

The twentieth meeting of the Faculty Executive Committee (FEC) for the academic year 2023–2024 was called to order by Professor Call, chair of the committee, in the president's office on Monday, April 29, at 4:00 P.M. Present, in addition to Professor Call, were Professors Follette, Gardner, Katsaros, and Polk; President Elliott; Provost and Dean of the Faculty Epstein; and Associate Provost Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with President Elliott briefly offering his thoughts about the pro-Palestinian protests that have been taking place on other campuses throughout the country. He emphasized Amherst's commitment to protecting free speech and the right to protest peacefully on campus, as long as the safety of the community is not threatened and the core instructional and administrative functions of the college can continue without interference.

Turning to another topic, he informed the committee that the Amherst College store, which is located in the space formerly occupied by Hastings, is now open.

Professor Call next noted that he had reached out to next year's FEC to request that the committee propose a chair, noting that only a tenured member of the FEC can serve in this role. The current FEC will then ratify that recommendation, he had explained. Professor Call also suggested to the new FEC that, when the members review the three-year pilot that divided the Committee of Six into two separate committees (the Tenure and Promotion Committee and the FEC), consideration be given to revising the FEC charge so that each incoming FEC elects its own chair, rather than assigning responsibility for the selection of the chair to the outgoing FEC. (The president serves, *ex officio*, and without vote, as the chair of the TPC.)

The committee next discussed letters that it had received from [Professor Hall](#) and [Professor Harms](#) that were prompted by the discussion of the motion to adopt a policy on teaching expectations that had taken place at the April 26 faculty meeting. The members expressed appreciation for both letters and agreed to bring a revised motion forward to the faculty, drawing on Professor Harms's proposed language. Returning to the current proposal, Professor Follette noted that some tenure-track colleagues had spoken with her after the faculty meeting, sharing that they were pleased with the clarity that the original motion offered about the processes that should be followed in the event a faculty member is not being able to hold class due to an emergency or because of a planned absence of short duration. They were relieved that, if it became necessary, it would be possible to make alternative teaching arrangements for up to two weeks, Professor Follette said.

Continuing the discussion, the committee noted that some faculty at the faculty meeting had raised concerns about whether the proposed policy was aspirational, or whether there could be serious consequences for not following it. In this regard, some had wondered what would happen if they could not teach due to a chronic health issue, Professor Katsaros noted. Provost Epstein said that faculty go on medical leave if a health issue necessitates being absent from teaching in person for more than two weeks; such a leave can last for up to a semester. Faculty who need a medical leave inform the provost, who then consults with the department to make arrangements to cover the professor's classes, with the goal of providing the best educational experience for the students. The faculty member's physician must also send a note to Human Resources testifying to the need for the leave. The provost emphasized the importance of having a policy that requires that faculty not be absent from their classes, or teach remotely, for more than a maximum of two weeks during the course of a semester. In situations in which faculty have not followed this guidance in the past, it would have been very helpful to be able to point to a voted policy on teaching expectations, she noted.

The committee then reviewed a recommendation from the Department of Physical Education and Athletics for a Hitchcock Fellow, expressed enthusiasm for the student-nominee, and voted unanimously to forward the recommendation to the full faculty for a vote at the commencement faculty meeting.

The remainder of the meeting was devoted to a lengthy discussion of the most effective parliamentary approach to use for the special faculty meeting that would take place on May 3. At the conclusion of the conversation, the members agreed that discussion at the meeting would take place in a committee-of-the-whole format, with the goal of facilitating robust and open conversation. Prior to the meeting, Professor Call had consulted with the group of colleagues who had requested the special meeting, several additional faculty who were considering making motions at the meeting, and the parliamentarian, Professor George. All had expressed

support for having a discussion take place in a committee of the whole. The members also agreed that students would not be permitted to attend the special faculty meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein  
Provost and Dean of the Faculty