

# FCAFA Proceedings - 17 September 2020

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Via Zoom!

Present: Sonya Clark, Ilyssa Forman '22, David Hall (chair), Maria Heim, Michael Hood, Gail Holt (Dean of Financial Aid, *ex officio*), Matt McGann (Dean of Admission and Financial Aid, *ex officio*), Obed Narcisse '21, Cate Zolkos (Dean of Admission, *ex officio*)

## 1. Welcome and Introductions

- David and Matt provided an introduction to the purpose and goals of FCAFA committee for all new members.

## 2. Review of Committee Charges and Policy Statement (David, Matt)

- Committee Rules
  - Conversations will be open and confidential.
  - Committee adopted a policy to work by consensus, but that all committee members would have a vote should consensus prove impossible to reach. A majority of members approved.

## 3. Urgent business

- News and Updates since last meeting (Matt)
  - Matt will present the class of 2024 at the CCAFA meeting in November.
  - In the spring, the decision was made to waive the advance tuition deposit for all admitted students.
  - The deferral request deadline was extended beyond the typical May 1 deadline through the beginning of classes in the interest of equity and fairness to all students given the rapidly shifting circumstances due to COVID.
  - With the approval of FCAFA, Amherst made the decision to no longer require the SAT/ACT of all applicants and move to a test-optional admission policy for the 2020-2021 admission cycle.
  - All recruitment this fall is online.
  - Admission pushed back the deadline for Early Admission to November 16 (a Monday). Moving forward, decision deadlines will fall on days when students have access to their school counselors. The regular decision deadline will now be the first non-holiday of January. This year it will be January 4.
  - Admission's longstanding Telementoring program has been discontinued.
  - Admission has added a set of large scale recruitment events that are being done collaboratively with five other leading liberal arts colleges (Amherst, Bowdoin, Carlton, Pomona, Swarthmore, Williams) to their recruitment portfolio. The shared goal is to build the liberal arts brand as a whole.
  - With consultation from FCAFA last year, Admission has evolved the academic reader rating process.
  - The Schupf Scholar funding has been shifted to support student research funding. Any enrolled Amherst student will be eligible to apply for this funding specifically targeted to the Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences.
  - Financial Aid packages did not ask for a summer work or term-time work contribution from students this year. Those contributions were replaced with grant money. Financial Aid also adjusted the personal allowance to provide an enhanced personal allowance for

students who are off campus. Amherst launched an emergency fund that was largely funded by the CARES Act which allowed Amherst to provide money to Amherst's lowest income students. Amherst expanded this to support undocumented and international students. Amherst is also working on a more permanent emergency fund that can be used to support students in the future.

- Admission evolved a program called Dean's Day – a program for Amherst Alums and their children with the goal of creating a program that would be broader and more useful.
- First circuit court of appeals heard the first round of arguments in the Harvard Admissions Lawsuit.

4. **Mock Admission Committee** (Matt)

- FCAFA will be participating in a mock admission committee exercise.

## FCAFA Membership 2020-2021

Sonya Clark, Art and the History of Art; x5972

David Hall, Physics and Astronomy (chair); x2072

Maria Heim, Religion; x8475

Gail Holt, Dean of Financial Aid; x2296

Michael Hood, Biology; x8538

Karu Kozuma, Chief Student Affairs Officer; x2337

Matt McGann, Dean of Admission and Financial Aid; x2328

Cate Zolkos, Dean of Admission; x2328

Jasmine Hardy, Assistant Dean of Admission; x2328 (recorder-designate)

**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 re-convene 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.

