

FCAFA Proceedings – 4 April 2020

Present: Rachel Chaffin '20, David Hall (chair), Gail Holt (Dean of Financial Aid, *ex officio*), Chris Kingston, Jen Manion, Matt McGann (Dean of Admission and Financial Aid, *ex officio*), David Schneider, Cate Zolkos (Dean of Admission, *ex officio*)

1. **Adjustment of the academic rating** (Matt)

- Matt presented on the academic rating scale and a new proposal for a modification of the academic rating scale coming out of a research project that has been conducted on the scale.

2. **Standardized testing** (Matt)

- The Committee discussed concern about the future feasibility of standardized testing environments that include large groups and which are not conducive to social distancing recommendations. Several SAT administrations have been canceled, June administration is questionable, ACT administrations have been canceled. Future test sittings beyond that are uncertain. Amherst's ethical obligation and public health obligation lead to action.
- The Committee by individual reflected that under the current set of circumstances, a test optional policy is the best option. The Committee is confident that a strong class can be admitted with a test optional policy.
- The Committee also discussed the opportunity and value of the graded assignment submission in place of an original essay.
- The discussion also clarified the optional intent of the test, rather than exclusively a blind approach.
- The consensus was to proceed with a one-year test optional policy and adjust the academic reader rating.

FCAFA Membership 2019-2020

Rachel Chaffin, Class of 2020

Ilyssa Forman, Class of 2022

David Hall, Physics and Astronomy (chair); x2072

Gail Holt, Dean of Financial Aid; x2296

Natalia Khoudian, Class of 2020

Chris Kingston, Economics; x5139

Karu Kozuma, Chief Student Affairs Officer; x2337

Jen Manion, History; x5873

Matt McGann, Dean of Admission and Financial Aid; x2328

Avery Saffold, Class of 2020

David Schneider, Music; x8414

Cate Zolkos, Dean of Admission; x2328

Jasmine Hardy, Assistant Dean of Admission, recorder.

Faculty Handbook IV.S.1.d The Committee on Admission and Financial Aid consists of four members of the faculty appointed by the Committee of Six for three-year terms, four students serving two-year terms to be chosen as described below and, as members, ex officio, the dean of admission and financial aid (secretary of the committee), the dean of admission, the dean of financial aid, and the chief student affairs officer. One of the faculty members is appointed by the Committee of Six as chair, normally after a year of service. It is hoped that different areas of the curriculum will be represented by the faculty members on the committee. The president will meet with the committee either at its invitation or on his or her initiative.

A College Committee on Admission and Financial Aid will convene under the chairmanship of the dean of admission and financial aid at least four times in each academic year. It will consist of the dean of the faculty, ex officio, and eight voting members: the dean of admission and financial aid, the dean of admission, the dean of financial aid, the chief student affairs officer, and the four faculty members on the Committee on Admission and Financial Aid. At a meeting early in the fall of each year, the College Committee on Admission and Financial Aid will review the composition and diversity of the first-year class, paying attention to such issues as the distribution of students by curricular and extracurricular strengths. The committee will reconvene in advance of the release of notifications of admission to early decision candidates (normally in December) and prior to the release of notifications of admission to regular round candidates (normally in March) to consider such information as it deems necessary to insure that the college's stated policies are being implemented. At the end of each of these meetings the committee will vote on the admission actions recommended by the dean of admission and financial aid. The committee will hold a final meeting at the end of the academic year to review the outcome of the completed admission process (voted by the faculty, December, 1999).

Two students shall be elected by the student body for a two-year term to the Committee on Admission and Financial Aid. Following the election, the dean of admission and financial aid in consultation with the Committee on Admission and Financial Aid will appoint two additional student members for two-year terms. The four student positions are to be filled in staggered order, with one appointed and one elected position to be filled annually.

Because of Amherst College's commitment to equal opportunity and the role of the admission process in meeting an important part of this commitment, the presence on the committee of students from different minority and racial groups is especially valuable. In general, student members of the committee can provide particular advice on policy discussions about recruitment.

The primary function of the committee is to enhance communication between the faculty and appropriate administrative offices and in so doing to aid the faculty in carrying out its responsibility to formulate standards and policy for admission and financial aid. To these ends, the committee should review on a regular basis, through observation and quantitative studies, how adequately policy and practice are meeting stated goals, should develop and maintain mechanisms for communicating faculty opinion on the quality of our students to the staff, and should report annually to the faculty on the committee's work. Members of the committee should be sufficiently engaged in the admission process to enable them to carry out their responsibilities effectively (voted by the faculty, September 1984).

THE AMHERST COLLEGE ADMISSION MISSION STATEMENT

~Voted by the Faculty in 1983

Amherst College looks, above all, for students of intellectual promise who have demonstrated qualities of mind and character that will enable them to take full advantage of our curriculum. We seek qualified applicants from different racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds students whose several perspectives might contribute significantly to a process of mutual education within and beyond the curriculum.

We aim to select from among the many qualified applicants those possessing the intellectual talent, discipline and imagination that will allow them most fully to benefit from our curriculum and contribute to the life of the college and society. Grades, standardized test scores, essays, recommendations, independent work, the quality of the secondary school program, and achievements outside the classroom are among the factors used to evaluate this promise, but no one of these measures is considered determinative.