.

But equally, if not more important, is the need to insure that 1) both men's and women's teams are represented, and 2) there be sufficient over-lap between our committee and a newly-formed Student-Athlete Advisory Committee made up of representatives of every team and several clubs.

As things now stand, one student is selected by the student government and another elected at large. Both are men. The change would insure that both genders are represented. By making the slate the Advisory Committee (which numbers about 40 students) each committee would be apprised of what the other is discussing and doing. This year luck - and only luck - has it that one student is on both committees.

Thank you for your consideration of our motion.

Yours sincerely

Kim Townsend, Chair
Patrick Benson, '08
Andrew Bruns, 07
Suzanne Coffey
Don Faulstick
Ben Lieber
Joe Moore
Nick Nichols
Rose Olver

From: Lyle A. McGeoch [lam@cs.amherst.edu]
Sent: Thursday, April 26, 2007 1:49 PM
To: Mary Miller
Cc: Peter Schilling; Scott Payne
Subject: proposal for new charge for the Faculty Computer Committee

Attachments: FCC Charge2.doc

Hi Greg,

I am writing on behalf of the Faculty Computer Committee to submit the attached proposal for a revised charge for our committee. The current charge is outdated in a number of ways.

The main changes reflected in the proposed charge are:

--- Addition of a fourth faculty member. All academic departments are now dependent on technology, and we feel that a fourth member could help ensure that the committee has a better understanding of the IT needs of the entire College.

--- Addition of a student member. Students are, of course, part of the academic enterprise, and we think that a student member could contribute substantially to the work of the committee. The president of the student government has agreed to our proposal to have a student member and has said that the senate would be able to hold an election for this position.

--- Specifying that faculty members of the committee would be appointed for two years, which is already the practice.

---Updating of titles and department names.

--- Formalizing the committee's role in advising on large faculty requests for equipment and support.

---Specifying that there would be a faculty representative to the ISG.

Thanks, and best wishes,

Lyle

Lyle A. McGeoch
Chair, Faculty Computer Committee

Proposed Revised Charge

4/24/2007

The Faculty Computer Committee

The Faculty Computer Committee consists of four faculty members appointed by the Committee of Six for two-year terms and one student member elected by the student government. One of the faculty members serves as chair. The committee advises the Director of Information Technology and the Director of Academic Technology Services (ATS) on topics related to the use of computer technology in support of research and instruction and on other IT issues affecting the academic life of the College. The committee also makes recommendations to the Director of ATS and the Dean of the Faculty on faculty requests involving significant investment in equipment or extensive ATS support. One member of the committee serves as a faculty representative to the College's Internet Strategy Group.

Current Charge, as found in the Faculty Handbook:

Three members of the Faculty, drawn primarily from those disciplines making the most use of technology, form a committee to work with the Director and staff of the Academic Computer Center. The members of the Committee are selected by the Committee of Six. One of the faculty members serves as chair. By definition, members of the Faculty Computer Committee also serve on the Information Technology Policy Committee, a campus-wide committee that addresses policy matters related to the use of information technology at the College.

AMHERST COLLEGE
Department of Economics

April 11, 2007

Committee of Six

Dear Committee of Six:

Our current parental leave policy is far less generous than that of peer institutions including Williams, Wellesley, and Dartmouth with whom we compete for both faculty and students. One consequence of current policy is that a faculty member who is the primary or only wage earner in the family is subject to economic hardship if he or she chooses to have a child and take parental leave. More generally, the current benefit level produces anxiety and additional stress among faculty attempting to balance professional and family considerations that could be mitigated by a more generous leave policy comparable to the aforementioned institutions. Given our interest in fostering a diverse and accomplished faculty and current plan to engage in substantial hiring during the coming years, I believe that it is an appropriate time to consider the desirability of making parental leave more generous.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Steven Rivkin