

**Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, September 11, 2017
Amended September 21, 2017**

The first meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2017–2018 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:15 P.M. on Monday, September 11, 2017. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Call, Engelhardt, Heim, Jaswal, Moss, and Sitze and Dean Epstein, and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

Under “Topics of the Day,” Dean Epstein proposed that a one-year pilot be undertaken this fall to experiment with the use of clickers as a means of voting at faculty meetings. The dean reminded the members that last year’s Committee of Six had agreed that paper ballots would be used for all votes at faculty meetings. This decision had been prompted by communication with the consultative group of untenured faculty. The group had shared with the Committee of Six concerns that untenured faculty had raised surrounding speaking and voting at faculty meetings, and their desire to find ways to ensure anonymity when voting.

Dean Epstein commented that the time that it takes to count votes at faculty meetings is interrupting the flow of the meeting and imposing on the faculty’s time. Clickers would be an effective tool for addressing these challenges, in her view. The dean commented that the use of clickers will ensure greater accuracy when determining whether a quorum has been reached at each faculty meeting. In the *Faculty Handbook* (IV. R., 6.), a quorum is defined as follows: “The presence at any meeting of the faculty of a majority of the members required to attend and eligible to vote constitutes a quorum for the transaction of business at that meeting. Faculty on leave are not required to attend, but retain the privilege of attendance and vote; they will not be counted in determining a quorum.” According to the dean, this year, 267 faculty members and administrators are eligible to vote. After subtracting the number of faculty members on leave (forty-two), there are 225 individuals who are eligible to vote. A majority is thus the smallest integer strictly larger than 50 percent of that figure, or 113 individuals who are eligible to vote. A two-thirds majority is 150 individuals. Dean Epstein emphasized that it is the right and responsibility of all faculty members to attend faculty meetings, and that it is her expectation that faculty members will make every effort to attend the meetings.

Returning to the discussion about the advantages of clickers, the dean noted that the devices may be used for voting on motions, and also, possibly, to poll the faculty to gain a sense of the body’s views on particular issues. Professor Moss expressed enthusiasm for experimenting with clickers, commenting that she is in favor of implementing, as a default, a method of voting that ensures anonymity. Many faculty members may not be comfortable “calling” for a vote by paper ballot, and/or may not be aware of the rules governing this procedure, she pointed out. Professor Sitze commented that, since paper ballots are anonymous, this mechanism seems to address the concerns of tenure-track faculty members. Moving in the direction of a technological solution would not be his preference; as a general matter, he argued for technological minimalism, where we technologize our relations with each other not as first instinct or second nature, but only as a last resort. Professor Sitze also expressed the view that real-time polling could substitute for debate and become a distraction from the business of the meeting. Concurring, Professor Call said that he worries that a large amount of informal polling could inhibit conversation and curtail debate. In his view, faculty members might hesitate to express contrary views when discussion seems to be moving in a particular direction.

Professor Jaswal said that she is in favor of using clickers, both for formal voting and for informally soliciting the faculty’s sense of particular issues. Her experience with the devices in her classes has been positive. Professor Jaswal commented that, at present, many voices remain unheard at faculty meeting; a small number of colleagues often dominate discussion at each

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meeting, and some colleagues are not confident about speaking. Professor Sitze noted that reliance on clickers could displace or delay the development of faculty members' desire to speak at the meetings. There are techniques that could be employed to count ballots more quickly, Professor Call suggested. Another approach might be to ask faculty trained in those techniques to assume the responsibility of counting paper ballots. Professors Engelhardt and Heim expressed support for using clickers as a substitute for paper ballots, but not for polling purposes. While the clicker solution is not perfect, the dean noted, the use of clickers will help to address concerns that tenure-track faculty members have raised, which she feels is important. Concluding the conversation, the members agreed that clickers should be used in lieu of paper ballots for one year. At the end of the pilot period, this experiment will be evaluated, it was decided.

Continuing with her remarks, Dean Epstein informed the committee that it was her understanding that some students were planning a walkout the next day (September 12) to protest racism. She shared with the members a note that she planned to send to inform the faculty and to advise colleagues to use their discretion in regard to delaying or cancelling class or excusing students from class. Turning to another matter, the dean noted that it has come to her attention that the Office of Student Affairs has adopted a new name (the Community Standards Review Board) for the Committee on Discipline, and that it appears that the office has modified the way in which students are selected to serve on this body. Since a change to the name and charge of this faculty committee requires a vote of the faculty, the dean said that she will request that Suzanne Coffey, chief student affairs officer, write to the Committee of Six to convey any changes that she would like to make regarding the Committee on Discipline, and the rationale for doing so. The Committee of Six will then evaluate the proposal, and if it is agreed that it should go forward to the faculty, there will be a vote.

Dean Epstein next reviewed issues of confidentiality and attribution in the committee's minutes, noting that the public minutes should be used as a guide in regard to questions of whether matters discussed by the committee can be shared with others. She informed the members that, in her experience, very few conversations (with the exception of personnel matters and committee nominations that are under consideration) have not been included in the committee's public minutes. Dean Epstein explained that minutes of discussions of certain sensitive or unresolved matters and plans in their formative stages, about which the president and the dean are seeking the advice of the Committee of Six, have sometimes been kept confidential. Generally, conversations about these issues are made public once the matter is in a less tentative state. The dean also discussed the circumstances under which the committee would communicate via email. It was agreed that email will not be used to communicate about personnel or other confidential matters, and that the use of email should be kept to a minimum in general.

Continuing with her remarks about the ways in which the committee will work, Dean Epstein discussed with the members the longstanding policy of appending letters to the minutes when the committee has discussed the matters contained within them. Colleagues are informed by the dean's office as to when their letters will be appended. If a colleague states at the outset that he or she does not want the contents of a letter discussed in the public minutes, the committee will decide whether it wishes to take up the matter in question. The members decided that, for reasons of transparency, comments by committee members should be attributed by name in the minutes. It was agreed that the committee's regular meeting time will be 3:15 P.M. on

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Mondays. The members then decided that the following dates should be held for possible faculty meetings during the fall semester: October 3, October 17, November 7 (tentative), December 5, and December 19. It was agreed that Riley Caldwell O'Keefe, director of the Center for Teaching and Learning, and Jess Martin, administrative director of the science center will be invited to attend meetings of the faculty as guests. The dean informed the members that Janet Tobin, associate dean for academic administration, will continue to serve as the recorder of Committee of Six minutes. Nancy Ratner, associate dean of admission and director of academic projects, will serve as the recorder of the faculty meeting minutes. Dean Epstein explained that Lisa Rutherford, Amherst's chief policy officer and general counsel, will meet with the Committee of Six on September 18 to provide general legal advice related to the processes for reappointment and tenure, as an attorney does on an annual basis. Norm Jones, chief diversity and inclusion officer, will also be present to discuss avoiding bias when interpreting teaching evaluations.

Dean Epstein next provided information to the members as a follow-up to discussions that had taken place last year about changes in the way funding is allocated to enable Amherst students to participate in local non-profit organizations. The question had been raised as to whether the college was still providing funding for Amherst students who participate in the Big Brothers Big Sisters Program (BBBS) to allow their "Little Brothers" and "Little Sisters" to have lunch on occasion at Valentine. Sarah Barr, director of the Center for Community Engagement (CCE), had informed the committee that, more than a decade ago, a "Kids to Campus" program had been developed to bring children to Amherst on a weekly basis for a meal at Valentine and for one-on-one mentoring with Amherst students. When the CCE was created, an external grant to the center was used to support Amherst students' participation in BBBS. The grant enabled the CCE to provide transportation for the children participating in the program, fund meals in Valentine and afternoon snacks, purchase supplies, and hire two to three student workers to coordinate the program. The cost of the program, which serves between twenty-five to thirty students annually, is about \$8,000 a year, not including transportation and staff time. When the original funding for the CCE came to a close in 2015, staff members in the Office of Student Activities and the CCE worked with BBBS to identify other sources of funding to cover the costs associated with the program. Most recently, the community engagement offices at Amherst, UMass, and Smith had signed letters of support for a Community Foundation of Western Mass grant that would cover the costs associated with BBBS's work with all of its mentors, including those who are college students. Ms. Barr recently shared with the dean the news that the BBBS has received the grant. Paul Gallegos, director of student activities, reports that his office had a very successful summer of planning and coordination with the new director of BBBS. Arrangements with Valentine are set for Little Brothers and Little Sisters to enjoy meals on campus with their Big Brothers and Big Sisters starting September 25. Professor Call said that he was very pleased to learn of this outcome, which will enable Amherst students to continue to spend this time on campus with their Little Brothers and Little Sisters.

Continuing her remarks, Dean Epstein informed the members that it is her understanding that John Carter, chief of public safety, will be sending out an update to the campus about the exterior door electronic access system that is being installed on campus. His communication will describe the locks on the doors to classrooms and when and how they should be used. A question about this topic had been asked at the special meeting with the faculty on September 5, the dean noted. She said that she has been researching the answers to other questions that had

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been posed at the faculty meeting. At the committee's next meeting, the dean will share what she has learned, and Lisa Rutherford will respond to any legal points that arise. The members then turned to nominations for faculty committees. After that discussion concluded, Dean Epstein reviewed with the committee a list of potential agenda items for the Committee of Six for the year and invited the members to propose additional items. It was agreed that major issues for discussion by the committee this fall will include the report of the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee, tenure criteria, and athletics, among other topics.

At 3:40 P.M., Jesse Barba, director of institutional research and registrar services, joined the meeting to present results of the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) survey. In advance of the committee's meeting, the members had been provided with information about the results. It was agreed that the [COACHE 2013–2017 Benchmark Comparison](#) and the [COACHE Amherst Preview](#) would be shared with the full faculty via these minutes. Beginning the conversation, Mr. Barba explained that the survey had been administered in the spring 2017. Noting that Amherst invites all teaching faculty, including visitors and lecturers, to participate in the survey, he explained that the overall response rate was 58 percent, while the response rate for faculty who do not hold tenure-line appointments was 28 percent. Among the schools participating in the survey, Amherst selected five peer institutions (Dartmouth, Hamilton, Kenyon, Middlebury, and Tufts) to serve as a comparison group. More specific comparisons to this group were provided as part of the survey results, Mr. Barba noted. The COACHE results demonstrate the ways in which the responses of Amherst faculty compare with those of faculty at all schools that participated in the survey and with those of faculty at the five peer colleges, specifically. Mr. Barba explained that, when fewer than five faculty members responded to a question, results do not appear, in order to protect the anonymity of participating faculty. The report provided by COACHE displays benchmarks and peer comparisons for all faculty, pre-tenure faculty, associate professors, female faculty, and faculty of color. It is possible to segment responses by cohort in an effort to gain a more nuanced understanding of a particular concern, Mr. Barba noted. Professor Call suggested that comparisons between pre-tenure and tenured faculty might be informative.

Turning to the survey results for all faculty, Mr. Barba explained that research, teaching, benefits, shared governance, and collaboration are areas of strength for Amherst relative to all COACHE schools, including the peer group. Service obligations, tenure policy, tenure clarity, personal and family policies, and recognition stand out as areas of lower satisfaction, in comparison to peer colleges. Amherst faculty were also asked to select the best and worst aspects of working at the college. Results were ranked by the percentage of faculty selecting each option. In terms of the best things about working at Amherst, the following areas emerged as the top four, with the relevant percentages of respondents noted: the quality of undergraduate students (69 percent of respondents), the quality of colleagues (33 percent of respondents), support for research/creative work (28 percent of respondents), and academic freedom (12 percent of respondents). The five areas cited as the worst aspects of working at Amherst are the following: too much service/too many assignments (38 percent of respondents), spousal/partner hiring (15 percent of respondents), quality of facilities (12 percent of respondents), childcare facilities (11 percent of respondents), and an "unrelenting pressure to perform" (tied at 11 percent of respondents). Professor Engelhardt asked whether the responses of full professors are included in these responses, and Mr. Barba responded that they are included, but are not broken out.

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Overall, the results of the 2017 COACHE survey are very similar to those of the 2013 survey, with only slight variation from 2013, Mr. Barba commented. This iteration of the survey included a new area of focus, shared governance. Satisfaction with governance is an area of higher satisfaction among Amherst faculty in comparison with the satisfaction of faculty at peer institutions. The committee discussed this result in relation to Amherst's relatively poor results when it comes to satisfaction with service obligations. Mr. Barba explained that the service questions tend to focus on practical questions, such as the time spent in service, advising, and discretion in choosing committee assignments, while the shared governance questions focus on trust, shared purpose, adaptability, and productivity in faculty governance.

The members asked a number of questions. Noting that the survey posed no questions about technology, Professor Sitze asked if survey results about the general nature of work at the college contain any granular information about the amount of time that faculty spend answering email. Mr. Barba said that no information is revealed about this topic. Professor Sitze asked if it is clear what appreciation and recognition means in the context of the survey. Mr. Barba said that the meaning is open to interpretation by those answering the questions related to this topic. There is a lack of clarity. The committee thanked Mr. Barba, and he left the meeting at 4:20 P.M.

Based on the survey results and commentary that she has heard more generally, the dean said she will ask the committee to review this spring the criteria for tenure, which are articulated in the [*Faculty Handbook \(III., E., 3.\)*](#) A goal would be to offer greater specificity, she noted. Any changes to the criteria, will require a vote of the faculty. Professor Call asked the dean about her plans to discuss the results of the survey with the faculty. Dean Epstein responded that, in addition to sharing the data via the attachments to the minutes, and the minutes themselves, she and Mr. Barba would host several lunch-discussions with the faculty. She also plans to discuss the survey results, again with Mr. Barba present, at a chairs' meeting in October. The survey does reveal a pattern of unhappiness at the departmental level, Dean Epstein noted. She feels that it is important to try to gain an understanding of survey responses in this area, and to try to address concerns in this realm, as well as others, whenever possible.

In regard to the results that indicate that some faculty may feel under-recognized, the committee speculated that appreciation and recognition could mean anything from a lack of compensation for service obligations that are not shared equally among faculty, for example advising, to recognition and/or acknowledgement of extra effort within a department, to an Amherst culture that traditionally has avoided singling members out for recognition for their achievements. In regard to advising, Dean Epstein noted that the curriculum committee is considering ways to address inequities. She commented that faculty members who are participating in the intensive advising program, which supports students in summer bridge programs and requires an additional commitment of the advisor's time, are receiving compensation. Professor Sitze noted that many associate professors become overburdened with service obligations when they become tenured associate professors. Those who display ability and/or dedication in the area of service often take on even greater burdens, in his view. This additional labor is not recognized and represents an imbalance across the rank and the tenured faculty as a whole, he noted. This situation can prove frustrating, particularly when the ability to make progress on scholarship is affected. Professors Jaswal and Moss commented that even simple forms of expressing appreciation to faculty for their efforts, what Professor Engelhardt characterized as "micro affirmations," can help colleagues feel recognized. Professor Moss

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offered praise for Professor Call's efforts, as dean, to offer thanks and "blessings" whenever an occasion arose to do so. Professor Sitze noted that the survey reveals concerns that are consistent with those that have been identified by the consultative group of tenure-track faculty. A summary of those issues has been provided to the committee by the group, and the committee agreed to discuss the summary at its next meeting. The document, at the request of the consultative group, will be attached to the Committee of Six minutes.

Under "Questions from Committee Members," Professor Moss offered thanks to the dean for choosing the topic of disability and accessibility as the theme of the second annual dean's retreat on inclusive pedagogy, which was held in August. Professor Moss, as well as Professor Jaswal, commented on the impressive faculty turnout at the event and noted appreciation for other recent efforts to enhance inclusion at the college. Professor Moss also expressed gratitude to the dean for her responsiveness in creating the position of testing coordinator. Dean Epstein noted that two individuals have been hired into this position, in order to have coverage from Monday through Thursday, from 8:30 A.M. to 9:30 P.M., and on Friday, from 8:30 A.M. to 2:30 P.M. The dean explained that the testing coordinators, who are part of the staff of the Office of Student Affairs, will support faculty by providing assistance with scheduling and administering exams for students with accommodations. Services are not yet available under the new structure, but will be soon, the dean said, and the faculty will be informed. Continuing with her questions, Professor Moss said that, in discussions with staff members, she had learned of two changes that had occurred over the summer, and wondered if it would be useful for the Committee of Six to learn more about these efforts, particularly if the members will be asked to participate in discussions about the results of the upcoming staff survey.

President Martin responded that she anticipates that the Committee of Six will be asked to discuss the results of the staff survey, which will be administered this fall, once data about the responses have been received and analyzed. In answer to Professor Moss's specific questions, Dean Epstein explained that, for many years, Amherst had two categories of staff employees, staff and "trustee-appointed" staff, with separate compensation programs for each. Guidance and transparency in regard to career progression were insufficient, and the differentiation among positions was unclear. To address these issues, a job classification and compensation review (JCCR) of permanent non-faculty positions was launched in 2014. The goals were to develop a common classification and compensation system for non-faculty positions; assure that all positions are classified and compensated within Amherst's employment markets; develop a structure for career growth; streamline the process for approving the classification of jobs; and combine the staff and trustee-appointed categories into a single structure. After an intensive process, a new Job Classification and Compensation Program (JCCP) was introduced in the summer of 2017. Staff and trustee-appointed categories have been combined, though there is ongoing discussion about how lecturers and coaches will be categorized under the new system. All staff positions are now assigned to one of five "job groups," each of which includes positions that share similar attributes and responsibilities. Within each group are multiple levels based on six job factors. When creating the groups, the Office of Human Resources, in consultation with supervisors, established and/or updated position descriptions and assigned each position to a group and level most closely matching the position's attributes. The dean noted that the chairs of academic departments and programs were invited to informational sessions about the JCCP.

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Professor Jaswal next commented that she had found the conversation at the special meeting for faculty, held on September 5, to be timely and informative. (The president and the dean had called the meeting to discuss how to keep the campus safe, while also upholding Amherst's commitment to free inquiry and expression. A specific focus of discussion had been the consideration of ways in which the faculty can create a classroom environment in which they are free to teach their subjects and to foster a free exchange of ideas that is respectful and free of intimidation and derision.) Professor Jaswal suggested that having more opportunities for conversation of this kind, in this less formal, more open format, would be welcome and productive. Other members agreed. In a related matter, the dean noted that alternative faculty meeting times will be under discussion during this academic year. At the conclusion of last year, departments had been asked to consider over the summer the proposal of the Ad Hoc Committee on Alternative Faculty Meeting Hours. The dean said that she will discuss departments' views on this issue at a meeting with the chairs of academic departments and programs that will take place in October.

In response to a question about the process that has been under way to develop a teaching evaluation form that can be used by all departments, including a recent pilot, the dean said that this process is ongoing. Riley Caldwell-O'Keefe, director of the Center for Teaching and Learning, is currently working with the Department of Information Technology to make the form, which was developed in consultation with the Committee of Six, available to all departments. Departments and programs will not be required to adopt the form, but it is anticipated that it will be made available to all sometime soon. Guidance about administering the form and interpreting results will also be forthcoming, she noted. The teaching evaluation form will be discussed at a chairs' meeting in December, at which time representatives from departments that participated in the pilot will discuss their experiences with the form.

Turning to another topic, Professor Call asked Dean Epstein about the status of the work of the ad hoc committee that has been examining Amherst's curriculum. The dean responded that the ad hoc committee is in the final stages of completing its report, and that she anticipates that the report will be shared with the faculty in the near future. Discussion of the committee's recommendations will begin soon, in a variety of formats and in multiple venues. Professor Call next asked President Martin for information about the upcoming comprehensive campaign, in particular whether a campaign goal has been discussed and whether the campaign's priorities will include obtaining funding to hire more faculty, especially in the sciences, mathematics and statistics, computer science, and economics. President Martin said that she anticipates that the campaign will be launched in April, depending on a number of factors. The "quiet phase" of this effort, which has been ongoing, should yield about 40 percent of the campaign goal before the public phase begins. At the moment, no goal has been set. The president, who said that her conversations with donors have been fruitful, noted that last year's fundraising efforts were very successful, through the annual fund and more broadly; she commented that she is confident about the potential to raise additional funds moving forward. Planning for the campaign has been a bit of the challenge, she explained, as the college has been without a chief advancement officer for some time. Thus, the president herself, with the help of a consultant, has been coordinating planning efforts. The necessary elements are now all in place. With the appointment of Christopher J. Menard, Amherst's new chief advancement officer, who will begin working at the college on September 14, she anticipates that she will be able to focus more heavily on aspects of the campaign beyond planning. In answer to Professor Call's question

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about STEM faculty, she said that securing funding for this purpose is indeed a campaign priority. The president noted that faculty will be asked to assist with the campaign by speaking with alumni.

Professor Engelhardt next asked the president about an article that had appeared in the September 13, 2017, issue of the *Amherst Student*. In the piece, titled “Raises in Family Contributions Surprise Students,” it was reported that a number of students’ expected family contributions had increased significantly. He wondered about the accuracy of the piece. President Martin said that it is important to note that, because Amherst’s financial aid system is based solely on financial need, changes in the amount of a family’s contribution can and do occur. Fluctuations in the amount of the contribution, either in the case of increases or decreases, happen when a family’s financial circumstances change, most commonly because of shifts in income and/or in the number of children in college. The president expressed full confidence that Amherst’s Office of Financial Aid, in determining the family contributions of students who seek financial aid, and in all other areas of its work, employs policies and processes that are consistent, equitable, and beyond reproach in regard to ethical practice. Staff in the Office of Financial Aid are always available to students who have questions about their financial aid policies, she noted.

Continuing with the committee’s questions, Professor Sitze began his remarks by praising President Martin’s recent communications—through statements, her convocation address, and emails to the community—about a variety of highly disturbing incidents in the wider world and at Amherst. These efforts have included condemnation of the white nationalist rally in Charlottesville, the Trump administration’s decision to rescind DACA (the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), and the act of leaving a noose on Amherst’s athletics field. On a related note, Professor Sitze asked President Martin if the college plans to weigh in on the recent announcement by Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos that she is launching “a transparent notice-and-comment” process. Plans call for the education department to receive comments from the public, “to incorporate the insights of all parties.” Professor Sitze wondered if Amherst plans to offer any comments. President Martin said that, at this time, the college has no plans to submit comments, while noting that the period for comments has not yet begun. The president said that Amherst will continue to use processes that are fair to all parties, and that the college’s focus, in light of the administration’s announcement, is to take steps to reassure students that Amherst will not abandon its commitment to addressing sexual misconduct.

The members then reviewed proposals for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Summer Stipend competition and selected nominees. Professor Heim suggested that mechanisms for increasing the number of applications from faculty for these and other fellowships should be explored. Dean Epstein noted that significant outreach is done already through communications to the faculty as a whole and to individual faculty through the dean’s office, through fellowship workshops offered by the dean’s office and the Grants Office, and through individual assistance offered through the Grants Office. She said that she would be open to suggestions for other approaches and would confer with Lisa Stoffer, director of the Grants Office.

The meeting adjourned at 5:36 P.M.

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Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

The second meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2017–2018 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:15 P.M. on Monday, September 18, 2017. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Call, Engelhardt, Heim, Jaswal, Moss, and Sitze and Dean Epstein, and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

Under “Topics of the Day,” President Martin commented on how much she had enjoyed the performance of *The Scarlet Professor* that she had attended the previous Sunday. The dean, who had gone to the Saturday performance of the opera, echoed the president’s praise. The president and dean offered congratulations to Professor Sawyer, who composed the music and to Professor Bashford, who directed the production, as well as to Professor Couvares, who sang in the chorus.

Dean Epstein next shared information that she had learned from Lisa Stoffer, director of the Grants Office, in response to Professor Heim’s query about possible approaches that might be taken to enhance the success rate of Amherst faculty in the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) summer stipend competition. Ms. Stoffer had explained that fewer than 10 percent of applicants nationally are funded for both the NEH summer stipend and other fellowship competitions. She had noted that the NEH is under pressure from Congress to fund colleges across the United States to achieve geographic diversity. A desire on the part of successive NEH chairs to send research dollars into the South and middle states influences the total number of awards available outside those regions. In effect, Ms. Stoffer had said, Amherst faculty are competing against every other Massachusetts-based applicant for a limited number of Massachusetts awards. Ms. Stoffer had also pointed out that reviewers are similarly drawn from across the United States and from every kind of institution. There may be little special consideration given to the scale of research that is possible at an undergraduate institution vs. a university. While these are tough competitions for anyone, no matter how capable or accomplished, there are some factors that can make a difference, in Ms. Stoffer’s view.

Continuing her summary, the dean noted that, to test the proposal for clarity and appeal across the humanities, Ms. Stoffer recommends allowing sufficient time to prepare multiple drafts and sharing drafts with a number of readers. Family members and Grants Office staff should not be the only readers, she had informed the dean. It is beneficial to have colleagues in related, but not identical disciplines offer their views of drafts. Ms. Stoffer suspects that 25 percent or fewer Amherst applicants have more than one reader outside the Grants Office. She had noted the importance of taking time to develop a proposal and not working right up until the deadline, which can result in rushing. Presenting a project that is sufficiently developed gives reviewers confidence that the project will be finished and submitted for publication within a couple of years. In Ms. Stoffer’s experience, Amherst faculty sometimes apply for funding a bit too soon, before they have a clear chapter outline, timetable for completion, or sense of the full scope of their project, or they present their research plans in the proposal in a way that sounds a bit vague or preliminary. In addition, Ms. Stoffer recommends paying attention to the project’s place in a national or international conversation. The literature review tends to be the section that faculty shortchange the most, in her experience. Most often, it is because faculty tend to devote more time to developing the chapter outline and a timetable. They may also assume that a reviewer will know where their work fits within the literature. That is a risky assumption, in Ms. Stoffer’s view.

Continuing, the dean noted that Ms. Stoffer had also stressed the need to make the case for the project’s contribution to the humanities generally and the importance of avoiding jargon. She recommends that faculty members reapply if they are not funded on the first try. Reapplication is expected in the sciences, she had noted, but is a newer practice to many

colleagues in the humanities. The chances of receiving an NEH award increase significantly when an applicant revises and resubmits a revision that is based on reviewers' comments, which can be quite specific. Comments are available to all NEH applicants on written request, Ms. Stoffer had said. Choosing recommenders strategically, to include those who are both well regarded and familiar with the applicant's work, is also important, according to Ms. Stoffer. In her experience, faculty sometimes hesitate to approach recommenders, so some applicants rely too heavily on either dissertation advisers or departmental colleagues, which is not always the best strategy. Amherst faculty members who have served as reviewers have been asked to read drafts for applicants, to good effect, Mr. Stoffer had noted. For the NEH, there are no recent reviewers or awardees, she had said, but sample proposals are available on the NEH website. In addition, Ms. Stoffer can request sample proposals through colleagues at other colleges. The Grants Office is working to reach out to faculty well in advance of sabbaticals, in an effort to have those who wish to apply build in more time to draft and revise. Finally, the dean explained, a few years ago, the Grants Office co-sponsored with the other Five Colleges a workshop that featured an NEH program officer and a mock proposal review. Ms. Stoffer said that the college may want to consider repeating such a workshop, if NEH staff are still able to travel.

The members next spoke briefly about the results of the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) survey, which the dean had shared with the committee the previous week. The members asked for some additional information, in particular a breakdown by rank of responses relating to service, to gain a more nuanced understanding of some findings. The dean said that she would ask Jesse Barba, director of institutional research and registrar services, to prepare materials for the next meeting.

Dean Epstein next shared a request from Suzanne Coffey, chief student affairs officer. Ms. Coffey had informed the dean that Professor A. Dole, chair of the College Council, is working to finalize the membership of the council for this academic year. Ms. Coffey had explained to the dean that there is a need to have a one-year replacement on the council for the dean of students, who is designated as an ex officio member, and who serves without vote. (The college is currently without a dean of students, and a search is under way for a successor to former dean of students Alex Vasquez.) The recommendation is to have Corey Michalos, Amherst's new director of community standards, serve on the council this year in the place of the dean of students, along with Ms. Coffey, who also serves ex officio, without vote, and one other student affairs administrator who, in accordance with the charge, is appointed by the president. Ms. Coffey has nominated Paul Gallegos, director of student activities, for this position on the council. Some members asked whether Dean Gendron, senior associate dean of students and former director of community standards, might assume the vacant position for the year. The dean said that it is her understanding that Dean Gendron has a very full schedule at this time, so cannot serve. The committee agreed that Mr. Michalos may serve for the year in place of the dean of students, and President Martin said that Mr. Gallegos may serve as the member of the Office of Students Affairs who is appointed by the president to serve on the College Council. The members next turned briefly to other committee nominations.

Under "Questions from Committee Members," Professor Call inquired about the increase in the faculty salary pool that had been approved at the end of the 2016–2017 academic year, and on which increases for this academic year were based. Dean Epstein responded that the faculty salary pool had been increased by 2.5 percent, with an additional .5 percent provided for promotions. In response to a question about the increase in the staff salary pool, Dean Epstein informed the committee that the pool had increased by 2 percent, with an additional .5 percent

provided for merit increases. Professor Call noted that this level of increase is the lowest since the time immediately following the 2008 financial crisis, though at the time that the salary letters were sent, the stock market was at an all-time high. The dean, who noted that the endowment is composed of a range of investments, including some that are not part of the U.S. stock market, explained that the performance of the stock market was not at this level at the time the budget process was ongoing; she commented that it is difficult to predict the performance of the market, of course. In addition, while returns on Amherst's endowment ended up being excellent for the recently completed fiscal year, this too is hard to predict. In the previous two years, President Martin noted, the endowment's performance was poor. She explained that Amherst calculates its budgeted endowment spending amount using a "smoothing formula."

Continuing, President Martin noted that, under this formula, 70 percent of budgeted endowment spending is based on prior-year spending plus an inflation factor, and 30 percent is based on applying a long-term spending rate target (currently 4.8 percent) to average market values over the last twelve quarters. This approach instills financial discipline during periods of strong endowment returns by delaying the availability of recent market appreciation to fund the budget. During these periods, the endowment spending rate decreases. Conversely, the operating budget is insulated from the immediate effects of market downturns. During these periods, the endowment spending rate increases. This approach protects the budget from large changes in available resources from year-to-year, an important objective for a college with high budgetary reliance upon its endowment. President Martin said it is her hope, depending on the economic climate, that the increases to the salary pools will be greater at the conclusion of this academic year. Dean Epstein noted, as a point of information, that Amherst's faculty salaries are highly competitive when compared with those of peer institutions. Professor Call pointed out the importance of the faculty salary pool for recruiting and retaining faculty. He suggested that Kevin Weinman, chief financial and administrative officer, offer a presentation at an upcoming faculty meeting to inform the faculty further about the process used to set the salary pool. The president and the dean noted that Mr. Weinman is invited each fall to give a presentation about the college's finances, and will be asked again this fall. They agreed to ask him to provide some insights into the setting of the salary pool.

Also under "Questions from Committee Members," Professor Engelhardt noted his positive impression of the meeting of chairs of academic departments and programs that had been held on September 15. Dean Epstein explained that the meeting was the first of a series of monthly chairs' conversations that she has scheduled for this academic year. The topic of the first meeting was mentoring, the dean noted, and chairs discussed ongoing mentoring practices. In her view, the meeting resulted in a useful inventory of current mentoring practices at the college, as well as some new ideas. Dean Epstein said that it is her hope that chairs' meetings will provide a forum in which to consider further ways to enhance support for untenured colleagues. Noting that the chairs' meeting had been excellent, Professor Engelhardt said that he is pleased to see that the topics discussed at the chairs' meeting are interfacing, even at this early juncture, with conversations that the Committee of Six has begun about ways to address the faculty's responses to the COACHE survey, and related issues raised by the Consultative Group for Tenure-Track Faculty. The dean noted that the future topics of chairs' meetings this semester include the COACHE survey results, the proposal for a new faculty meeting hour, the budgeting processes at the college, and teaching evaluations.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Moss asked the dean if she has scheduled training for chairs on how to work with faculty on issues of disability and accommodation. It was noted that

the dean's retreat on inclusive pedagogy, held on August 31, had focused on disability and accessibility, but that the emphasis had been on students. Dean Epstein said that she would consider adding this topic to the schedule for chairs' meetings in the spring, as the schedule for the fall term is already set. On a related note, Professor Moss said that she had been pleased to learn that Professors Hart and Parham's work as faculty diversity and inclusion officers encompasses issues of disability and inclusion. She expressed the view that it would be helpful for the faculty to gain a better understanding of the responsibilities and role of this relatively new position. The dean suggested that Professors Hart and Parham make a presentation on this topic at an upcoming faculty meeting. It was agreed that such a presentation would be informative and helpful, and would convey that issues of disability and inclusion are included in the college's efforts to enhance and support diversity within its community. Professor Jaswal suggested adding information about the faculty diversity and inclusion officers to the accommodations web site.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Engelhardt asked if a discussion is planned about adopting the use of non-binary pronouns in the *Faculty Handbook*. One proposal might be to adopt "they" as a singular, gender-neutral pronoun. The members discussed this question and decided that, in future legislation that is brought forward, the committee will take the approach of avoiding the use of pronouns. For example, "the candidate" or "the faculty member" will be used instead of "him" or "her." Much of the existing language in the *Faculty Handbook* follows this format. Next, the members decided to focus their attention this spring on reviewing the language about the criteria for tenure in the *Faculty Handbook* (III., E., 3.). Given the concerns raised by tenure-track faculty members, a goal would be to offer greater specificity. Any changes to the criteria, will require a vote of the faculty.

At 3:50 P.M. Lisa Rutherford, chief policy officer and general counsel, and Norm Jones, chief diversity and inclusion officer, joined the meeting. Ms. Rutherford, offered general legal advice related to the tenure process and answered questions posed by the committee. Mr. Jones spoke with the committee about approaches to mitigating bias when reading teaching evaluations, and in the tenure process, more generally. The members thanked Ms. Rutherford and Mr. Jones, and they left the meeting at 4:28 P.M.

The members next reviewed [responses that the dean had gathered to questions raised at the special meeting of the faculty held on September 5.](#) In regard to possible restrictions on time, manner, and place that might be put in place in regard to student protests, Professor Sitze asked what the process will be for considering any guidelines developed by the administration. Dean Epstein responded that the recently established Incident Readiness Working Group is currently discussing such guidelines and will bring forward any proposal that it develops to the senior staff and Committee of Six. Professor Sitze asked about the composition of the working group. The dean said that she is a member of the group, which also includes the chief of staff and secretary to the board of trustees, chief policy officer and general counsel, associate general counsel, chief student affairs officer, chief of campus operations, chief of public safety, chief communications officer, chief diversity and inclusion officer, associate dean for diversity and inclusion, alumni secretary, and executive assistant to the president for communications and project management.

Continuing the discussion, Professor Sitze asked what type of incidents would be covered by such a policy and about the protection of students' academic freedom in this and other contexts. President Martin said that preserving students' academic freedom is crucial, as is ensuring that the campus community is safe. At this time, incidents under discussion revolve around student protests. Professor Sitze expressed the view that any proposals generated by the Incident Readiness Working Group should come to the Committee of Six first, rather than after

the senior staff weighs in. He asked who the final authority will be on such matters. President Martin said that she will discuss proposals with both groups. She noted that the same procedure will be used for any policy regarding weapons on campus that may be developed. Professor Sitze asked if concealing and carrying weapons would be addressed in such a policy. (Justin Smith, associate general counsel, later provided the information that there would be no need to address this issue. If “weapons” are prohibited [which they would be under a college policy], then, by definition, weapons are prohibited whether they are concealed or carried. Under Massachusetts law, firearms are specifically prohibited on college campuses, except for law enforcement officers. Anyone else must have the written permission of the president of the college under the law. This trumps any other license to “carry” that an individual may possess.)

More generally, Professor Sitze said that he wonders how explicitly and comprehensively faculty members need to state their expectation for students to follow the policies enumerated in the *Student Code of Conduct*. Does a faculty member need to enumerate each of the specific college policies the faculty member expects students to follow? Or is it enough for the professor to state that the expectation is that students must review, understand, and conform to all of the policies in the *Student Code of Conduct*, and then to assume that all of those policies are binding on all of the professor’s students, even if the professor doesn’t explicitly review each of those policies with all of students in all of the faculty member’s classes? (According to Mr. Smith, faculty members may correctly assume that the entire *Student Code of Conduct*, as well as all other college policies applicable to students, is already binding on students. Therefore, there is no portion of the code of conduct that faculty members need to make explicit to students in each of their classes in order for it to become binding.) The committee next discussed specific passages of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Following that conversation, the members discussed whether any circumstance could be imagined under which a speaker, including a political provocateur, who had been invited by Amherst students would not be allowed to speak at the college. Professor Moss, noting the estimated \$600,000 in costs that the University of California, Berkeley, had incurred recently for security surrounding a talk by conservative commentator Ben Shapiro, asked at what point economics might become a factor in making such a decision. President Martin noted that the threat of imminent danger would be the primary reason for not allowing a speaker to give a talk on campus. The members agreed that there should be a strong educational rationale for bringing speakers to campus, and that the college should err on the side of protecting students’ academic freedom.

On a related note, the members discussed an incident that occurred on September 11. President Martin explained that a sign had been hung on the front of Valentine Hall with the following language: “There is no flag large enough to cover the shame of killing innocent people,” an abridged quotation from American historian Howard Zinn. The sign included the following statement underneath the Zinn quotation, “In honor of those killed and displaced by America’s so called ‘war on terror.’” The sign demonstrated the need, which has been recognized for some time, for a college policy about messaging on Amherst’s buildings, President Martin commented.

Conversation turned to [a summary of concerns raised by untenured faculty](#), which was provided to the committee at the end of the last academic year by the Consultative Group for Tenure-Track Faculty. The group had asked the committee to discuss this document and to append it to the minutes. The dean began by noting that in introducing new faculty to Amherst this year, her office had implemented some suggestions made by some tenure-track faculty

members for improving the faculty orientation program. The first day of orientation, held on August 30, included a “nuts-and-bolts” session that featured a panel of relatively new colleagues speaking on the topic of “What I Wish I had Known when I First Arrived at Amherst.” Title IX training followed. That evening, new faculty members brought their partners and children to the annual “Dinoque,” which featured a dinosaur-themed meal and fun activities for the youngest new members of the Amherst community, as well as tours of the Beneski Museum of Natural History. The next day, many new faculty members attended the dean’s retreat on inclusive pedagogy. Dean Epstein noted that the orientation program for new faculty members will continue throughout the year with a series of lunches. She intends to solicit feedback from participants to learn more about their views of the orientation program, and to make adjustments accordingly.

Turning to the summary, Professor Jaswal asked how the members of that body are selected. The dean explained that the tenure-track faculty select the members; the current members of the group are Professors Boucher, Jeong, Ratigan, and Vicario. Professor Sitze addressed the concern expressed in the summary that some untenured faculty members feel unable to speak candidly at faculty meetings. He said that he has never witnessed an untenured faculty member being criticized for speaking at a faculty meeting or been aware of any repercussions in the context of Committee of Six deliberations. He wondered if there is a way to reassure untenured faculty that they will not be penalized for speaking at faculty meetings; in fact, in his experience as a member of the Committee of Six, doing so has been viewed positively.

Dean Epstein said that it is her impression that it is within departments that some untenured faculty members have been told by senior faculty not to speak at faculty meetings. She expressed hope that the tone and culture within departments is changing, and that senior faculty are conveying that the contributions to the community being made by tenure-track faculty are valued. Professor Engelhardt commented that, in his experience, the Amherst culture can be one in which new faculty feel a burden of proof to demonstrate their strengths. The impression is sometimes conveyed that new faculty members’ work is probationary, rather than affirming their value as contributors who bring new expertise and ideas. The message that is periodically conveyed is that, until new faculty members learn to navigate the twists and turns of the Amherst labyrinth, they assume a risk of creating a bad impression if they speak at faculty meetings, Professor Engelhardt noted. The dean said that, in an effort to demystify faculty meetings, her office will soon organize a meeting for the purpose of explaining to new colleagues what occurs at faculty meetings and the rules that are used.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Jaswal commented that, in order to ensure that many voices are heard during faculty meeting discussions, it would be helpful if the president called on those who indicate that they wish to speak, and have not spoken before; in this way, the practice of taking turns could be encouraged. Professor Moss commented that, while it is important to make it clear that the opinions of tenure-track faculty are valued, care should be taken not to create an expectation that tenure-track faculty must speak. Such an expectation might place even greater pressure on them. It should be acknowledged that many senior faculty members never speak at faculty meetings. The members agreed that speaking at faculty meetings is a broader issue, and that it is important to create a space in which all faculty feel comfortable speaking. The committee concluded that having more communication about these issues, including through the regular meetings that the Committee of Six holds with tenure-track faculty, should help to address some of the concerns under discussion.

The committee next discussed the feelings of many tenure-track faculty members that they are constantly being observed and evaluated. Professor Call noted that the emphasis on providing more feedback and mentoring has led to tenure-track faculty members having greater success in the tenure process. Professor Moss commented that, because Amherst is such an intimate community, and because many tenure-track faculty members live in faculty housing, public and private space is often blended. In her experience, some tenure-track faculty members can feel as if they have little opportunity for anonymity. It was noted that this feeling is not specific to tenure-track faculty. President Martin also pointed out that there are many positive aspects of being part of a small community. The members agreed that gaining greater clarity about the tenure process should provide reassurance to untenured faculty that they will be evaluated primarily on the basis of the quality of their scholarly work and the effectiveness of their teaching, with less emphasis placed on their impact on the community.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Engelhardt commented that there is evidence that tenure-track faculty members feel they are being judged on their “fit” within the Amherst culture in a way that goes beyond the professional. Professor Jaswal expressed the view that, as there are more and more colleagues with diverse backgrounds on the faculty, ensuring that everyone feels that they belong takes on even greater importance. Faculty of color, in particular, may feel that they are going out on a limb if they express support for a student protest, or speak out after another faculty member argues against the notion that faculty should take political stands, for example. It can take a great deal of courage to speak in opposition to views of the majority, Professor Jaswal commented. To encourage change at the department level, the committee recommended that the dean discuss with chairs of departments and programs different approaches to encouraging all faculty to participate in department meetings. Professor Jaswal noted that the chemistry department had benefited from support from the Center for Teaching and Learning in implementing practices to draw more voices into departmental conversations.

Conversation turned to concerns raised by tenure-track faculty members about spousal/partner hiring. Dean Epstein informed the members that she has developed a set of criteria that she applies to spousal/partner hiring, which she has discussed with the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP), and which the CEP has supported. The dean explained that, for a spousal/partner hire to take place, the department must be willing to “mortgage” half an FTE line now or in the future. In addition, the spouse or partner under consideration must have received a tenure-track offer from another institution, must have the strong support of the department seeking the hire, and must be justified with respect to the academic needs of the college as a whole—not only the academic needs of the department. When these criteria are met, spouses are eligible to be hired into a half tenure-line position. The individual receives 100 percent salary by having a full teaching load.

Continuing the conversation, the dean noted that not all spouses and partners can be accommodated through this structure, or others that are used. Beyond the limited number of half FTE tenure-line positions, the college often creates short-term solutions, through visiting appointments, and sometimes via permanent lecturer appointments. The dean noted that departments can be flexible. While an individual’s research focus may not meet a department’s curricular needs, most individuals can teach courses on topics that are outside the area of their scholarly work. Sometimes, it is possible for larger departments to have more flexibility in this regard, but the criteria for spousal/partner hiring are the same across departments, the dean said. Overall, the college has made some significant steps forward when it comes to spousal/partner hiring, Dean Epstein noted. Professor Call asked if Five College joint

appointments are helpful in creating arrangements for spouses and partners. Dean Epstein responded that such positions have not been successful for the most part, as being “shared” among two or more institutions has resulted in many pressures and demands. Some individuals with these appointments have been unhappy and have chosen to leave before standing for tenure. As a result, the Five College deans have decided to discontinue such arrangements. The CVs of spouses and partners are shared among the members of the consortium, however.

The members briefly discussed special demands that may be placed on STEM faculty and the related issue of retention rates among faculty in these fields, a subject of extensive conversation by last year’s Committee of Six. Professor Jaswal expressed enthusiasm for the support that is provided by appointing technicians. Technicians relieve many burdens placed on faculty, leaving more time to pursue research and to concentrate on teaching and advising. The dean noted the expectation that, in the new science center, one technician will be provided for every two faculty members in the sciences.

In regard to issues of retention, Professor Moss expressed support for providing chairs with training on mentoring. In her view, tenure-track faculty members who receive support from senior colleagues will later provide the same level of support to their untenured colleagues. Professor Sitze commented that it is important that mentoring not do more harm than good, and he stressed the need to try to think carefully about the unintended consequences of even the most well-intentioned advice. The dean said that she is eager to learn more about ways that departments support untenured faculty. Professor Jaswal said that many different forms and levels of intervention can be helpful. For example, she found the sabbatical writing group, which has been organized by faculty members with support from the dean, to be very helpful, though this program is rather informal, and some might assume it has little impact.

The meeting adjourned at 5:36 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

**Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, September 25, 2017
Amended October 12, 2017**

The third meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2017–2018 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:15 P.M. on Monday, September 25, 2017. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Call, Engelhardt, Heim, Jaswal, Moss, and Sitze and Dean Epstein, and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

Under “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Call raised an issue on behalf of a colleague who had contacted him after reading the discussion about the quorum in the minutes of the Committee of Six’s meeting of the previous week. The faculty member had noted that, in the discussion of the quorum on page one of the minutes, the following passage from the *Faculty Handbook* had been quoted: “The presence at any meeting of the faculty of a majority of the members required to attend and eligible to vote constitutes a quorum for the transaction of business at that meeting. Faculty on leave are not required to attend, but retain the privilege of attendance and vote; they will not be counted in determining a quorum.” This reference was followed by the following statement: “According to the dean, this year, 267 faculty members and administrators are eligible to vote. After subtracting the number of faculty members on leave (forty-two), there are 225 individuals who are *eligible to vote* [emphasis added].” The colleague has pointed out that, according to the *Faculty Handbook*, there are 267 individuals eligible to vote regardless of the number on leave. Commenting further, the faculty member commented that there are 225 individuals who are eligible to be counted toward the 113 that determines a quorum. Reading the minutes further, the colleague had pointed out that, though the intention in the minutes seemed to be to specify that a quorum this year consists of 113 persons who have the right of vote, even that conception is not quite right. A colleague on leave could attend and have the right to vote, but should not count toward the quorum, the colleague had noted.

Professor Call commented that, when asked in the past to describe how the quorum is calculated, he had used language similar to what had appeared in the minutes. He thinks that the description in the minutes is consistent with the college’s conventions and practice of longstanding, but that the language in the *Faculty Handbook* doesn’t quite match current practice. All agreed that there is no wish to discourage faculty who are on leave from attending and voting at faculty meetings, if they wish to do so. Continuing, Professor Call noted that the literal reading of the *Faculty Handbook* language would imply that a quorum consists of 113 persons who both have the right to vote and are required to attend (in particular, and are not on leave). Faculty colleagues on leave retain the right to attend and vote, but if they choose to do so, they should not be counted among the 113 required for a quorum (though their voice and vote should, of course, be allowed and counted in the meeting). While on leave, a faculty member does not lose the right to attend and vote at faculty meetings, but such a person is not “required” to do so. The members discussed whether the language in the *Faculty Handbook* about the quorum should be revised to reflect the common understanding that colleagues on leave who attend the meeting would be counted when determining whether a quorum (of 113) is present. Professor Sitze noted that, prior to the committee’s meeting, he had reviewed what is conveyed about calculating a quorum in the faculty handbooks of some NESCAC schools. A number of different approaches are taken, he had learned, ranging from the absence of any language defining a quorum, to definitions of the quorum as an absolute number that doesn’t change from year to year, to definitions of the quorum as a majority of the members of the faculty not on leave, which does change year to year. Professor Engelhardt wondered what the history might be behind Amherst’s language. Professor Call and Dean Epstein raised concern about low attendance at faculty meetings and the potential for not having a quorum, under the current system of calculation.

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Continuing with the conversation, the dean noted that visitors and lecturers are included in the quorum count, thus raising the number of individuals needed to reach the required number. Many individuals with these appointments do not attend faculty meetings, however. Under the current system of calculation, where the quorum threshold is high, but attendance is occasionally low, it may become difficult to conduct normal business during faculty meetings. The members discussed whether, perhaps, visitors should be encouraged to attend as observers, with voice, rather than as voting faculty who are counted for purposes of the quorum. It was agreed that lecturers should continue to be counted and to have the right to vote. Further, the dean should encourage chairs to emphasize to their lecturers that those with these appointments have the right and responsibility to attend faculty meetings. The committee discussed whether visiting faculty members should have voting privileges and should “count” toward the quorum. One solution would be to have visitors attend with voice, but not vote, and not to have them count when calculating a quorum. Professor Moss expressed the view that the college should err in the direction of inclusivity and should not disenfranchise those who currently have the right to attend and vote. Professor Sitze said that it would be his preference to allow anyone who is teaching at Amherst to have voting privileges. The dean noted that the number of tenure-line faculty who typically attend faculty meetings seems to be between ninety and one hundred, which would be the number that she would recommend if it is decided that the quorum should be defined as an absolute number.

Professor Jaswal expressed concern that academic department managers who teach the intensive sections of introductory and organic chemistry and lab sections and play a vital role in students’ learning, do not have a voice in curricular matters. The dean noted that those in these positions do not have faculty appointments, and she said that she would not recommend extending the rights and privileges of faculty to them as a result. Professor Sitze said that he had found the following commentary in *Robert’s Rules of Order* to be useful: “The requirement of a quorum is a protection against totally unrepresentative action in the name of the body by an unduly small number of persons.” (See the eleventh edition of *Robert’s Rules*, page 21.) The most controversial proposal about changing the quorum, Professor Sitze imagines, would be the idea of lowering it below a simple majority. He noted that, although a simple majority is the default quorum (in the absence of an explicit provision, a quorum is a simple majority of the membership of a society or assembly), *Robert’s Rules* is clear about the difference between a quorum and a simple majority. *Robert’s Rules* states that a majority may be appropriate in Congress, but it is “too large in most voluntary societies.” It then goes on to say that “in an ordinary society...a provision of the bylaws should specify the number of members that shall constitute a quorum, *which should approximate the largest number that can be depended on to attend any meeting except in very bad weather or other extremely unfavorable conditions*” (Professor Sitze’s emphasis, page 21). In Professor Sitze’s view, any new definition of a quorum should not focus on a majority, but rather on this “largest number.”

The committee also noted that many administrators have the right to attend faculty meetings with voting privileges or with voice only, but that the relevant *Faculty Handbook* language is outdated, since some positions and/or titles of positions have changed. In addition, some positions that are referenced no longer exist. Some “guests,” whose positions are not mentioned at all, have been “guests” for years, after receiving permission to attend at some point. It was agreed that the committee should be provided with a list of positions that have the right to attend faculty meetings and the relevant privileges that have traditionally been assigned to them, as well

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as a list of guests. The members decided to continue the discussion about the quorum at a future meeting.

Continuing with “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Sitze asked the president and the dean if it would be possible for the college to provide some funding for students who wish to prepare to take the Law School Admission Test (LSAT), but who cannot afford the fees associated with practice tests and classes, which often can exceed \$1,000.00. Practice tests for other standardized tests may also be very expensive, it was noted. Professor Engelhardt commented that, if the college provides some support for this purpose, consideration should also be given to offering funding to students who just meet threshold for *not* receiving financial aid from the college; they may also struggle to pay this expense. President Martin said that she would explore what resources might be available to help defray expenses for practice tests.

Professor Heim next asked, on behalf of a colleague, about the parking situation on campus. The faculty member had expressed concern about the reduction in parking spaces on campus, due to the construction of the science center. As a result, faculty members now have to park further away from their offices and classrooms and walk greater distances. Dean Epstein responded that parking has been permanently reduced behind Merrill and McGuire to create the greenway and the greenway residence halls. Parking along East Campus Drive has been temporarily lost due to construction, but the spaces will return once the science center is completed, she noted. Parking along Mead Drive has been permanently displaced by the greenway, and the South Lot was created where the clay tennis courts once were to provide additional parking. This lot has approximately two hundred spaces, which more than offsets the loss of some parking spaces. In addition, student parking was shifted from the Hills Lot (north of College Street) to the Seymour Lot (east of the railroad tracks), so that faculty and staff would have more parking in the Hills Lot. In an additional effort to compensate for spaces that were lost, spaces at the south end of East Drive were created, the dean explained, as were new spaces behind King and Wieland. Facilities staff have been monitoring the Alumni Lot, which has been at or near capacity a number of days during the fall. It may be possible to reallocate the Alumni Lot spaces currently designated for students to create needed buffer capacity for faculty and staff, Dean Epstein said. Jim Brassord, chief of campus operations, and John Carter, chief of public safety, will be discussing this idea with the Office of Student Affairs.

Conversation returned to the results of the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) survey. The committee discussed [the results by faculty rank](#), an exercise that revealed that associate professors had expressed the greatest unhappiness about aspects of college life. In regard to the burdens of service, it was noted that, after returning from their post-tenure leaves, most associate professors are asked to serve on major committees and may assume the role of chair, often at the same time. Professor Sitze commented that many associate professors cannot focus on their research sufficiently as a result. He said that he has been told by some science faculty that their service burdens, which may include large advising loads in addition to the work of chairing and serving on committees, may prevent them from having the time that they need to apply for grants. If they miss a funding cycle, it can be very difficult to secure grants in future rounds to sustain their research programs. It is important for the college to monitor this trend, Professor Sitze commented.

Continuing the conversation, Dean Epstein offered the view that the new compensation program for chairs could result in having more full professors serving as chairs, which would relieve some associate professors from having to assume this role if they would prefer not to do so. Chairing may become particularly attractive to faculty with children who are nearing college

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age or are in college. The dean asked for the committee's advice about other ways that might be found to address the needs of associate professors. Professor Jaswal reiterated her support for providing scientists with lab technicians, who can relieve faculty members from some time-consuming responsibilities, affording more time for research. Professor Moss commented that associate professors are often the parents of young children and expressed the view that making high-quality childcare options available on campus should be a priority. Professor Engelhardt asked if there is a strong sense that full professors place burdens on associate professors, with the expectation that certain responsibilities will shift to others, once associate professors become full professors themselves. Dean Epstein commented that associate professors may face a "perfect storm" in their personal as well as their professional lives. They may be caring for children, for example, at the same time that they are needed by aging parents. By the time one becomes a full professor, children may be more self-sufficient and the stress of evaluation for promotion is alleviated, it was noted.

President Martin commented that there is a greater service obligation for associate professors at Amherst than at other institutions with which she has been associated. Professor Moss suggested that, in some instances, it could be helpful for the Committee of Six to learn if special circumstances exist that would make particular committees more challenging for specific faculty. At present, in an ad hoc way, this kind of information becomes known about some faculty, but not others, which is not equitable, Professor Moss commented. Regardless, the committee agreed that it should not solicit information about faculty members' personal lives. Professor Heim proposed that associate professors not be asked to chair major faculty committees, as this is a demanding and time-consuming role. The dean found this idea to be an interesting one, while noting that another model is for committee chairs to delegate some work among committee members. President Martin suggested that providing more staff support for faculty committees would be helpful. The dean noted that the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) and the Committee on Priorities and Resources (CPR) benefit from support from dedicated staff members. Professor Heim said that, as chair of the College Council, she had found that there was a lack of historical perspective as a result of the frequent turnover of the council's chairs. It was noted that Professor Wagaman, chair of the College Council last year, began the practice of taking minutes. It was suggested that one of the staff members from the Office of Student Affairs could potentially be tasked with providing staff support to the committee. To address the multiple roles that are sometimes assigned to associate professors, Professor Sitze suggested that, before making committee assignments in the spring, the Committee of Six could be provided with a list of chairs of academic departments and programs. In this way, service as chair could be considered as part of the process of assigning faculty members to committees. The dean said that her office will gather this information as early as possible in the spring and share the list of chairs with the committee. As a concluding comment for the discussion of the survey results and a segue to the topic of the meeting time for faculty meetings, Professor Engelhardt said that he has observed that, at times, there is an assumption that for faculty who don't have children the burdens of service are somehow less intense. He has found this assumption to be troubling and unfair. The other members agreed.

Conversation turned to how best to move forward with the [proposal from the Ad Hoc Committee on Alternative Faculty Meeting Hours](#). In the spring of 2016, the Committee of Six had charged the ad hoc committee with examining the feasibility of creating a weekly two-hour block during the day that would be set aside for faculty meetings and events for the community—for example, campus-wide meetings and talks by speakers of interest. The

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proposal had been the subject of extensive conversation by the Committee of Six during the last academic year, and by the full faculty at a faculty meeting held on May 2, 2017. At that meeting, it had been decided that departments and programs should discuss the proposal (to hold faculty meetings, and potentially community meetings, from 1 P.M. to 2:50 P.M. on Thursdays) and come to a conclusion about whether the proposal for a new meeting time would be viable for them.

After offering praise for the thorough work of the ad hoc committee, the committee began its discussion by asking Professor Jaswal about prior concerns that had been expressed about the effect of losing time slots that are used for labs, because some courses are currently utilizing all possible meeting times. Professor Jaswal responded that the main impact would be shifting the Thursday lab slot later by half an hour, and chemistry department faculty are interested in experimenting with a schedule that includes the possibility for a daytime faculty meeting/community period. Professor Sitze said that it is his impression that the change in schedule could place burdens on staff members who support labs, as they potentially would have to work later hours if labs began at 3:00 instead of 2:30 and ended at 6 P.M. Professor Jaswal said she had been in conversation with the chemistry staff, who had indicated that this shift would not pose a burden. Professor Call said that his department (mathematics and statistics) had discussed the proposal last spring. Some faculty had felt that it might be possible to change the department's course schedule to accommodate the new time being proposed for faculty meetings, and were willing to try to develop options. Other colleagues had expressed the view that it would be impossible to come up with a workable alternative to the department's present schedule. The faculty member who is responsible for drawing up the schedule was adamant that it could not be changed to leave the Thursday afternoon time slot free. The dean wondered if offering some sections of Math 111 in a late-afternoon slot might create more options for students who are not athletes, for example. Professor Call noted that most mathematics and statistics courses, including calculus courses, meet four days a week, and that many students taking mathematics and statistics courses would need to be in lab when they were not in his department's courses, so late afternoon sections might not offer a solution. As an overall matter, the dean suggested that using more afternoon time slots for classes that have multiple sections might open up the class schedule and might alleviate some "bunching." Doing so would give students greater access to the curriculum. Professor Jaswal noted that the chemistry department already offers some classes in the afternoon.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Moss said that she would prefer examining the course schedule from the ground up, a proposal made by Professor George, rather than retrofitting the course schedules of departments and programs within the current schedule, in order to develop a new time for faculty meetings and a community period. As it is, the course schedule is extremely difficult to understand and has many complexities, she commented. As a result, it may not be serving the needs of faculty and students, Professor Moss pointed out. Professor Sitze also favored the approach of revamping the class schedule. Both Professor Sitze and Professor Engelhardt expressed skepticism about the effectiveness of a "top-down" approach to building community at the college, which can feel somewhat forced and artificial. Professor Sitze commented that he is struck by the increasing use of email and social media to mediate professional and personal relationships alike, and he sees this trend as more of a barrier to the sense of trust at the core of healthy communities than a lack of large gatherings might be. Professor Sitze also expressed doubts about instituting a community period in a way that would require unwilling sacrifices from one part of the community, however small that part may be.

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Professors Sitze and Engelhardt expressed the view that a sense of community is more likely to emerge organically and spontaneously at the micro level. Professor Engelhardt said that he favors, in the near term, experimenting with holding faculty meetings during the day, but not engineering a new meeting time around a community period. As a longer-term project, it will be important to undertake a review of the course schedule and to consider ways to create a schedule that is more rational, in his view. He also expressed his relief that the question of endorsing evening class times has not come up in these discussions, which would, in his view, have a severe, detrimental impact on students and faculty in the creative and performing arts.

President Martin agreed that the discussion of the approaches to building community should be decoupled from the consideration of a new time for faculty meetings. She noted that the faculty had voted to end classes earlier in the spring semester, in order to set aside time to make up classes that might be canceled because of inclement weather or because of an event. Rather than having a regular time set aside for community events, it might be best to create a less routinized approach to events that are geared toward building community, in her view—including interrupting classes for one day in the spring. If the course schedule is problematic for faculty and students, she recommends that it be reexamined as soon possible. Professor Jaswal expressed that in reviewing the minutes of the faculty meeting discussion, she was struck by the question posed by a colleague about whether there is a commitment to creating a time for the Amherst community to come together. It is her sense, based on views expressed during the strategic planning process, that there is eagerness, even a hunger, among many members of the community to do so. It was agreed that the consideration of a new time for faculty meetings should be decoupled from the issue of a community period.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Moss said that she is under the impression that the ad hoc committee was told not to consider Friday afternoons as a possible time for faculty meetings, and she wondered why. Some members recalled that, since the proposed time slot for faculty meetings was intended to be used for a community period when faculty meetings were not held, it has been felt that Fridays would be problematic. Students, in particular, and some faculty who leave the area to travel to conferences, would likely not attend faculty or community meetings, some members commented. Professor Moss expressed the view that Friday afternoons should be considered as a potential time for faculty meetings, particularly if community period and the faculty meeting times are decoupled. The members agreed that, if a proposal for a Thursday-afternoon time slot moves forward, it would be critical to gain a sense, in advance, of how many faculty members would be willing to teach on Friday, otherwise there could be serious repercussions.

It was agreed that, as a first step toward deciding whether a proposal to create a new meeting time for faculty meetings should be brought forward, departments and programs should be asked whether they can adjust their schedules, and/or wish to do so, in order to create such a slot. The members asked the dean to convey to the chairs that Jesse Barba, director of institutional research and registrar services, will be available to offer assistance, as departments and programs consider options for scheduling their classes. She agreed to do so. Professor Moss expressed concern about developing a meeting slot for faculty meetings that would have, perhaps, the unintended consequence of lengthening the work day. For example, more seminars would need to be taught from 4 P.M. to 6 P.M., because there would be fewer seminar options available earlier in the day. Those faculty members who find the current faculty meeting time challenging because of childcare demands might also find the new system would pose similar

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challenges. Dean Epstein noted that faculty members have a choice about when they teach their courses.

The committee requested that the dean ask the chairs of departments and programs to discuss the proposal to create a block of time on Thursdays, from 1 to 3 P.M. for faculty meetings and to consider the idea of holding faculty meetings on Fridays from 2 to 4 P.M. She agreed to do so and to have chairs report back at the chairs' meeting on October 20. After evaluating the responses from the chairs, the members agreed to consider how best to move forward. A decision about whether to change the time of faculty meetings will need to be made by December, the dean noted, as reserving a time slot would have an impact on course scheduling.

The meeting adjourned at 5:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

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The fourth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2017–2018 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:15 P.M. on Monday, October 2, 2017. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Call, Engelhardt, Heim, Jaswal, Moss, and Sitze, Dean Epstein, and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

Under “Topics of the Day,” President Martin informed the members that the first draft of the college’s reaccreditation self-study report is now complete. The final version of the document will be submitted to the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (CIHE) of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) in February, she noted. The president thanked Associate Dean Tobin for her work on the document. Many administrative units of the college contributed to the self-study, Dean Tobin commented, and she said that the writing of the document has been a team effort. Over the course of the fall term, the self-study will be shared broadly, she noted, and feedback will be solicited. The chair of the reaccreditation visiting team, Ron Liebowitz, president of Brandeis University, will be visiting Amherst on October 16 to review preparations for the full team’s campus visit, which is set for April 15–18, 2018. (For more information about the NEASC process, visit https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/general_information/neasc-reaccreditation-2018 .)

Under “Questions from Committee Members, Professor Sitze raised a question about the breadth of participation in the NESCAC symposium on concussive and sub-concussive injury that Amherst would be hosting on October 4. While he had been pleased to learn that there would be a special panel discussion for the Amherst community as part of the symposium, Professor Sitze wondered whether other sessions also would be open to Amherst faculty. Continuing, he commented that the focus of the Amherst panel, which has been announced as students’ return to the classroom and to activities following a concussion, seemed narrowly framed. It is possible, he suggested, that this framing may not allow for hard questions to be addressed. The dean responded that other faculty members have also raised this concern. She noted that the organizers of the symposium have been asked to broaden the focus of the discussion to include topics beyond what the description of the panel implies. In regard to Professor Sitze’s questions about attendance, Dean Epstein said that it is her understanding that there is limited space for members of the Amherst community to attend sessions other than the special panel, but that she would be happy to inquire on Professor Sitze’s behalf. (She later did so, and arrangements were made for Professor Sitze to attend other sessions.) Professor Sitze noted that, whereas both concussive and sub-concussive blows can lead to brain injuries such as chronic traumatic encephalopathy (or “CTE”), sub-concussive blows are asymptomatic and as such present unique challenges. They are neither tracked nor measured by “return to play” tests, and they are neither documented nor governed under “return to school” protocols. He suggested that the hard question is whether the college should be sponsoring any activities that lead regularly and predictably to brain injuries, regardless of whether those injuries are caused by concussive blows or by sub-concussive blows. President Martin said that a major focus of the symposium is gaining a better understanding of the most effective ways to track concussive injuries. College personnel who are responsible for documenting concussive injuries on their campuses and NESCAC commissioners will be the primary audience. The goal is to inform the medical officers in NESCAC about the latest medical research on concussions. Professor Sitze asked what the decision-making process will be once data are gathered and disseminated about

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concussive injuries on NESAC campuses. The dean said that she would inquire about follow-up plans.

The committee next discussed a draft of a policy governing the possession of weapons in and around premises owned or controlled by Amherst College and at Amherst-sponsored events in other locations. Professor Call asked if the college has the ability to regulate weapons in ways that are consistent with state and federal law, but also go beyond the restrictions these laws impose. An example might be the development of a broader definition of what constitutes a “weapon.” President Martin said that Amherst has the ability to do so. Dean Epstein noted that, for example, that “replica guns” would be allowed on campus only if they are used exclusively in connection with a theatrical production, or in certain other limited circumstances, with the permission by the chief of police and director of public safety. The dean commented that, under the policy, requests by faculty members to have a weapon on campus for pedagogical purposes will be granted unless the use would pose an exceptional danger to the community.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Sitze asked why, in the following section, the policy references “the college,” in regard to making determinations, rather than naming an officer or domain at Amherst: “In addition to the weapons identified above, Amherst College also prohibits all other weapons, including but not limited to: open flames (unless otherwise approved by Environmental Health and Safety), ammunition, explosives, paintball guns, replica guns (except as noted below), electronic incapacitation or other stun weapons, and any other object (including an otherwise innocuous object) that the college determines could be used (or is being used) to harass or injure another individual or that the college reasonably determines has the effect of intimidating another individual.” (Lisa Rutherford, chief policy officer and general counsel, later explained that the campus police would most often be making such determinations, but that, in order to preserve the flexibility needed under these circumstances, it is best not to name a particular Amherst officer or domain.)

At 3:40 P.M., Suzanne Coffey, chief student affairs officer, and Dean Gendron, senior associate dean of students, joined the meeting to discuss changes that they have proposed to the charge of the Committee on Discipline, which include renaming the committee The Community Standards Review Board ([see the appended letter of September 20, 2017, from Ms. Coffey](#)). As the committee had learned earlier, several weeks ago, it had come to the dean’s attention that the Office of Student Affairs had adopted the Community Standards Review Board (CSRB) as the name for the panel that processes cases under the Committee on Discipline, and had modified the way in which students are selected to serve on this body. The dean had informed Ms. Coffey that any change to the name and charge of a faculty committee requires a vote of the faculty. The Committee of Six had then decided that it would be helpful to have a conversation about this matter.

Beginning the discussion, Ms. Coffey offered her apologies for her mistake in permitting unapproved changes to the name of the committee and the ways in which disciplinary hearings are managed. Ms. Coffey said that it had not been her intention to circumvent faculty governance processes when she had endorsed changing the name of the hearing panel to the CSRB, and when she had accepted the recommendation to enlarge the pool of student panelists. Until the dean pointed out the issues that had arisen, Ms. Coffey had not made the connection that changing the name of the entity that conducts hearings had meant that the Committee on Discipline’s name should also be altered. She informed the members that she regrets this

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oversight, and explained that that her office continues to operate under the original charge of the Committee on Discipline, with the exception that the pool of potential student panelists has been enlarged and its make-up has been broadened.

Ms. Coffey noted that, in the charge of the Committee on Discipline, it is stated that the committee will include “four elected student members, two men and two women; four members of the faculty; and the dean of students, who serves as the chair, ex officio, without vote, and as record keeper.” After trying to constitute panels and finding it difficult to schedule hearings because of students’ schedules, her office had put out a general call to students to apply to serve on the panels. Eighteen students were chosen from the applications that had been received, Ms. Coffey explained. When selecting this additional cohort of students, Ms. Coffey noted that her office was able to achieve a greater balance in regard to ethnicity and gender identity, creating a pool that is more representative of the make-up of the student body. Ms. Coffey informed the members that the Association of Amherst Students (AAS) still oversees the procedure for electing students, in accordance with the charge of the Committee on Discipline. That charge also states that members on the committee will serve on “hearing panels,” Ms. Coffey noted. This is still the case, but these adjudication sessions are now referred to as hearings before the CSRB. The hearing panels adjudicate certain allegations of students’ violations of community standards (except for gender-based discriminatory behavior).

Continuing the discussion, Dean Gendron described the shift to a community standards model in which greater emphasis is placed on helping students gain an understanding of why they have engaged in problematic behavior and providing opportunities for self-reflection and support, rather than taking an approach that is adversarial and punitive. Dean Gendron noted that there is a recognition that stress can be a contributing factor in many instances of misconduct, and case managers, who have expertise in mental health, are important partners in community standards work, he noted.

Professor Call asked how many students, under the current system are appointed to the CSRB by the AAS. Dean Gendron said that the AAS appoints up to four, in accordance with the charge of the Committee on Discipline. In answer to the question of whether individual hearings always include panels with an equal number of students who have been appointed by the AAS and students appointed through the student affairs process, Dean Gendron said that there can be a smaller proportion of AAS students on a hearing panel. He explained that there is no cap on the number of students selected by the Office of Student Affairs at present, though one could be imposed in the future, if needed. Responding to a question from Professor Jaswal about the process that is being used to encourage students to apply to serve on the CSRB, Dean Gendron noted that the office casts as wide a net as possible, across classes, when soliciting applications to serve on the board. Information is shared by placing posters around campus, through the Daily Mail, and through reaching out to members of the Queer Resource Center, Women’s and Gender Center, and Multicultural Resource Center. Dean Gendron noted that Corey Michalos, director of community standards, is considering expanding the invitation to serve to members of the class of 2021; there may, however, be a benefit to continuing to have only second-, third-, and fourth-year students serve, he commented. Last year, twenty or so applications were received, and eighteen students were invited to serve. If applications were to increase to fifty or sixty, there might be a need to make the selection process more competitive, Dean Gendron said.

Continuing, Dean Gendron noted that hearings require eleven persons from the Amherst community to assemble for a minimum of two hours, and sometimes for five or more hours.

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He stressed the importance of convening balanced panels in a timely, fair, and judicious manner. In his view, the larger pool of potential student panelists is helping make it possible to do so. Keeping the size of the pool of potential panelists at around twenty is helpful because of the time it takes to train students, Dean Gendron explained. In addition, it is hoped that educating a greater number of students about the adjudicative process will help reduce the amount of inappropriate behavior among students.

Turning to another topic, Professor Moss asked about the rise in the number of hearings and what is prompting this increase—for example, a change in the kinds of violations of community standards that are occurring or a change in the threshold for the college’s intervention under particular circumstances. Dean Gendron noted that most problematic behavior is addressed by professional staff through informal means. Residential life staff now receive more training in the area of community standards and have more responsibilities in this realm, he explained, and systems of reporting and adjudication have been improved. For example, resident counselors (RCs) are encouraged to seek ways of becoming more proactive with regard to behavior in residence halls. They are asked to share with student affairs information that they learn about the climate in their halls, and instances of concerning behavior at an individual level. As the Office of Student Affairs becomes aware of difficulties, staff members are better able to provide help and support.

The Office of Student Affairs now receives more than five hundred reports each year, including care reports, community standard reports, and reports from the Amherst College Police Department, Dean Gendron noted. In recent years, five to ten hearings have been convened annually, and that number is expected to climb. A major contributing factor is the increasing amount of documented behavior that relates to harassment, violence, intellectual dishonesty, and other egregious acts, which requires input from the CSRB. While there has been an increase in disciplinary actions and hearings, Dean Gendron noted, the number of “separations” from the college has remained consistent. Professor Moss asked how many infractions are related to academic matters. Dean Gendron responded that each year, there are about ten to fifteen cases that involve intellectual responsibility and hundreds of instances of problematic behavior that are social in nature.

Dean Gendron noted that it is possible for members of the community to make reports of concerns about students’ behavior via forms that are posted at <https://www.amherst.edu/offices/student-affairs/community-standards/reporting-forms>. Anyone can submit anonymous care or community standards reports. There are separate reporting forms for each. Reports relating to sexual misconduct and intellectual responsibility, which also have separate forms, may not be anonymous, he noted. Professor Sitze asked what the rationale is for allowing reports to be made anonymously. Dean Gendron responded that students with identities that have been marginalized have real and perceived concerns about being part of these processes. In addition, anonymous reports provide student affairs with valuable information about the campus climate, themes and patterns emerge, and the college learns about distress that students may be experiencing. Some of this information might not otherwise rise to the surface, he explained.

Some members wondered if a culture of reporting, as described by Dean Gendron, might lead students to feel that they are living in a surveillance state. Ms. Coffey said that Dean Gendron spends a great deal of time talking with students after learning about an instance of problematic behavior. The idea is to build a relationship, rather than to create a situation in which students

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feel that they are being watched. It is hoped that students will feel that they can come to the Office of Student Affairs and talk with staff. Professor Engelhardt wondered, based on reporting mechanisms that are in place, whether there are a significant number of instances of concerning behavior that are not being reported. Dean Gendron noted that it appears that there has been an increase in reporting, in part because of the creation of the reporting portal, which is now in its second year of operation. He believes that it is likely that incidents of sexual misconduct are under-reported. The same is true for incidents of intellectual dishonesty, in his view. Some faculty members continue to address issues of cheating and plagiarism themselves and do not report infractions to the Office of Student Affairs. He noted the advantage of having a single clearing house of information about this behavior, which allows the college to identify patterns and trends. In addition, formal reports enable those involved to make use of grievance procedures and mechanisms of appeal. Dean Gendron expressed the view that increasing reporting, which results in addressing what is taking place and creating a healthier environment, contributes to efforts to strengthen community life at the college.

Professor Sitze expressed support for moving away from a punitive model to a restorative justice model, which seems to be implicit in the community standards approach. Other members of the committee also expressed support. He asked Dean Gendron about the use of ad hoc panels, which became an option beginning in the summer of 2016. How much of this process is at variance with the regular process, he wondered, noting that there is no opportunity for appeal. Dean Gendron responded that the ad hoc process is used on a limited basis as a last resort and typically by students' request—for example, when students need a resolution on a matter so that a decision can be made about whether they may study abroad. Hearing panels have traditionally not met during recesses or final exams, so another process was needed during these times. He noted that the office does not compel a student to set aside academics to participate in a hearing. Professor Sitze said that it is important to communicate that the ad hoc process is not being imposed, but is being used to meet students' needs, by their choice. Dean Gendron agreed.

Professor Sitze next asked if the solicitation of applications to serve on hearing panels is framed in such a way as to draw students who may be eager to stand in judgment of fellow students. Dean Gendron said that the self-selected group that has applied to serve has not included students with that mindset. If there is a problem, it is that the prevailing attitude among them is not to hold fellow students accountable for improper behavior. Professors Sitze asked if Dean Gendron would like to see a restorative justice model implemented in the future. This model involves finding ways to repair harm to individuals and to the community caused by problematic behavior, and having the individuals involved help to bring about a resolution. Dean Gendron said he would like to work toward such a model, making use of mediated conversations, rather than adversarial approaches, when possible, for example. Professor Heim asked what obstacles are keeping the college from adopting a restorative justice model. Dean Gendron responded that the primary obstacle is the need to balance the Amherst community's needs around health and well-being with compliance with government regulations. Another challenge is capacity—including staffing needs and the amount of energy needed to adjust cultural expectations about accountability. A program of intergroup dialogue is needed, in Dean Gendron's view, to implement a restorative justice model. Dean Gendron said that he would like to move toward this model slowly, in partnership with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion and members of the faculty. At this time, there is interest, but no roadmap about how best to move forward.

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Returning to the topic of the make-up of hearing panels, Professor Call asked about the process that is used to select the membership of the panels. Ms. Coffey responded that a broad solicitation is made to the student cohort and to faculty members to learn about their availability at a particular time. Students and faculty are also asked to reveal any conflicts of interest that they may have with the students involved, for example whether a faculty member has a student in a class or is a student's advisor. (Dean Gendron noted that in the case of a reported conflict, he and Mr. Michalos will consider whether the conflict could have an impact on a case.) The reporting and responding parties are asked to make themselves available. Typically, six or seven people (three students, two faculty members, and members of the student affairs staff) participate in a given hearing. The dean of students or the person's designee does not vote. Mr. Michalos provides support, including offering answers to questions that arise about the *Student Code of Conduct*, and has no influence over final decisions. The chair, who does not vote, assists with the determination of sanctions. Hearing boards cannot mandate some sanctions, for example therapeutic counseling, but can require others, for example, an assessment of whether counseling is needed.

Professor Jaswal noted that the skills that are required for the participants in these processes appear to overlap with the competencies needed for other work, for example with the resource centers and among resident counselors. She wondered if training could be coordinated. Dean Gendron said that ideas for developing common training protocols are under discussion, for example those that focus on communication and dialogue skills. Other skills are specific to participating on hearing boards and require specialized training, he noted. Students receive such training over four or five days before the beginning of the semester. The members asked about the training that faculty receive. Dean Gendron responded that training for faculty takes about ninety minutes and also takes place at the beginning of the semester. He also works with faculty members on a one-to-one basis prior to hearings.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Moss asked how much time a faculty member on the discipline committee might be spending on hearing panels. She wondered if there are ways to relieve the pressure that this commitment may be placing on faculty. Ms. Coffey responded that each faculty member typically serves on half of the five to six hearings that take place each semester. As noted earlier, a hearing may run anywhere from two to five hours. Thus, with two faculty on each panel, faculty are spending between twenty and sixty hours a semester on the hearings, Professor Moss commented. She noted that, while the number of students who can serve on panels has been enlarged, based on the assumption that students have time constraints, it should be recognized that faculty have demands on their time too. The members discussed whether a solution might be to have staff with relevant expertise serve on hearing panels for cases that do not involve matters of intellectual responsibility. This change could also have the effect of broadening the diversity of the panels further. At the conclusion of the conversation, the members thanked Ms. Coffey and Dean Gendron, who left the meeting at 4:30 P.M.

Professor Sitze said that he continues to feel discomfort with the use of anonymous online reporting systems, and he argued that systems like this run counter to the college's emphasis on trust and friendship among students. Some members expressed the view that the current system, when compared with a full bias-reporting system, is preferable. Professor Jaswal found the argument that an anonymous system gives voice to students from marginalized backgrounds to be compelling. Due to their life experiences, students with these backgrounds may find it challenging to form the relationships of trust that Professor Sitze mentioned. Professor Sitze said

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that, while the intent of an anonymous reporting system may seem admirable now, systems such as this one can outlive their original purposes and take on a life of their own, one that is fully independent of, or even opposed to, those original purposes. Professor Sitze noted that the college's statement of non-discrimination includes religion as one of several protected classes. As such, he observed, an anonymous online reporting system could be used to file reports of religious discrimination that are consistent with the sort of "religious liberty" claims favored by the current Department of Justice.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Engelhardt expressed concern about the projected growth in reporting and wondered about the impact of this trend on the campus culture. Professor Moss said that she supports having staff members participate in the hearing process for cases that do not involve academic matters. She has found that knowing more about the intimate details of students' lives can make it more challenging to teach them. While agreeing that it would be a good idea to have staff serve on hearing panels, Professor Call commented that faculty bear a special responsibility for community standards. He advocated having at least one faculty member serve on all hearing panels.

In conclusion, the members agreed that the changes to the charge of the Committee on Discipline that have been proposed by Ms. Coffey and Dean Gendron should be brought before the faculty, and expressed support for implementing the revisions. The idea of having staff serve on hearing panels could be considered going forward, it was noted. The committee then voted six in favor and zero opposed on the substance of the motion below, and six in favor and zero opposed to forward the motion to the faculty. The members then reviewed a draft of a faculty meeting agenda for a meeting on October 17 and voted six in favor and zero opposed to forward it to the faculty.

The Committee of Six proposes the following changes to current language in the [Faculty Handbook \(IV., S. 1., g.\)](#), as indicated below.

g. ~~*The Committee on Discipline*~~ **THE COMMUNITY STANDARDS REVIEW BOARD** The ~~committee~~ **BOARD** will consist of four elected student members, ~~two men and two women~~; **FIFTEEN OR MORE SELECTED STUDENT MEMBERS, REPRESENTING A PLURALISM OF IDENTITIES AND CLASS YEARS**; four members of the faculty; and the dean of students, **OR THAT PERSON'S DESIGNEE**, who serves as the chair, ex officio, without vote, ~~and as record keeper~~. The faculty members of the ~~Committee on Discipline~~ **COMMUNITY STANDARDS REVIEW BOARD** will be elected during a meeting of the faculty after nomination by the Committee of Six or after nomination from the floor. They will normally serve three-year terms, and their terms, when possible, will be staggered so as to maintain continuity from year to year. Incidents regarding violations of the ~~STUDENT honor code~~ **CODE OF CONDUCT** may be adjudicated by a hearing panel. Members ~~of the Committee on Discipline~~ will serve on ~~hearing~~ **COMMUNITY STANDARDS REVIEW BOARD** panels.

Membership on the ~~committee~~ **BOARD**:

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~~The committee will consist of two male and two female students~~ **THE POOL FROM WHICH A COMMUNITY STANDARDS REVIEW BOARD PANEL IS DRAWN WILL CONSIST OF APPROXIMATELY NINETEEN STUDENTS** and four members of the faculty. The dean of students, or ~~his or her~~ **THAT PERSON'S** designee, will ordinarily serve as non-voting chair. ~~The dean of students may delegate this responsibility to a faculty member who has previously served on the Committee on Discipline~~ **COMMUNITY STANDARDS REVIEW BOARD** when the dean has supervised or been involved in an investigation of the complaint at issue. ~~The director of student conduct and community standards, or his or her~~ **OR THAT PERSON'S** designee, will serve as record keeper.

THE DEAN IS JOINED BY FIVE VOTING PANEL MEMBERS, THREE STUDENTS, AND TWO FACULTY MEMBERS. UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES, THE DEAN OF STUDENTS, OR THAT PERSON'S DESIGNEE, IS AUTHORIZED TO CONVENE AD HOC PANELS, AS DESCRIBED IN THIS DOCUMENT, IF NECESSARY.

~~Each case will normally be heard by a panel of two faculty members and three student members. A panel may consist of one faculty member and two student members when a normal quorum is unavailable.~~

~~When any faculty member of the committee disqualifies himself or herself from hearing a case, is disqualified for a conflict of interest, or is otherwise unavailable, he or she will be replaced by a substitute appointed by the Committee of Six, if a substitution is required to maintain the quorum.~~

Student members of the ~~Committee on Discipline~~ **COMMUNITY STANDARDS REVIEW BOARD** will be chosen ~~in~~ **EITHER BY** an election conducted by the middle of the second semester of each academic year **BY THE ASSOCIATION OF AMHERST STUDENTS (AAS) OR BY A SELECTION PROCESS ADMINISTERED BY THE OFFICE OF STUDENT AFFAIRS**. The Association of Amherst Students (~~AAS~~) will oversee the following procedures:

1. The election will be conducted according to the procedures outlined in the code of elections. The ~~two men and the two women candidates~~ **FOUR CANDIDATES, WITH NO MORE THAN TWO OF THE FOUR CANDIDATES REPRESENTING THE SAME GENDER IDENTITY**, who receive the highest number of votes will be elected. If this procedure cannot be followed because of an insufficient number of candidates, then the College Council will appoint a student to any position unfilled by election.
2. If one of the elected students resigns, the AAS will appoint an alternate ~~of the same gender~~, **AND THE ALTERNATE WILL BE OF THE SAME GENDER IDENTITY AS THE STUDENT WHO RESIGNED WHEN POSSIBLE**. In the event elected students are not available, and substitutes are required to maintain the

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quorum for a case, a substitute will normally be appointed by the chair of the College Council.

3. ADDITIONAL STUDENTS ARE APPOINTED VIA A SELECTION PROCESS ADMINISTERED BY THE OFFICE OF STUDENT AFFAIRS.

Student members will begin their two-year term on July 1 of the year of their election.

At the beginning of each academic year, the dean of students or designee will schedule training for all members of the ~~Committee on Discipline~~ **COMMUNITY STANDARDS REVIEW BOARD**. In consultation with the ~~committee~~ **BOARD**, the dean of students or designee may, from time to time, schedule other such training to assist the ~~committee~~ **BOARD**.

AD HOC PANELS

THE COMMUNITY STANDARDS REVIEW BOARD IS ACTIVE ONLY WHEN CLASSES ARE IN SESSION; THERE ARE NO REGULARLY SCHEDULED HEARINGS DURING FINAL EXAMINATIONS OR RECESSES. OCCASIONALLY, HOWEVER, CIRCUMSTANCES MAY PROMPT A COMPLAINANT OR RESPONDENT TO REQUEST AN EXPEDITED RESOLUTION DURING A PERIOD WHEN THE COMMUNITY STANDARDS REVIEW BOARD IS INACTIVE. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, THE DEAN OF STUDENTS IS AUTHORIZED TO PROVIDE VOLUNTARY, ALTERNATIVE MECHANISMS FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION, INCLUDING CONSTITUING AD HOC PANELS, PROVIDED BOTH PARTIES TO THE CONFLICT CONSENT TO THE VOLUNTARY ALTERNATIVE. AD HOC PANELS MAY COMPRISE AMHERST COLLEGE STUDENTS OR FACULTY, WHO NEED NOT BE MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY STANDARDS REVIEW BOARD. PANEL COMPOSITIONS MAY BE ADJUSTED AT THE DISCRETION OF THE DEAN OF STUDENTS, OR THAT PERSON'S DESIGNEE. RELEVANT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES WILL BE REVIEWED WITH AD HOC PANEL MEMBERS PRIOR TO THEIR SERVICE.

Appeal

Either the respondent or the complainant may appeal a decision by the ~~Committee on Discipline~~ **COMMUNITY STANDARDS REVIEW BOARD (CSRB)**, the dean of students, or the director of ~~student conduct and~~ community standards. All **INTELLECTUAL RESPONSIBILITY** appeals **AND APPEALS OF A DECISION OF A CSRB PANEL** are directed to the dean of the faculty. **APPEALS OF NON-INTELLECTUAL RESPONSIBILITY-RELATED DECISIONS MADE BY THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY STANDARDS**

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OR DESIGNEE (ADMINISTRATIVE ADJUDICATOR) ARE DIRECTED TO THE CHIEF STUDENT AFFAIRS OFFICER. An appeal may come forward based on the following grounds: bias shown during any part of the student conduct process; material procedural error; the inappropriateness of the sanction **(RESPONDENT ONLY)**; or the discovery of substantive new evidence that was not available at the time the decision was made.

The respondent or the complainant must submit a written statement of appeal to the dean of the faculty **OR CHIEF STUDENT AFFAIRS OFFICER AS APPROPRIATE**, which must state the grounds and reason for the appeal, within ten business days of the date of the written finding. Upon receipt of the statement of appeal, the dean of the faculty **OR CHIEF STUDENT AFFAIRS OFFICER** will review the official records of the dean of students, director of ~~student conduct and~~ community standards or the ~~committee's~~ **BOARD'S** proceeding, and other materials bearing on the case as necessary. The dean of the faculty **OR CHIEF STUDENT AFFAIRS OFFICER** may interview the parties to the dispute or anyone else involved in the hearing process, including the ~~committee~~ **PANEL** members.

For an appeal of a **AN INTELLECTUAL RESPONSIBILITY** decision by the dean of students or the director of ~~student conduct and~~ community standards, the dean of the faculty may refer the case to a panel of the ~~Committee on Discipline~~ **COMMUNITY STANDARDS REVIEW BOARD**, consisting of two faculty members, one of whom will act as chair, and one student. For an appeal of a decision by the ~~Committee on Discipline~~ **COMMUNITY STANDARDS REVIEW BOARD**, the dean of the faculty may refer the case back to the original panel with instructions or may direct that the case be reviewed or reheard by a different panel of the ~~Committee on Discipline~~ **COMMUNITY STANDARDS REVIEW BOARD, consisting of two faculty members, one of whom will act as chair, and one student.** In the case of any such referral, the panel of the ~~Committee on Discipline~~ **COMMUNITY STANDARDS REVIEW BOARD** will report its findings and recommendations to the dean of the faculty, who will resolve the appeal.

FOR ANY APPEAL, the dean of the faculty **OR CHIEF STUDENT AFFAIRS OFFICER** will render a decision with such terms as the dean of the faculty **OR CHIEF STUDENT AFFAIRS OFFICER** determines to be appropriate. The dean of the faculty's **OR CHIEF STUDENT AFFAIRS OFFICER'S** decision is final, and no further appeal will be permitted.

Conversation turned to a revised proposal forwarded by the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) to remove instructors' access to students' transcripts and test scores through the ACDATA system. As noted in [a letter of September 25, 2017 from Professor Sanderson](#), chair of the CEP, "The CEP believes that the faculty's current easy access to students' transcripts has the potential to influence expectations and may, on occasion, affect decisions about the class list. The CEP believes faculty access should be more limited." It was noted that the CEP had brought forward similar proposals in 2015–2016 and 2016–2017. Members of the Committee

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of Six at those times had raised some concerns about aspects of the proposals, which the current proposal has been designed to address. As noted in Professor Sanderson's letter, the CEP is recommending that students' transcripts, with grades suppressed, be available to instructors through the ACDATA system only during the pre-registration period. Under the current proposal, faculty members who need to view grades in prior courses to determine whether prerequisites have been satisfied will "continue to be able to take advantage of an option developed by the registrar that provides access to that information as well as placement and testing information. The registrar will provide complete academic records of the students in a class upon request if the instructor has legitimate educational reasons for needing this information." The CEP expressed the view that the proposed policy "adheres more closely to rules established by The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and will serve the needs of our faculty and students." It was noted that the CEP is also recommending that transcripts no longer be automatically available to advisors through ACDATA after the advisee has either moved to a new advisor or graduated, unless the student has given permission for that access. The committee agreed with the CEP that the registrar should create a process that will allow former advisors to request, with a student's permission, immediate electronic access through ACDATA to their former students' transcripts. The committee suggested that for alumni and former advisees who wish to provide faculty with access to their transcripts, perhaps an electronic waiver of some kind could be made available. The CEP noted that a vote by the faculty would not be needed to implement this policy and asked that the Committee of Six request that the registrar implement the proposed policy.

Professor Call asked for clarity about whether, under the proposed policy, individual faculty within certain departments, for legitimate educational purposes, would be able to view courses that students complete in that department and in other relevant departments, as well as test scores. As part of the Committee of Six's most recent conversation in May of 2017, the request had been made that the process for making a request to the registrar should allow faculty members to have access to transcripts in an electronic form in "real time"—most simply, by allowing continued access through ACDATA for faculty who have received "need-to-know" clearance. Professor Call said that he would like to be sure that the CEP intends for such an approach to be taken. He reiterated that it is important that he is aware of the courses that students are currently taking and those that they have taken in the past, as well as their performance in past courses, in order to provide students with the support that they need to be successful. The dean said that she would be sure that the process described by Professor Call takes place. The members, who expressed support for the CEP's proposal, asked the dean to consider the best way to share the news of the policy change with the community. The members suggested that a letter be sent from the dean, the CEP chair, and the registrar, for example. Dean Epstein agreed to consider the best mechanism.

With little time remaining in the meeting, the members agreed to postpone a discussion on attendance and voting at faculty meetings until a future meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 5:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

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Amended October 31, 2017**

The fifth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2017–2018 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:30 P.M. on Monday, October 16, 2017. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Call, Engelhardt, Heim, Jaswal, Moss, and Sitze, Dean Epstein, and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

Under “Topics of the Day,” President Martin informed the members that the meetings of the board of trustees and the President’s Campaign Board, held over the previous weekend, had been a success. She noted that the newly formed campaign board comprises one hundred leading donors and prospective donors to the college. The attendees were impressed with the faculty and students with whom they had interacted during the course of their time on campus, the president commented. Professor Jaswal, who had participated on a panel on undergraduate research as part the campaign board’s activities, said that she had noticed that a member of the staff was taking notes of the conversations; she wondered about the purpose of doing so and who would be reviewing this material. President Martin said the purpose was to give board members a chance to respond to what they had heard throughout the day and to share this information with the entire group. The notes had been helpful to her, the president commented, as she developed a summary of the sessions to present at the conclusion of the campaign board’s meetings.

Continuing, Professor Jaswal commented that, following one event, a trustee had asked her to suggest resources that might be provided to increase support for STEM faculty and students. Professor Jaswal had responded by mentioning that she is excited by the college’s plans to appoint one technician for every two faculty members in the sciences. She had explained that technicians relieve many burdens placed on faculty, leaving more time to pursue research and to concentrate on teaching and advising. In response to another question about how students find out about non-health related STEM opportunities and careers, Professor Jaswal mentioned a STEM-specific advisor within the Loeb Center for Career Exploration and Planning, similar to the existing health professions advisor would benefit students and standardize the current ad hoc advising that is taking place through individual faculty members. Dean Epstein said that, at present, Emily Griffin, director of the Loeb Center, advises students about careers in STEM. It is hoped that a donor can be found to support a position dedicated to this area. The dean noted that there are now professional advisors within the Loeb Center with special expertise in advising students about careers in business and finance, education, and health professions. A search is currently under way for an advisor who will focus on careers in arts and communications, Dean Epstein said. Pending successful fundraising, new positions will be added to cover government and nonprofit, law, and science and technology. The Health Professions Committee works closely with the Loeb Center’s health professions advisor, the dean noted. President Martin mentioned that additional faculty FTEs in STEM and other fields will be a campaign priority.

Concluding the discussion of the weekend’s activities, Dean Epstein reported that, at its meeting on Friday, the board of trustees had voted to approve the continuation of the Phased Retirement Option (PRO) for faculty age sixty and sixty-one for an additional five-year period (to end June 30, 2023). The board also approved a renewal of the Enhanced Phased Retirement Option (EPRO) for faculty age sixty-three and over for an additional five-year period (to end June 30, 2023).

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President Martin next informed the members that an announcement would soon be sent to the community about the retirement of Suzanne Coffey, chief student affairs officer. Ms. Coffey has informed the president of her intention to retire from the college at end of this academic year. A search for Ms. Coffey's successor will be launched immediately, the president said, and Dean Epstein and Norm Jones, chief diversity and inclusion officer, will co-chair the search.

Dean Epstein next reported that the search for a new registrar has concluded. Turning to the new policy about faculty members' access to transcripts, which the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) had proposed and the Committee of Six had recently approved, the dean noted that the policy will be implemented by the new registrar in the spring. The committee then discussed a personnel matter.

Discussion turned to the use of clickers at faculty meetings, which is being piloted beginning this year. The dean suggested that the clickers be used for voting on significant motions, and not for routine votes such as that required for the approval of the minutes. The committee agreed that this approach would be best and that routine votes should continue to be done by voice. Dean Epstein next informed the committee that Ms. Coffey has requested that Corey Michalos, director of community standards, attend the October 17 faculty meeting. The purpose would be to have him on hand to answer questions about the proposed changes to the charge of the Committee on Discipline. The members agreed that having Mr. Michalos at the meeting would be helpful.

Dean Epstein next informed the committee that, when reviewing course proposals recently, the CEP had observed that many full-time visiting faculty members are choosing to teach classes that meet once a week, in many cases for just 150 minutes. The dean noted that the CEP had expressed the view that allowing increasing numbers of courses to meet once a week could further limit students' access to the curriculum and might be less beneficial pedagogically, given the way such courses need to be structured. Most members of the CEP think that, with the exception of 300- and 400-level senior seminars, there should be much greater scrutiny of courses offered once a week. Dean Epstein said that she had offered to contact visiting professors to consider having their classes meet more frequently. Almost all visitors have now agreed to do so, she noted. The dean commented that student members of the CEP had said that building a schedule has become more challenging as a result of the recent proliferation of 150- and 180-minute classes, which effectively limit course selection by overlapping with three course slots, in the students' view.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Moss asked if the CEP's concerns are limited to courses taught by visitors. She expressed the view that a once-a-week format can have pedagogical advantages for courses besides those targeted to advanced students. For example, the Department of Black Studies has regularly offered its introductory course as a once-a-week meeting, in an effort to provide beginning students with the opportunity to engage with difficult material in a structured and sustained setting. She wondered if the CEP's new position on course length and level had been informed by pedagogical evidence, anecdote, or experience. She worries that, if students' first encounters with longer class periods are also their first encounters with advanced material, such a structure might inadvertently disadvantage students with less academic preparation. She hoped the CEP and the dean of the faculty would return to this question and not create a new policy without deliberate inquiry. Apart from the question of visitors, she believes, professors are the best suited to determine the class structure that will best serve their students. The dean responded that the CEP will likely be in touch with professors

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(and their chairs) who wish to teach introductory classes in a once-a-week format to explain the committee's concerns. That said, the CEP is not planning on a change in policy. Faculty who wish to teach classes in a once-a-week format need only to provide the educational rationale for doing so. This rationale will not become part of the course description in the catalog.

Under "Questions from Committee Members, Professor Call noted, with great sadness, the passing of poet Richard Wilbur '42, who died on October 14 at the age of ninety-six. Mr. Wilbur taught a much-admired seminar with Professor Sofield. President Martin agreed that Mr. Wilbur's death represents a tremendous loss and said that the college will be planning ways to honor him.

Continuing with questions, Professor Sitze asked President Martin about an event at the University of Chicago (see <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/10/16/college-presidents-and-provosts-gather-consider-issues-free-speech>) at which presidents and provosts from a range of institutions had discussed not only free speech on campus but also how to change the national narrative on higher education. Given that attacks on higher education are coming not only from right-wing websites but also from the Department of Justice, and given that these attacks are aiming not only at extra-mural utterances but also on course descriptions, including those at the college itself, Professor Sitze wondered whether Amherst will be a part of the sector-wide response that appears to have been at issue in this meeting. President Martin said that she and the dean would have attended if the gathering had not been scheduled at the same time as the meetings of the President's Campaign Board. The event was limited to presidents and chief academic officers, President Martin said, noting that she had asked whether she might send someone from the faculty. Dean Epstein commented that matters relating to free speech on campus will top the agenda at the upcoming meetings of the Northeast deans. She said that she would be happy to report back about these conversations when she returns from those meetings.

A conversation ensued about concerted attacks on faculty speech and courses. Professor Sitze commented that he sees the wisdom in not responding to certain attacks on higher education, on the theory that engaging with "trolls" plays into their hands, but he added that he thinks that this tactic is unsustainable over the long term. The more that academics don't respond, he continued, the more that academia will become delegitimized in the eyes of significant parts of the voting public. This may or may not affect private colleges, he thinks, but it is likely to affect public universities that depend upon state appropriations for funding and are subject to legislative control. There is therefore an increasing need for a sector-wide response, he suggested. The committee discussed the visibility of course materials to the world beyond the campus and academe and the possible targeting of what they convey. In an electronic age, President Martin commented, course descriptions can become the subject of extensive, pernicious online attacks, and professors, as well as the institution, can suffer. The members, the president, and the dean agreed that this is a deeply troubling trend, and that the issues involved are complex. President Martin said she would find out from colleagues whether there was any discussion in Chicago of what Professor Sitze had called a "sector-wide response." The committee turned to personnel matters.

Discussion returned briefly to the question of reconsidering the criteria for a quorum at faculty meetings. Conversation focused on whether to set the quorum as an absolute number of those who are eligible to vote, and/or to come up with a principle for setting the quorum number that could be used to define the quorum or to determine a workable absolute number. Professor Call recommended defining the quorum based on the number of tenure-line faculty, resident

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artists, and lecturers who are not on leave in a given semester. This number of individuals in these permanent positions is relatively stable, whereas the number of visitors can fluctuate a great deal, the members agreed. For this reason, it was decided that the cohort described by Professor Call could serve as a good baseline for the quorum. Professor Call proposed that the quorum for the transaction of business at a faculty meeting be met when the number of those required to attend, eligible to vote, and present at the meeting is at least equal to the smallest whole number larger than one-half of the number of tenure-line faculty, lecturers, and resident artists not on leave in a given semester. (This number is ninety-two this semester, Associate Dean Tobin later informed the members.) The committee agreed that all tenure-line faculty (including those attending while on leave), lecturers, resident artists, and visiting faculty present at a meeting should be counted in determining the quorum at that meeting. At the conclusion of the discussion, it was agreed that motions to revise the *Faculty Handbook* language about the quorum should be drafted, and that the committee would review them at its next meeting. No conclusion was reached about whether the quorum should be defined as an absolute number or should follow a formula such as that proposed by Professor Call.

With little time remaining in the meeting, the members agreed to postpone a discussion on attendance and voting at faculty meetings until a future meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 5:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

**Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, October 23, 2017
Amended November 1, 2017**

The sixth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2017–2018 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:15 P.M. on Monday, October 23, 2017. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Call, Engelhardt, Heim, Jaswal, Moss, and Sitze, Dean Epstein, and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

Under “Topics of the Day,” President Martin noted the upcoming event at the college that will mark the one hundredth anniversary of President John F. Kennedy’s birth, a milestone that is occurring this year. To celebrate that occasion, and also President Kennedy’s October 26, 1963, visit to the college, Amherst will host a forum titled “Poetry and Politics: A Celebration of the Life of John F. Kennedy” on October 28. Among the events planned is a talk by Congressman Joseph Kennedy III, which will take place on the steps of Frost Library. All members of the community are encouraged to attend, President Martin commented.

Dean Epstein next summarized views expressed at the recent chairs’ meeting about the proposal to change the time of faculty meetings. The dean noted that reports by the chairs about the preferences of their colleagues made it evident that many departments and programs—across disciplines—are adamantly opposed to changing the time of faculty meetings to Thursday or Friday during the day. These departments and programs expressed a preference for the status quo over the other options offered. Citing the constraints imposed by the course schedule, some chairs said that the anticipated impact of shifting timeslots would be significant and would have an adverse effect on their ability to offer their curricula. A shift would likely result in the inability to find replacement slots in which to offer displaced courses, these chairs commented. A smaller number of departments and programs seem willing to experiment; some preferred Thursdays, and some wanted to change to Fridays. Some departments and programs have not reached a conclusion about the matter, the dean said. The chairs expressed support for reexamining the course schedule from the ground up, building on the hard work of the Ad Hoc Committee on Alternative Faculty Meeting Hours, to see if it might be possible to develop a more rational schedule that might provide greater flexibility—in service of myriad goals. One of the aspirations in the future might be to find a new timeslot for faculty meetings. Seeking the members’ advice about how best to move forward, the dean asked if it appears that the faculty has been consulted sufficiently.

Professor Jaswal, noted the extraordinary efforts of the ad hoc committee, including its faithfulness to meeting the Committee of Six’s charge. She expressed the view that, before departments deliberated about the proposals, it would have been helpful if the minutes of the committee’s consideration of several possibilities and schedule examples had been shared. Professor Engelhardt, who had participated in the discussion at the chairs’ meeting, said that he had been left with the impression that more than half of departments and programs were passionate in the view that the time of faculty meetings should not be changed. Dean Epstein concurred, noting that some chairs worry about having a vote on the floor of the faculty, as the concerns of some departments are significant, and particular changes could have a differential impact. Professor Sitze asked if it appeared from the chairs’ reports that tenure-track faculty within departments and programs had been adequately consulted. The dean responded that the conversation implied that tenure-track faculty had been consulted, along with other members of departments and programs. Professor Engelhardt said that the argument has been made by some tenure-track faculty, and other faculty who are parents, that the proposed timeslots would be less workable for faculty with children than the current evening time. Some tenure-track faculty members have also been concerned that the need to teach more classes on Fridays

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and/or to attend faculty meetings on that day could present a barrier to attending conferences on Fridays/weekends, a common practice. The dean said that she plans to explore possibilities surrounding reimbursement for childcare, if the meeting time remains in the evening. Professor Call commented that, in regard to the faculty meeting time, he conjectures that no perfect solution exists.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Moss said that she supports the idea of reevaluating the schedule in its entirety. In doing so, the goal of the exercise should not be narrowly constructed, limiting consideration to whether the time of the faculty meeting could be changed. Instead, in her view, the schedule should be considered broadly, encompassing overlapping conversations that are ongoing—for example, needs surrounding accessibility and inclusion. She commented that, in regard to accessible classrooms and other topics related to accessibility and inclusion on campus, it would be helpful to consult with Jim Brassord, chief of campus operations, and Norm Jones, chief diversity and inclusion officer. These two colleagues are co-chairing the Presidential Task Force on Accessibility and Inclusion. Professor Moss said that she would prefer that another faculty committee not be charged with examining the course schedule until preliminary work is done by administrators, or perhaps by an outside consultant. A significant amount of faculty time has already been devoted to this issue, she noted. The other members agreed. Professor Jaswal commented that other institutions seem to have found ways to reserve a time that can be used for community periods and faculty meetings. She suggested that research be done on the schedules of peer institutions, as did Professor Call, who noted that gathering ideas from other schools would be informative.

Concluding the conversation, the members expressed appreciation for the thorough work of the ad hoc committee, commenting on the expertise and thoughtfulness that this body has brought to carrying out what was an extremely challenging charge. The Committee of Six offered support for taking a fresh look at the course schedule, agreeing that the information gathered by the ad hoc committee would provide a very useful foundation for this work. Dean Epstein suggested that everything be on the table, including assumptions about the viability of early-morning classes and extending the academic schedule into the evening. The committee agreed. As a first step, the members decided that the new registrar and Jesse Barba, director of institutional research and registrar services, and perhaps an outside consultant, should evaluate the course schedule and develop proposals for improvement. Another ad hoc faculty committee could then be charged with considering the course schedule and bringing proposals to the faculty to meet identified goals. The members agreed that, based on the feedback offered by departments and programs, a proposal to change the time of faculty meetings should not go forward at this time.

Conversation turned to the question of whether a memorial minute committee should be constituted for Richard Wilbur '42, who died on October 14 and who had held a distinguished visiting appointment at the college for a number of years. The committee noted that, while memorial minutes are normally reserved for tenure-line faculty at Amherst, exceptions have been made in the past. In the case of Mr. Wilbur, all agreed that he should be honored with a memorial minute. The dean recommended a number of faculty members who might serve on the memorial minute committee, and she agreed to confer with the potential chair of the committee about recommendations for other members.

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Under “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Moss suggested that, at least once during this academic year, the Committee of Six meet with the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) and the Ad hoc Curriculum Committee to discuss proposals that are emerging from the work of the curriculum committee, as well as other topics. She finds it can be informative and efficient to supplement written communication with in-person dialogue and discussion. The dean said that perhaps it would be most helpful if such a meeting were arranged after the curriculum committee releases its report, which she anticipates will be within the next several weeks. Professor Call said that he remembers that a past Committee of Six had requested that the committee meet annually with the CEP. Associate Dean Tobin said that this was an accurate recollection, while noting that subsequent Committees of Six had preferred to meet with the CEP and other faculty committees when there were specific issues to discuss.

Continuing with questions, Professor Engelhardt asked, on behalf of a colleague, if the results of the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) survey have been shared with the Board of Trustees. The goal of doing so, in the colleague’s view, would be to make the board aware of the faculty’s concerns about workload issues and a lack of clarity in regard to tenure criteria. Dean Epstein responded that she had summarized the survey results as part of her report to the board in October. President Martin commented that she and the dean regularly keep the board apprised of the major issues facing the college. Respecting the governance role of the trustees, they remain cognizant of the importance of not blurring boundaries that are important to preserve. The president commented that, over Instruction Weekend this coming January, faculty members will have a number of opportunities to interact with trustees and to share their views.

President Martin next responded briefly to Professor Sitze’s request of the previous week to learn the outcomes of an event that was about to be held at the University of Chicago (<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/10/16/college-presidents-and-provosts-gather-consider-issues-free-speech>). As noted in the Committee of Six minutes of October 16, 2017, the plan was for presidents and provosts from a range of institutions to discuss issues relating to free speech on campus and how to change the national narrative on higher education. Professor Sitze had wondered whether Amherst would be part of any “sector-wide responses” that might emerge from these conversations. President Martin understands that the outcomes of the gathering in Chicago did not include such a response. She informed the committee of her plans to discuss the idea of such a response with the president of the University of Chicago, Robert Zimmer. President Martin expressed the view that there will also be opportunities to consider a “sector-wide response” at three upcoming meetings of presidents that she will attend. The president commented that, over the homecoming weekend that had just concluded, she had addressed in her talk for alumni the importance of preserving free expression. She had also discussed the need to find ways to support students, without abridging the expression of ideas, including those that are controversial. Professor Sitze agreed that doing so is important, adding that he thought President Martin had nicely articulated the relation between free speech and the pursuit of truth in her convocation address. That address could serve as a model for a “sector-wide response,” Professor Sitze noted. Continuing, Professor Sitze said that he believes institutions of higher education have special obligations under political conditions where lies are becoming a norm of public discourse. In particular, he suggested, it is both inaccurate and unfair for students to be portrayed as “snowflakes” who cannot engage with ideas

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that make them feel uncomfortable. In his experience, students are facing the serious issues of the twenty-first century in ways that are admirable. He thanked President Martin for reporting back about the event and for her plans to work with other presidents on a sector-wide response. The remainder of the meeting was devoted to personnel matters.

The meeting adjourned at 5:35 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

**Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, November 6, 2017
Amended November 16, 2017**

The seventh meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2017–2018 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:15 P.M. on Monday, October 30, 2017. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Call, Engelhardt, Heim, Jaswal, Moss, and Sitze, Dean Epstein, and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

Lisa Rutherford, chief policy officer and general counsel, joined the meeting briefly to answer questions about the process that would be followed to bring forward Professor Shah’s concerns about the college’s procedures for adjudicating allegations of sexual misconduct. Professor Shah had communicated these concerns to the Committee of Six via a letter that contained links to documents related to a lawsuit against the college. Ms. Rutherford, the dean, and the president said that they would be happy to discuss the procedures with the committee. It was explained that, as a result of an agreement that the college had reached with the former student who filed the lawsuit, it would not be possible to have any conversation with the committee or the faculty about the specific case that Professor Shah had referenced or to disseminate any information related to the case. For this reason, the letter, in its current form, also could not be appended to the minutes, Ms. Rutherford advised. The committee agreed that the substantive issues raised by Professor Shah’s letter can and should be discussed, and also that a revised version of the letter could and should be appended to the minutes. At the conclusion of the conversation, Ms. Rutherford left the meeting.

Under “Topics of the Day,” President Martin noted that events that had taken place on campus on the previous Saturday to mark the one hundredth anniversary of President John F. Kennedy’s birth, and JFK’s October 26, 1963, visit to the college, had been a great success. The forum titled “Poetry and Politics: A Celebration of the Life of John F. Kennedy” had drawn alumni (including some members of the class of 1964), students, faculty, staff, and members of the local community and had been a true intergenerational event, she commented. The president noted that the students, faculty, and alumni who had participated as panel members had been very impressive, and that the talk given by Congressman Joseph Kennedy III, which took place on the steps of Frost Library at the end of the day, had been inspiring. The committee then turned to personnel matters for a large portion of the meeting.

The members next discussed a request from the Library Committee (see the appended letter from Professor Moore, chair of the committee) to eliminate the Archives Committee as a standing committee of the faculty and reviewed a draft motion to effect this change. The members voted six in favor and zero opposed on the substance of the motion to eliminate the Archives Committee, effective immediately, and to remove the committee’s charge (see below) from the *Faculty Handbook* ([section IV, S.,1. 3., b.](#)), as well as the reference to the Archives Committee that appears in the charge of the Library Committee ([section IV, S.,1. n.](#)), as indicated below:

b. *The Archives Committee* The Archives Committee is composed of a member of the faculty appointed by the Committee of Six from those faculty members serving on the Library Committee, the librarian of the college, ex officio, and the archivist of the college, ex officio, who serves as the chair. The committee reports to the president. The committee reviews policy issues relating to the archives and makes decisions concerning retention of and access to institutional records of permanent historical value.

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n. *The Library Committee* The Library Committee is composed of three members of the faculty, one chosen annually by the Committee of Six, serving for three-year terms, two students, and the librarian of the college, ex officio. The committee chooses its chair and secretary each year. Its membership should include one representative each from the humanities, the social sciences and the natural sciences. ~~One of the three faculty members is appointed by the Committee of Six to serve also as the faculty member on the Archives Committee.~~ The purpose of the committee is to discuss and to recommend policies concerning the library's collections and services.

Before turning to a draft of a faculty meeting agenda for a meeting on November 7, the committee voted six in favor and zero opposed to correct a spelling error and an omission in its motion surrounding the Committee on Discipline. The original motion had appeared on the faculty meeting agenda for the faculty meeting that had been scheduled for October 17, but which had later been cancelled. The committee agreed that Dean Gendron, senior associate dean of students, should be invited to attend the meeting to answer questions that may arise. The members discussed some other revisions to that agenda. They noted that Katie Fretwell, dean of admission and financial aid, would not speak at the November 7 meeting, as the agenda is quite full and she is now engaged in the early-decision round of the admission process. Dean Epstein informed the members that Michael Stephens, Amherst's ombudsperson, has expressed a desire to increase awareness among faculty about the services that he provides, some of which intersect with those offered by the faculty diversity and inclusion officers. Of course, the dean noted, these positions also have responsibilities that are unique to them. The dean suggested that it might be informative to invite Mr. Stephens to speak briefly prior to the report about the role of the faculty diversity and inclusion officer, which will be delivered on November 7 by Norm Jones, chief diversity and inclusion officer, and Professors Allen Hart and Marisa Parham, who serve in this role. The members agreed that Mr. Stephens should be invited, and the dean said that she would check to see if he would be available to speak and to answer questions on November 7. (Mr. Stephens later informed the dean that he has a scheduling conflict on November 7). In another matter relating to the upcoming faculty meeting, Dean Epstein informed the members that she had received a request from Professor Sánchez-Eppler to make an announcement about the United Way campaign under "new business" and to provide pledge forms at a table in the lobby, following the meeting. The members agreed that doing so would be fine. The committee then voted six in favor and zero opposed to forward to the faculty an agenda for a meeting of the faculty on November 7.

The members reviewed a draft motion to revise the language in the *Faculty Handbook* about the quorum for faculty meeting, made a number of changes, and then voted four in favor and zero opposed, with two abstentions, on the substance of the motion below, and six in favor and zero opposed to forward it to the faculty.

The Committee of Six proposes the following changes to current language in the [Faculty Handbook](#) (IV., R. 6.), as indicated below.

6. Quorum

THE QUORUM FOR THE TRANSACTION OF BUSINESS AT A FACULTY MEETING IS MET WHEN THE NUMBER OF THOSE REQUIRED TO ATTEND,

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ELIGIBLE TO VOTE, AND PRESENT AT THE MEETING IS GREATER THAN ONE-HALF OF THE NUMBER OF TENURE-LINE FACULTY, LECTURERS, AND RESIDENT ARTISTS NOT ON LEAVE IN A GIVEN SEMESTER. ~~The presence at any meeting of the faculty of a majority of the members required to attend and eligible to vote constitutes a quorum for the transaction of business at that meeting.~~ Faculty on leave are not required to attend, but retain the privilege of attendance and vote; **IF FACULTY MEMBERS ATTEND A MEETING OF THE FACULTY WHILE THEY ARE ON LEAVE, they will not be counted WHEN in determining CONSTITUTING THE a quorum AT THAT MEETING.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

**Committee of Six Minutes of Thursday, November 9, 2017
Amended November 16, 2017**

The eighth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2017–2018 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:15 P.M. on Monday, November 6, 2017. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Call, Engelhardt, Heim, Jaswal, Moss, and Sitze, Dean Epstein, and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

The dean began the meeting by sharing that she had just returned from a meeting of deans and provosts from liberal arts colleges in the Northeast, at which she became aware that many of Amherst’s peers prohibit sexual relationships between faculty members and students. Amherst’s policy (*Faculty Handbook*, IV., A., 1., 3.) is as follows:

Consensual sexual relationships between faculty members and students (voted by the faculty, 1993). Experience has shown that consensual sexual relationships between faculty members and students can lead to harassment. Faculty members should understand the potential for coercion in sexual relationships with students with whom the faculty members also have instructional, advisory or supervisory relationships.

Even when such relationships do not lead to harassment, they can compromise the integrity of the educational process. The objectivity of evaluations which occur in making recommendations or assigning grades, honors, and fellowships may be called into question when a faculty member involved in those functions has or has had a sexual relationship with a student.

For these reasons, the college does not condone, and in fact strongly discourages consensual sexual relationships between faculty members and students. The college requires a faculty member to remove himself or herself from any supervisory, evaluative, advisory, or other pedagogical role involving a student with whom he or she has had or currently has a sexual relationship. Since the absence of this person may deprive the student of educational, advising, or career opportunities, both parties should be mindful of the potential costs to the student before entering into a sexual relationship.

In cases in which it proves necessary, the dean of the faculty, in consultation with the dean of students and the chair (or head) of the relevant department, will evaluate the student's situation and take measures to prevent deprivation of educational and advising opportunities. The appropriate officers of the college will have the authority to make exceptions to normal academic rules and policies that are warranted by the circumstances.

Dean Epstein suggested that the faculty be asked to consider whether the college should prohibit sexual relationships between faculty and students at Amherst. Professor Moss commented that it would be informative to review the policies of other schools about this

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issue. The dean agreed, and she said that she would ask Lisa Rutherford, chief policy officer and general counsel, to gather this information, which could then be shared with the committee to inform a future discussion. In addition, Dean Epstein said, she would provide the members with the minutes of the Committee of Six's most recent discussions of this policy. Professor Sitze asked if it is necessary to revise the policy to be in compliance with Title IX. President Martin said that Amherst's Title IX consultant, Gina Smith, had argued several years ago that a shift to a policy that prohibits sexual relationships between faculty members and students would be consistent with the spirit of Title IX, though this change would not be required under Title IX law. In 2012, the Title IX Committee had recommended that such student-faculty relationships be prohibited. The remainder of the meeting was devoted to personnel matters.

The meeting adjourned at 5:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

**Committee of Six Minutes of Thursday, November 9, 2017
Amended November 16, 2017**

The ninth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2017–2018 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:15 P.M. on Thursday, November 9, 2017. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Call, Engelhardt, Heim, Jaswal, Moss, and Sitze, Dean Epstein, and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

The meeting was devoted largely to personnel matters. Following those discussions, the members had a brief conversation about the use of clickers as a voting mechanism at faculty meetings. The committee noted the recommendation of the parliamentarian, Professor George, that the faculty ultimately vote on undertaking the clicker pilot and on adopting clickers as a voting mechanism—should the Committee of Six choose to bring such a proposal forward. Professor George had pointed out to the committee the following language in the *Faculty Handbook* (IV. R.,1): “Questions before the faculty may be decided by a voice vote, or by show of hands, or by written ballot if requested by a faculty member.” The parliamentarian noted that introducing a new method of voting would be a change to the by-laws of the faculty meeting and so would require a two-thirds vote of the faculty to be approved.

Continuing with the discussion about clickers, Professor Call informed the members that a tenure-track colleague had written to him to express support for the use of clickers, noting that many untenured faculty members seek the anonymity that clickers would provide. The committee noted that this view echoes that of the Consultative Group for Tenure-Track Faculty, which had raised the idea initially of using paper ballots for all motions. The group had also argued that the act of requesting a paper ballot was fraught, proposing that anonymous voting become the default. Dean Epstein suggested that the consultative group be asked to invite some untenured colleagues to speak to their concerns at the next faculty meeting. The members agreed that hearing directly from untenured faculty members would enrich the discussion of “the problem” that the use of clickers might solve.

Professor Call noted that the assistant professor who had written to him had suggested that the expectation be that paper ballots would be used as a back-up for clickers, for close votes and if any faculty member wishes to request a recount. The committee agreed that this would be a desirable approach, and that any motion that might be brought forward to adopt clickers as a voting mechanism would include this feature. Professor Sitze said that he favors the use of paper ballots, which he sees as a simpler way of preserving the anonymity that untenured faculty members understandably sometimes desire, as well as accuracy. In his view, no matter what the assurances are, it will be difficult to have confidence that all votes are registered with clickers. While clickers would not bring much additional value to meetings, he suggested, they may subtract something of great value—trust in the count of the vote—that so far has not been missing from meetings. In some cases, he observed, the simplest systems are the best systems, and this appears to be one of those cases. The dean noted that counting paper ballots takes a considerable amount of time and interrupts the flow of faculty meetings. She said that, since the number of clickers that are distributed to those who can vote will be known, it will be a simple matter to determine whether the clickers are working, if the total number of votes is the same as the number of clickers handed out, or is close to that number. The expectation could be that a

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close vote would trigger the use of paper ballots to confirm that all votes are counted, and counted accurately.

Professor Engelhardt argued in favor of the clicker experiment, and for using clickers for voting on all motions, including the approval of course proposals. He noted that he cannot recall observing a “no” vote or an abstention, when the faculty votes on the proposals. He suspects that there may be times when faculty members wish to register an objection to a course proposal, but may feel uncomfortable doing so publically. Professor Sitze agreed that this is an issue, but asked what the purpose of electronically registering a “no” vote on a course proposal would be, if the reason for introducing electronic voting is to spare faculty members from having to speak publically. For example, he wondered, what would happen if twenty members were to vote “no” on the approval of courses, but then not publically specify which courses prompted their “no” vote or say why they voted “no” on those courses? In his view, a scenario like this either would lead to confusion, in which case clickers would have been undesirable, or it would lead back to the very public debate clickers were intended to avoid, in which case they would have defeated their own purpose. Professor Engelhardt said that simply not always having unanimity might change the culture of what a “normal” vote feels like, ideally fostering better forms of debate and deliberation. He and Professor Jaswal argued that having the ability to abstain or vote “no” would give faculty members “voice” in a way that is not possible now, even if there is not a direct impact on the question at hand. Professor Jaswal stressed the importance of being responsive to the concerns raised by the consultative group and recommended trying clickers and seeing how they work, while having paper ballots as a back-up when needed. Professor Sitze said that, in his experience, some technologies can come to function as a substitute for the very discussion they are supposed to enable. He worries that the use of technology will become a focus in and of itself, creating a distraction from the business of faculty meetings, as was demonstrated at the last meeting. He would not stand in the way of the clicker test, he noted, but he remains unconvinced that clickers are necessary.

Dean Epstein suggested that, since there had been some technical problems with the testing of the devices at the faculty meeting on November 7, and because some faculty members had raised concerns about using clickers during the meeting, it would be helpful to conduct another test. At the next faculty meeting, David Hamilton, chief information officer, and Luis Hernandez, director of information technology support services, could provide an introduction about the clickers, carry out more precise tests, and answer questions that are raised, Dean Epstein noted. The committee agreed that clickers should be tested again at the next faculty meeting. The members noted that Professor George has also weighed in on the vote that would be needed to approve the committee’s proposed motion to revise the language in the *Faculty Handbook* about the quorum. The committee agreed with Professor George’s view that a two-thirds majority would be required to implement such a change.

In the time remaining, the committee began a discussion of issues relating to attendance and voting at faculty meetings, the guidelines for which appear in the *Faculty Handbook* (IV, R.,1.). Prior to the meeting, the committee had been provided with Committee of Six minutes of previous conversations about this topic. Dean Epstein noted that many titles of administrators

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listed in the *Faculty Handbook* are now outdated, which creates logistical problems for her office, and which results in an ad hoc process of determining which new administrators should be invited to attend the meetings. Associate Dean Tobin noted that, in addition, there is no language about which staff members should receive the minutes of the Committee of Six. It would be helpful to have clarity on this point, she commented.

The committee began by considering the purpose of faculty meetings. It was agreed that, over time, faculty meetings at Amherst have evolved into community gatherings; important information is shared with those who teach at the college and the administrators who support the educational mission most directly. The committee expressed support for inclusivity as a guiding value, while agreeing that there is work to be done to update the current handbook language and to develop principles that can guide the dean's office in determining which new administrators should be invited to attend faculty meetings. Professor Moss cautioned that discussions about participation and attendance at faculty meetings should proceed carefully and deliberately. The significance of who can attend meetings, who cannot attend meetings, and why, can speak to larger questions about inclusion and exclusion among many different campus constituencies. These decisions carry literal and symbolic meaning, she noted. Particularly at a time when staff morale might appear low, any action the faculty take to create the appearance of a less inclusive meeting culture could have the potential to exacerbate existing feelings of marginalization. The members began a discussion of whether it might be beneficial to make the Committee of Six minutes more widely available to members of the campus community. It was acknowledged that the minutes serve an important communications role at Amherst; distributing them to a wider audience could help to share information about central issues facing the college and to demystify the work of the Committee of Six. With the hour growing late, the committee agreed to continue its discussion at a future meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

**Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, November 13, 2017
Amended November 29, 2017**

The tenth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2017–2018 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:15 P.M. on Monday, November 13, 2017. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Call, Engelhardt, Heim, Jaswal, Moss, and Sitze, Dean Epstein, and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

Dean Epstein began the meeting by noting that, in November and December, the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee will meet with various bodies (the chairs of academic departments and programs, the Presidential Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion, instructional staff and, possibly, the Committee on Educational Policy [CEP]) to discuss its recently released draft report. The curriculum committee is eager to garner feedback from individuals, and will consider making revisions to the document based on questions and concerns that are brought forward. The dean asked the members of the Committee of Six to respond to the report by the end of Thanksgiving break. She explained that the members may submit their views via the curriculum committee’s website or by contacting members of the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee directly. Professor Moss requested that a meeting with the curriculum committee be scheduled with the Committee of Six before the end of the semester. Other members agreed that having this meeting would be informative. The dean agreed to set up the meeting.

Under “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Engelhardt said that he had been pleased to learn that Amherst will be bringing a limited number of students from Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands who have been affected by Hurricane Maria to the college for the spring 2018 semester. He suggested that it would be helpful to share information with the Amherst community about the program, commenting that New York University, Smith, Tulane, Cornell, and Brown are among the schools offering similar programs. These institutions have been communicating widely about their efforts, he noted. The dean said that she intends to send an email to the Amherst community about the college’s new special visiting student program, which will serve U.S. citizens who currently attend a college or university in Puerto Rico or the U.S. Virgin Islands. To be eligible for participation, students must have completed at least thirty-two credit hours of coursework. Under the program, she explained, Amherst will cover all educational costs associated with students’ enrollment, including tuition and fees, room and board, books, transportation, and health insurance, as well as tuition at students’ home institutions. Participants in this program will be admitted through a selective process. After their semester here, students will not be able to transfer to Amherst, and they will be responsible for ensuring that the course work undertaken at Amherst is eligible for transfer credit at their institution at home. The committee expressed support for this effort. On a related note, the dean encouraged the members to attend a Puerto Rico relief effort, sponsored by Alianza Boricua de Amherst College, set for November 16 on Valentine Quad. She noted that, as part of the event, Ray Suárez, John J. McCloy ’16 Visiting Professor of American Studies, will give a talk, titled “Puerto Rico, the U.S., and a Complicated, Accidental Relationship,” at noon.

Continuing with questions, Professor Sitze asked, on behalf of a colleague who had recently read a November 8 piece in the *New York Times* titled “Endowments Boom as Colleges Bury Earnings Overseas,” whether Amherst makes use of “blocker corporations” to avoid federal taxes. President Martin said that Amherst does not do so. She said that Kevin Weinman, chief

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administrative and financial officer, could give a presentation on this topic at a future faculty meeting, perhaps. The president commented that she understands that there are legitimate ways of using these corporations, while reiterating that Amherst does not engage in this practice.

Concluding “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Jaswal asked if tenure-track colleagues should continue to be encouraged to use the teaching evaluation form approved by the Committee of Six in the spring of 2016. Some tenure-track colleagues have heard from departments that the administration is not recommending the use of the form. The dean encouraged tenure-track faculty, after conferring with their departments, to reach out to Riley Caldwell-O’Keefe, director of the Center for Teaching and Learning, to explore using the evaluation form. Ms. Caldwell-O’Keefe will try to accommodate requests, given current resources, and colleagues who have already been using the form will likely be prioritized. She is already working with all tenure-track faculty members who used the form in spring 2017, Dean Epstein said. At this point, all of these colleagues intend to use the form during future semesters in which they are evaluated. The dean noted that four additional pre-tenure faculty members also used the form in the spring of 2017. The dean said that she supports the use of the form, while noting that its results are also time-consuming to interpret. At the moment, the Center for Teaching and Learning has only one staff member to undertake this work and to confer with faculty members about the results.

Continuing the conversation about the evaluation form, Dean Epstein informed the members that this year’s Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) has expressed concerns about the quality of the form approved by the Committee of Six and has stated that the CEP is not ready to endorse this form as the default form for the evaluation of tenured faculty members’ courses. Currently, the college offers a default form for tenured faculty that the CEP developed. The dean stressed that any tenured faculty member may use the form approved by the Committee of Six, if the individual wishes to do so. Future CEPs may hold a different view and could certainly consider the matter of the default form again. The Committee of Six agreed to have a broader discussion this spring about the evaluation of teaching at the college. The remainder of the meeting was devoted to personnel matters.

The meeting adjourned at 6:10 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

The eleventh meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2017–2018 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:15 P.M. on Monday, November 27, 2017. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Call, Engelhardt, Heim, Jaswal, Moss, and Sitze, Dean Epstein, and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

Dean Epstein began the meeting by noting that the board’s annual “instruction weekend” will take place January 18–20, 2018, and informed the members that plans call for the trustees to meet with the Committee of Six on January 19. Traditionally, the dean explained, the board meets with the Committee of Six, without the president and the dean present, as well as the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP), as part of the weekend. As part of this year’s meetings, trustees will also have a conversation with the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee, Dean Epstein said.

Under “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Moss noted that, prior to seeing the online posting for the position, members of the Presidential Task Force on Accessibility and Inclusion had been unaware that a search had been launched for the new position of accessibility services specialist, which will be situated within the Office of Student Affairs. It would have been helpful, Professor Moss noted, for the task force to have been informed about the position, including its responsibilities. Professor Moss, who noted that the addition of a staff member in the office is an exciting development, asked why the task force had not been notified of the decision to make this hire, since its members have been tasked with assessing needs and offering solutions in the area of accessibility and inclusion. The dean noted Professor Moss’s concern about keeping the task force “in the loop” and said that efforts will be made to improve communications in the future, whenever possible.

Continuing with questions, Professor Sitze asked, on behalf of a colleague, whether Amherst might reconsider its decision of last year to reduce the support that it provides to local non-profit community organizations. He was making this inquiry, he said, given the current political climate, in which there is a perception that colleges are not spending their endowments for the public good, despite the size of the endowments of wealthy schools and robust returns on their endowments. President Martin commented that there were multiple reasons for Amherst’s decision not to provide funding to community organizations, while offering support to the local community in other ways. She also noted that it is problematic for tax exempt organizations to make donations to other tax exempt organizations. The dean commented that there were issues of equity surrounding the college’s level of support for some community organizations versus others.

The members turned to personnel matters for most of the remainder of the meeting. The meeting ended with the committee reviewing a draft agenda for a possible faculty meeting on December 5. The members voted five in favor and zero opposed, with one abstention, to forward the agenda to the faculty.

The meeting adjourned at 5:40 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

**Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, November 30, 2017
Amended December 4, 2017**

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The twelfth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2017–2018 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:00 P.M. on Thursday, November 30, 2017. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Call, Engelhardt, Heim, Jaswal, Moss, and Sitze, Dean Epstein, and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder. The meeting was devoted to personnel matters.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

**Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, December 4, 2017
Amended December 5, 2017**

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The thirteenth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2017–2018 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:15 P.M. on Monday, December 4, 2017. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Call, Engelhardt, Heim, Jaswal, Moss, and Sitze, Dean Epstein, and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder. The meeting was devoted to personnel matters.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

The fourteenth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2017–2018 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:00 P.M. on Thursday, December 7, 2017. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Call, Engelhardt, Heim, Jaswal, Moss, and Sitze, Dean Epstein, and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with a discussion of [a letter that President Martin had received a day earlier](#), which the authors had also shared with the Committee of Six. The letter’s signatories, who described themselves as “retirees and near retirees,” noted that the college has informed them that their drug coverage will be changed. President Martin explained that, in response to concerns raised in the letter, she had met with three members of the Benefits Committee, the dean, Associate Deans of the Faculty Cheney and Sarat, and Chris Casey, director of Compensation, Benefits, and Human Resources Information Systems (HRIS). The president said that she asked for and received some of the relevant documents from 2003, when Amherst had made some changes to the medical benefits of faculty and staff, grandfathering a group of faculty and staff who were over a specified age at the time and had a minimum number of years of service at the college to qualify. President Martin said that, based on what she has learned, she believes that the writers of the letter are right to object both to the process for making the decision, and to the change itself. She said that she also feels that there was no ill intent on the part of the members of the Benefits Committee, either with regard to process or to the change they decided to make. The members of the committee mistakenly believed that the change that they made in drug/pharmacy benefits was minor and did not constitute a substantive change. It is also true, she noted, that most of these colleagues were not employees of the college in 2003, so were also less aware of the details of the commitments that President Marx made at that time.

Continuing, President Martin informed the members of her plans to assure the writers of the letter that medical benefits were not changed at all ([her email to this effect is appended](#)). The change under discussion is a change that was made in pharmaceutical benefits, in a shift from a plan called MedEx 2 to a plan called MedEx 3. The considerations that went into the change and the differences in plans are somewhat complex, but there are two key aspects of the difference in plans that the president said are notable. First, the prescription drug benefit under the new MedEx 3 plan involves a copayment maximum that is a fixed amount of money, as opposed to a percentage of the total cost of the prescription, which is how the MedEx 2 plan works. Because of that difference, the shift to Med Ex 3 would represent an advantage, financially, for some, and possibly for many people, President Martin explained. At the same time, however, the new MedEx 3 plan does not cover over-the-counter medications/supplements, even those for which a physician has written a prescription, which is a change from the MedEx 2 plan that could well result in higher costs for other individuals. The fact that over-the-counter medications are no longer covered under the new plan represents what President Martin would call a substantive change, she said. The college is committed to doing everything possible to ensure that faculty and staff whose costs may increase are made whole. The president informed the members that Mr. Casey is looking into the option of shifting back to the MedEx 2 plan before the new plan takes effect on January 1. That may not be possible, President Martin noted, while emphasizing that the college will do everything that it can, working with those whose costs increase under the new plan, to keep them whole while consulting about how to proceed. Because the shift back to

the old plan may actually be less appealing to those who stand to benefit from the new one, Mr. Casey will do what he can, working with the Benefits Committee, to figure out what is best for those who were promised in 2003 that there would be no policy change in their retirement benefits.

The members of the Committee of Six thanked the president for her response. Professor Moss commented, as a general matter, that finding vehicles for faculty and staff to become better acquainted with the medical benefits to which they are entitled would be beneficial. She asked if the dean might inform faculty about their specific post-retirement benefits, or, at least, alert faculty to the need to be attentive to them. Such information would be particularly valuable for faculty who were hired after 2003, and thus not present for faculty-wide conversations about post-retirement health care coverage. The dean noted that Mr. Casey and others in the Office of Human Resources are available to provide information at any time. Professor Sitze said that he would like to learn more about any plans that the college may have to add a high-deductible health insurance plan. He raised some concerns about the financial repercussions that might occur if a large number of younger, healthy individuals at the college migrated to this plan. He expressed the view that it is possible that costs might rise for other plans, for example. The dean said that she understands that the Benefits Committee is at the beginning stages of reviewing a high-deductible health insurance plan and has not made any decisions. The committee turned briefly to a personnel matter.

The meeting concluded with a continuation of the members' earlier discussion about attendance and voting at faculty meetings. In a wide-ranging conversation, the committee raised fundamental questions about the purposes of faculty meetings, whether guidance should be offered to administrators about voting on curricular matters, whether the minutes of the Committee of Six and faculty meetings should be distributed more broadly on campus to enhance communication and demystify faculty governance, and whether a rationale should be developed for extending voting privileges to administrative positions and for requiring those in these positions to attend faculty meetings. Some members felt that, while individuals holding positions could be grandfathered and/or given the option of attending and/or voting, if changes were made, there should be a rationale for requiring administrators to attend and/or vote. Some members expressed the view that any changes that removed voting privileges from an individual and/or a position would represent a movement away from inclusion, which should be avoided. It was agreed that, at a minimum, the current language about attendance and voting in the *Faculty Handbook* should be updated to reflect current titles of positions.

Prior to the meeting and with the committee's prior discussion of this subject in mind, as a starting point for conversation, Professor Sitze had offered a proposal for three draft policies based on two assumptions. Time did not permit a discussion of these ideas, and no conclusions were reached on the issues raised. As assumption one, Professor Sitze expressed the view that the status quo is at best undesirable, and at worst without any clear rationale. The language about faculty meetings that currently appears in the *Faculty Handbook*, he noted, is outdated and inaccurate, and the handbook contains no language about who should receive Committee of Six minutes. The college therefore, in Professor Sitze's view, has no clear guidance from the faculty about who should attend faculty meetings and who should receive Committee of Six minutes,

even though faculty meeting is arguably the most important meeting on campus, and even though the Committee of Six minutes arguably operate as the only “weekly” or “newspaper” at the college that provides reliable information about college decision-making on a regular basis. Professor Sitze’s second assumption is that any drastic change to voting and attendance at faculty meeting would be at best undesirable, and at worst offensive and damaging. It probably should go without saying, he said, that even the most modest revision to these policies can and should be accompanied by some sort of grandfather clause for everyone who currently attends faculty meetings. Any new policies, in other words, would apply only to new hires.

With these assumptions in mind, Professor Sitze proposed what he described as three modest changes—that the right to attend faculty meetings be disaggregated from the responsibility to attend faculty meetings, widening the group of people who have the right to attend meetings in various capacities, while imposing the responsibility to attend meetings on faculty alone; that an opt-in mechanism designed to welcome members of the college who are not faculty members to attend faculty meetings be created, and to allow for faculty oversight of this mechanism (guided by policies that would include a minimally invasive annual review process); and that inaccuracies be eliminated or corrected in the current handbook language.

In regard to a policy governing Committee of Six minutes, Professor Sitze expressed the view that, because the Committee of Six acts in a “general advisory capacity” on “all matters of college policy,” it seems reasonable to craft a policy beginning from the basic principle that anyone who is governed by college policy should, in principle, be able to have access to Committee of Six minutes in order to better understand the policies that govern them. Continuing, he said that, assuming this principle as a point of departure—or, stated differently, erring on the side of access—could improve communication and trust at the college. In his view, a modicum of confidentiality is often necessary for processes of deliberative decision-making, however, so it seems unwise to translate the presumption of access directly and unconditionally into practice. Sometimes, he added, increasing the number of participants in a discussion can reduce the quality of that discussion. Perhaps, Professor Sitze proposed, it might then be possible to envision some sort of minimally invasive annual review process that allows Committee of Six minutes to be available on request, with a presumption toward access, but conditional on some sort of assent to some sort of confidentiality agreement. The members did not review the details of Professor Sitze’s proposal, continuing with a discussion at the level of principle.

Continuing the discussion, Professor Engelhardt suggested asking administrators who currently attend faculty meetings by virtue of their positions how they feel about the issues being raised, in particular their views on whether faculty alone should vote on curricular matters. It was noted that this may, in fact, be the current practice. Professor Call suggested that, in an ideal world, administrators would have an understanding of the issues on which they should vote, and one could just rely on individual judgment. Other members agreed that speaking with administrators about this and other questions would be valuable, if changes are under consideration. Professor Moss commented that in [the faculty meeting minutes of May 15, 1990, about the topic at hand](#), which had been provided to the members prior to the meeting, it was noted that the Committee of Six had had two conversations with faculty about its proposal

regarding attendance and voting at faculty meetings. (The votes on motions about attendance and voting described in these minutes resulted in much of the current *Faculty Handbook* language.) She wonders if such conversations should again take place with faculty should any changes be made regarding attendance and voting privileges. Professor Moss noted that Professor O'Connell's observation as represented in the 1990 minutes retains its relevance. Professor O'Connell had observed that it is invidious to require attendance without extending voting privileges.

President Martin commented that, from an administrative perspective, the college has expanded and become more complex in the twenty-seven years since the conversation under discussion. As an example, there are many more regulatory and compliance issues, she noted. Areas, such as these, if they fall outside the purview of the faculty, are overseen through administrative processes. The president suggested thinking carefully when considering issues of shared governance through the lens of attendance and voting at faculty meetings.

The committee commented that, in the minutes, it is noted that Professor Cheney had reviewed the roles of the faculty, which he pointed out include determination of requirements for admission, the course of study, graduation requirements, rules for assessing proficiency and honors, the academic calendar and examination schedule, and the conduct of students. Voting privileges, he had said, constitute a long-term obligation to fulfill the implications of faculty authority regarding the curriculum, the deployment of resources in establishing departments and programs, setting standards for admission, and in electing the Committee of Six, which has a significant role in determining promotion and tenure. Dean Epstein expressed the view that, since the faculty has the authority to make decisions in these areas, administrators with expertise in these realms should play an advisory role and should not have voting privileges. Some members felt that it would be helpful to gain a sense of which administrators are involved in these areas when thinking about a rationale for requiring or inviting attendance and/or when voting privileges should be associated with particular positions. Several members expressed the view that the best approach would be to speak with administrators who currently attend and vote and to gather their views on the questions raised. The members agreed to continue this discussion at a future meeting. The remainder of the meeting was devoted to personnel matters.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

The fifteenth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2017–2018 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:15 P.M. on Monday, December 11, 2017. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Call, Engelhardt, Heim, Jaswal, Moss, Sitze, Dean Epstein, and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

Dean Epstein began the meeting by informing the members that David Hamilton, chief information officer, has informed her that it has come to his attention that some of the information that he had presented during the brief demonstration of clickers at the December 5 faculty meeting had not been accurate. At the time, Mr. Hamilton had been told that 130 clickers had been distributed to voting members in attendance. When staff members counted the clickers after collecting them at the conclusion of the meeting, there were actually 107 clickers. The good news, he had noted, is that the two rounds of voting produced 106 and 108 votes, respectively. In his view, this is the number that would have been expected, and is within the margin of error for the number of devices that had been distributed, demonstrating that the devices were working as designed. During the first demonstration, it had taken too long to produce a clicker count, in Mr. Hamilton’s view. To determine the count more quickly on December 5, staff had adjusted the counting method, which, it turned out, had contributed to the mistake in the count. Mr. Hamilton had explained that clickers are contained in four carrying cases, each of which has four trays of clickers. At the December 5 meeting, a staff member had mistakenly opened a fresh case of clickers without having first distributed the bottom tray of clickers from the first case, then counted that tray as having been distributed, and texted the total sum (which turned out to be inaccurate) to Mr. Hamilton. After the meeting concluded, the undistributed tray of clickers had been discovered. Mr. Hamilton said that, for future counts, an auditing procedure will be put in place.

The committee expressed concern that 108 votes had apparently emerged from 107 clickers, wondering if a vote was counted twice from one device, which would be a fatal flaw in the system, all agreed. The dean said that she would discuss the matter with Mr. Hamilton to gain clarity on this question. Professor Sitze, who does not see a real need to adopt clickers as a voting mechanism, commented that one of the arguments for adopting clickers has been that they will save time. He noted the irony of taking time away from the committee’s work to discuss clicker-related matters once again, and devoting time to clicker tests at faculty meetings. The dean stressed that saving time is not the major reason for introducing clickers. Instead, the reason is to emphasize the importance of listening to the views of tenure-track faculty and making efforts to respond to their concerns. Making faculty meetings more inclusive and welcoming is a worthy goal in her view.

At 3:30 P.M., the committee was joined by the following members of the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee: Professors Basu, Honig, Horton, Miller, Wolfson, and Woodson; Nancy Ratner, associate dean of admission and director of academic projects, Missy Roser, Frost Library’s head of research and instruction; and Natasha Kim ’18. The dean thanked the members of the curriculum committee for meeting with the Committee of Six, noting that the curriculum committee has been soliciting feedback about its report from many on-campus constituencies. Thus far, the committee has met with instructional staff and the Presidential Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion, and will soon meet with department chairs. Dean Epstein said that all academic departments and programs have been asked to discuss the report and to summarize their reactions for the committee. In addition, through an online feedback

system, the curriculum committee has received very helpful responses from individuals, according to the dean. At a retreat to be held on January 10, the curriculum committee will reexamine its recommendations with this feedback in mind, she noted.

Professor Heim began the discussion by expressing gratitude to the members of the curriculum committee for all of their efforts, and the other members of the Committee of Six echoed this sentiment. Professor Heim, stressing the importance of studying the past and learning from what history reveals, and Amherst's historical commitment to the study of history as a salient feature of an Amherst education, noted that acquiring transhistorical knowledge is not a feature of the committee's proposed learning goals. She expressed concern about the pervasive and unexamined "presentism" in the curriculum draft, the current curriculum, and the culture at large—presentism being the ideology that only the present matters and thus that it can be understood and interpreted entirely on its own terms. She found it striking that the draft never mentions study of the past at all. She also suggested that a truly global vision of the curriculum would require teaching students how to learn from the non-modern and non-West. Professor Sitze agreed that this is a lacuna. He commented that knowledge is becoming devalued under conditions where all sorts of knowledge already is available electronically, so that supply outstrips demand. He suggested that this may put pressure on the model of the research university that was imported to the United States from Germany in the late nineteenth century, and which remains in effect at Amherst in the form of a curriculum focused in large part on disciplines, majors, and departments. He suggested that the redefinition of knowledge seems likely to accelerate in a century that already seems as if it will be defined by the increasing automation of the intellect. He praised the way the curriculum committee framed the problem of the equity and breadth challenges in its report, but he added that he thinks the curriculum that the college is creating for the next decade or more also needs to respond in purposeful ways to additional trends that seem likely to define the twenty-first century. Amherst should put itself in the position to argue, persuasively, that its education provides all of its students with the capacity to write beautifully, think critically, argue persuasively, and conduct research—in ways that cannot be done through automatization.

Continuing, Professor Sitze said that he favors the curriculum committee's initial proposal that there be three foundational seminars that would address the new learning goals that have been proposed. He agrees that these seminars could provide a variety of pathways for students to gain access to the curriculum and could offer common intellectual experiences that would be valuable for students, as well as faculty. The members of the curriculum committee noted that conversations with faculty members had revealed some concerns about the scope of the proposal and the feasibility of staffing a three-course sequence. The current proposal, that all students be required to take at least two Opening the Curriculum (OC) courses, emerged through the curriculum committee's process of exploring alternatives to its initial proposal. The goal is to ensure breadth and equity in students' education. It is the committee's hope that the OC courses would enable non-majors and/or prospective majors to explore the most distinctive and stimulating aspects of a field of study that is relatively new to them. In regard to the curriculum committee's proposed alternative approaches to the first-year seminar, which have been suggested with the goals of building community and shared intellectual experiences, Professor Sitze noted that it seems difficult to imagine that a single course could meet all of the articulated goals. (The curriculum committee has proposed revising the first-year seminar to

include the goal of creating shared intellectual experiences, through a common interdisciplinary course for all first-year students or through clusters of first-year seminars.)

Following up on Professor Heim's remarks, Professor Miller posed the question of whether an open curriculum, by its nature, fosters an emphasis on the contemporary over the historic. In regard to the initial proposal for a required three-semester sequence of seminars, she noted tension within the curriculum committee over the question of the degree to which students should be able to choose their courses. The committee, as both Professor Miller and Horton noted, is aware that the college would face staffing challenges, if the proposal were to be implemented. Several members of the curriculum committee commented that their committee had preferred the three-course sequence to the alternative proposal, but meetings with faculty had revealed little support for the plan. The curriculum committee also anticipates challenges with gaining agreement among departments to teach the proposed clusters, and there were different views among members of the curriculum committee expressed about this proposal. Professor Horton commented on the challenge of implementing any changes that diverge from Amherst's cultural norms in significant ways. As a result, the committee's proposals focus on enacting incremental change through existing structures, Professor Horton said, that is through departments. The committee's review of comprehensive requirements within majors revealed that practices differ substantially among departments and programs. The committee is suggesting that the goal should be to gain greater clarity about pathways into areas of the curriculum; to examine the balance between flexibility and structure within course requirements for majors; and to explore new ways of engaging faculty and students in thinking about the curriculum.

Professor Heim said that she is currently part of an informal group of faculty who focus on the pre-modern period that is exploring the possibility of a first-year seminar cluster. The group sees the cluster format as a vehicle for bringing the pre-modern into the curriculum in a more central way. At the same time, she acknowledged the challenges posed by Amherst's culture of strong departments, and a tendency, as a result, not to engage in "big-vision" thinking. She sees a need to foster a shared sense of purpose and shared intellectual experiences at the college, and considers the development of clusters to be a promising direction. However, under the current first-year seminar structure, Professor Heim noted, regular weekly plenary sessions, where a set of first-year seminars would come together, are not permitted.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Moss praised the report for being motivated by equity and opportunity. She suggested that the committee make that part of its argument more explicit, describing the ways in which it envisions the curriculum becoming more accessible. In her view, what the committee is proposing would help make Amherst a model of educational opportunity, if implemented. Providing more of a rationale for the proposals being made would make this argument more powerful, she noted. Professor Moss also commented that there is a tension in the report in regard to disciplines. She noted that knowledge is evolving in ways that transcend the three traditional divisions—the humanities, the social sciences, and mathematics and the natural sciences—in particular through interdisciplinary programs. She suggested that such programs can help students move outside their intellectual comfort zones by blending the disciplines. Offering several current examples of scientists and humanists co-

teaching courses, Professor Moss also expressed the view that such collaborations among faculty also provide a way to bring students into disciplines that they might not otherwise pursue.

Professor Basu commented that the committee's proposals were motivated by issues of educational equity, but also by the goal of finding ways to ensure that intellectual breadth is part of Amherst students' education. The committee struggled with how to accomplish this goal and tried to think about this question outside the confines of developing skills, and outside obstacles posed by existing structures. In the end, it decided that a decentralized approach through OC courses could avoid falling back on traditional disciplines. She felt that, while the culture of department autonomy may well be an obstacle to curricular change, an important additional obstacle is the value faculty place on their individual autonomy in determining which courses they offer. Professor Basu commented that it was not necessarily worthwhile, in the committee's view, simply to "think big," without also considering pragmatic, gradual ways of changing Amherst's culture. The committee recognized that having faculty teach courses together across departmental lines through clusters could be very exciting for students, and would encourage faculty to collaborate. Professor Woodson commented that it is not just departments that pose barriers to breadth and interdisciplinarity, but different philosophies of education, in her view. She has been disappointed that creative thinking and invention appear to be limited to certain disciplines at the college.

Professor Sitze suggested moving the discussion away from the theoretical. He commented that, to begin, there are essential skills—writing, critical thinking, oral argument, and research, as he noted earlier—that can help students navigate the challenges of the twenty-first century. Continuing, he recalled a 1966 curriculum report that emphasized the difficulty of understanding the college as a whole, given that all professors who teach at Amherst are trained in a particular discipline and tend to view the college as a whole on the basis of that particular discipline. If any college-wide curriculum is therefore an "act of faith," as the 1966 report stated, he wondered what act of faith this proposed curriculum is performing. He also recalled a 1982 long range planning report that stated that Amherst must "educate against the culture." He posed the question of what in the culture Amherst needs to educate against now, and suggested weighing the answer against the existing needs of departments, majors, and disciplines. In his view, the curriculum committee's formulations of the equity and breadth challenges amount to a curriculum that educates against a culture that is socially segregated and epistemically fragmented. He expressed doubt, however, that these challenges could be adequately met in the absence of the three-course foundational seminar series. He suggested that each department audit its curriculum and think about whether its faculty could reduce the required courses for their majors. Perhaps reducing the number of courses needed for majors, he continued, might free up professors to teach courses in the three-course sequence, which in turn could allow the college to meet the equity and breadth challenges. Professor Jaswal said that she too favors the three-semester seminar proposal. She commented that Amherst offers an education that is unique. With the college's talented and diverse student body, and Amherst's resources, the college should be a leader in advancing the liberal arts model. She argued for a bold vision.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Engelhardt cautioned against the casual use of "diversity and inclusion" in the report, noting that Danielle Allen, chair of the External Advisory Committee on Diversity, Inclusion, and Excellence, has raised this issue in the past. He stressed

the importance of achieving the proper register, rising to Professor Allen's challenge of trying to articulate a collection of working definitions, and thinking carefully about the terms that are

used. When discussing diversity and inclusion, focused and framed around the curricular goals expressed in the report and the goal of better supporting all students' academic endeavors, he emphasized the importance of focusing on the ways in which diversity and inclusion intersect with students' academic strengths and the value of an intellectually diverse and inclusive community—and not, as is the risk, primarily with achievement and preparation gaps.

President Martin raised concerns about including in the final public version of the report the sensitive and complex data that are now part of the document. She noted that these data may not be meaningful in isolation and/or useful, in the absence of offering solutions for issues that they may bring to the fore. Professor Basu responded that the committee feels that it is important to point out differences among students from different backgrounds, in order to address differences in opportunity and achievement. In regard to data, the aim is to explain the numbers and how they should be read. Professor Sitze wondered if the data could be presented at a faculty meeting, rather than distributing the information more broadly. The two committees favored this idea, as did the president and the dean. Professor Moss stressed that the focus, in her view, should be on the added value of an Amherst education to individuals and to the collective, rather than concentrating on an endpoint. Students start out with different levels of preparation. Aggregate data do not seem to be essential to the discussion of the interventions that Amherst makes, and/or should develop, she commented.

As the meeting concluded, President Martin stressed the importance of developing a strong and sound set of approaches to solving the problems facing the college, including making recommendations to improve advising. She emphasized the need to bolster the student experience and to find ways to build a greater sense of community, noting that shared intellectual experiences offer an effective opportunity for doing so. The president said that she does not feel that real progress can be made without moving forward with bold and innovative initiatives.

Professor Basu asked the members of the Committee of Six whether they would advise the curriculum committee to return to the idea of a three-course sequence. The members urged the curriculum committee to do so. Professor Call said that he is attracted to the three-course sequence, based on his positive experience with the ILS (Introduction to Liberal Studies) curriculum, the precursor of the current first-year seminar program. The ILS proved to be a productive experience for faculty and students, he noted. The three-course sequence being proposed strikes him as a similar opportunity to participate in a shared vision. He expressed hope that such seminars would be capacious and could be built over time, with positive results. The Committee of Six suggested that it might be helpful, as Professor Sitze had suggested, to ask each department if its faculty would be willing to reduce slightly the number of courses for its major to allow for the seminars to meet shared learning goals for all students. Professor Epstein said that some departments have already weighed in on this question in their responses to the curriculum committee's report. She said she would pose the question to chairs of academic departments and programs at her upcoming meeting with them. The Committee of Six thanked the members of the curriculum committee, who left the meeting at 4:34 P.M.

The members next briefly reviewed a [revised proposal from the Committee on International Education](#), addressing the Committee of Six's request that the committee specify in its proposal regarding its charge whether the committee's ex officio members should have voting rights.

The question of voting rights had been raised after the Committee on International Education submitted [an earlier letter](#), describing its proposal to expand its charge and change its name, which the committee had supported. The Committee of Six discussed the unanimous vote of the

faculty members of the CIE to recommend that its ex officio members be accorded full voting rights, and the rationale for their decision. Professor Moss expressed support for extending voting rights to the ex officio members already on the committee, as requested by the committee. Professor Call, who said that he supports extending voting rights to the ex officio members, noted that, if voting rights are extended to them, it would be possible for one faculty member and the ex officio members to outvote the other faculty. Professor Sitze found this possibility to be worrisome, and the dean agreed. The other members did not see this as a concern. The members then voted five in favor, with one abstention, on the substance of the following motion, and six in favor and zero opposed to forward the motion to the faculty. (On January 22, 2018, the committee voted on a revised version of this motion and decided to forward that iteration to the faculty.)

Proposal to Change the Name and Revise the Charge of the Committee on International Education (CIE)

Upon the recommendation of the Committee on International Education, the Committee of Six proposes changing the name of the Committee on International Education to the Committee on Global Education and expanding the committee's charge, as indicated in the following proposed revisions in the *Faculty Handbook*, section IV., S.,1. 1.

~~h.~~ The Committee on ~~International~~**GLOBAL** Education The Committee on ~~International~~**GLOBAL** Education is composed of three members of the faculty (each from a different department), one of whom will serve as chair, and the director of ~~education abroad, dean for international students and global engagement~~ (voted by the faculty November 2015), **THE OFFICE OF GLOBAL EDUCATION** and **THE** registrar, ex officio, **WITH VOTE**. The term for the faculty members of the committee is three years. ~~Members of the committee and the committee's chair are appointed by the~~ Committee of Six **APPOINTS THE FACULTY MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE FOR THREE-YEAR TERMS AND APPOINTS THE CHAIR**. The committee **ON GLOBAL EDUCATION** shapes policies and procedures for evaluating and approving study-~~abroad~~**AWAY** programs **AND INITIATIVES** for Amherst students. The members maintain and review a list of college-approved study-~~abroad~~**AWAY** programs, review student petitions for study-~~abroad~~**AWAY** ~~abroad~~ programs that are not already on the college-approved list, review student evaluations of all ~~international educational~~ programs, facilitate ~~communication between the faculty and the director of education abroad to aid in advising~~ **OUTREACH TO DEPARTMENTS**, and consult with the director to identify new opportunities for ~~international~~ experiences **OFF-CAMPUS** and to facilitate student participation in them. The committee reviews applications for the faculty exchange with Doshisha University (the Amherst-Doshisha Professorship) **AND OTHER POTENTIAL PARTNER INSTITUTIONS** and makes recommendations to Amherst's dean of the faculty (voted by the faculty, April 4, 2017).

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

The sixteenth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2017–2018 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:05 P.M. on Thursday, December 14, 2017. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Call, Engelhardt, Heim, Jaswal, Moss, Sitze, Dean Epstein, and Professor Frederick Griffiths, substitute recorder.

President Martin began the meeting by announcing the process of forming a search committee to find a successor for Dean of Admission and Financial Aid Katie Fretwell, who announced recently that she would retire at the end of the current academic year. The search committee will be co-chaired by Professor Hall and Dean Epstein. Professors Burkett and Hart and a faculty representative to be named from membership of the Faculty Committee on Admission and Financial Aid (FCAFA), later determined to be Professor Poe, will also serve. Kate Gentile, senior associate dean of financial aid, and Alexandra Hurd, associate dean of admission, will represent the financial aid and admission offices on the committee. Don Faulstick, director of athletics, and Sandy Genelius, chief communications officer, have also agreed to serve on the search committee. The Association of Amherst Students will be asked to name one student member (later determined to be Elias Schulz ’18), and a student from the FCAFA will also be asked to serve on the committee (later determined to be Dakota Foster ’18).

Dean Epstein next reported that the mystery of the missing vote in the count from the clicker demonstration at the faculty meeting of December 5 must have resulted either from a malfunctioning unit or the misplacement of one clicker during the meeting, according to David Hamilton, chief information officer. Mr. Hamilton remains confident in the reliability of the clickers, given their track record at many institutions over an extensive period. Professor Sitze asked if it was accurate to say that we do not know exactly why there were inaccuracies in the clicker demonstration on December 5. The dean said that this is her understanding. The members next considered some nominations to committees.

Under “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Sitze asked about the origin of the Benefits Committee, its charge, and its relationship to the Committee on Priorities and Resources (CPR). In particular, he wondered whether the Benefits Committee has any decision-making authorities that exceed those of the CPR. Professor Call said that he would like clarity about where the Benefits Committee functions in relationship to the Board of Trustees. Dean Epstein said that she would ask Associate Dean Tobin to research that committee’s history and remit. The dean explained that, since faculty and staff may not determine their own compensation, the Benefits Committee consults with the CPR in bringing proposals to the trustees and on occasion provides the research needed by the CPR in its deliberations. In a recent matter, now resolved, concerning prescription benefits for retirees and near-retirees ([see the Committee of Six minutes of December 7](#)), the Benefits Committee made what it considered a non-fundamental change, and responded quickly when those affected found the change to be more consequential. As background, President Martin referred to a letter from the trustees in 2008 indicating that post-retirement benefits for “grandfathered” faculty were subject to change and added that that exigency would need to be a crisis.

The committee then turned [to a letter of October 16, 2017, from the Committee on Educational Policy \(CEP\)](#) concerning the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee’s proposals to modify the policy on taking courses Pass/Fail and to substitute or add a Non-Recorded Option (NRO), whereby students would declare a grade threshold (e.g., “C”), beneath which the semester grade is recorded as “P” or “F.” A student’s election of the NRO would not be known to the instructor in the way that Pass/Fail is, nor would it require the instructor’s consent. Professor Moss asked whether the role of the Committee of Six is to judge the merits of the proposals or simply to shape motions to present to the faculty for discussion. A consensus emerged that the committee

Amended January 22, 2018

should articulate its own judgment. Though the CEP has finished its deliberations, the committee decided to check back with that committee in hopes that the motions are brought forward to the faculty with a consensus of the two committees. In a wide-ranging discussion, the committee found considerable merit in the proposed NRO in addition to the existing Pass/Fail option, as long as for each student, the total number and frequency of such courses are limited. The two options might have different times of election, be it the end of add/drop period, the eighth week, or up to the end of the semester.

In reference to Pass/Fail, members raised concerns about the proposal to raise the level for “Pass” up to “C-” from “D,” though “D” otherwise remains sufficient for graduation credit. Professor Engelhardt pointed out that in other contexts, such as Five College certificates, “D” is sometimes excluded. On the other hand, Professor Heim noted that she has not seen shirking in students with the Pass/Fail option. Professors Call and Jaswal noted that in STEM courses, “D” is a needed gradation. Professor Jaswal also commented that for some students, especially those from low-income families, the need to retake a course would impose a hardship. The committee agreed that, on balance, the current threshold of “D” for “Pass” should be retained.

Continuing the discussion, the committee looked with favor on the proposal to allow the election of the Pass/Fail option later in the semester, in light of how students, especially when new to the college, can misestimate their own capacities or the difficulty of the course. President Martin reported that she had heard student requests to expand the Pass/Fail option at a forum sponsored by the Multicultural Resource Center. The committee agreed that students should be cautious about the implications of “Pass” on a transcript, which in the eyes of graduate admissions committees might be taken as equivalent to a “C-.” However, the president noted that she has heard from other COFHE (Consortium on Financing Higher Education) presidents that such options are increasing at peer institutions.

Turning to the NRO, the committee felt that its function would be sufficiently distinct to warrant having both options. Professor Engelhardt characterized the Pass/Fail option as supportive and compassionate while the NRO is best aligned with advising conversations. That is, the NRO would also encourage academic breadth and risk-taking, but with a clearer sense of strategy. Professor Call noted that the NRO could be subject to abuse, such as setting the threshold so high (nothing lower than an “A”) that a high average would be assured, and he urged a cap on that threshold. Professor Sitze inquired why the NRO should not be known to the instructor. Professor Moss explained that the practice would prevent bias. To the objection that a greater frequency of NROs or Pass/Fail options in a class might dilute the energy of a class, Professor Engelhardt noted that instructors might also find in their courses more students crossing disciplinary boundaries. The president observed that courses could, with better safety nets, be more rigorous. Professor Jaswal said that the Pass/Fail option could have the virtue of saving students with unexpected difficulties from the more radical option of withdrawing from a course. It was also generally agreed that, as inducement to branching out, the NRO may be a more appealing and motivating option than an assured “Pass.” Because of this contrasting function, the committee agreed that the NRO option, if adopted, should be elected by the end of add/drop period.

The committee agreed with the proposal forwarded by the CEP to raise the number of such NROs and Pass/Fails from two to four in total, with the further stipulation that no more than one NRO or Pass/Fail could be taken per semester.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Catherine Epstein, Dean of the Faculty

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The seventeenth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2017–2018 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:15 P.M. on Monday, December 18, 2017. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Call, Engelhardt, Heim, Jaswal, Moss (via speaker phone), Sitze, Dean Epstein, and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

Under “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Jaswal inquired about the meeting that had recently taken place with chairs of academic departments and programs and members of the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee. Dean Epstein, as well as Professor Engelhardt, who had also been present at the meeting in his role as chair of the music department, described the discussions as inconclusive; a variety of views had been expressed about the curriculum committee’s proposals. Professor Jaswal asked what the next steps will be in the process of considering the report, and whether the members of the curriculum committee have received the feedback that they feel they require. The dean responded that the curriculum committee will hold a retreat on January 10 to consider the responses that have been received. The dean, Professor Sanborn (co-chair of the curriculum committee), and President Martin will have further discussions, as needed, the dean informed the members.

Discussion turned to the proposal from the curriculum committee, which had been forwarded to the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP), to award half credits for science laboratories so that students taking these courses can benefit occasionally from a reduced course load. This policy, if adopted, would extend existing half-credit policies to laboratories, permitting students to apply four of these half-credits toward graduation, and allowing students to take three-and-a-half courses in a semester following one in which they complete four-and-a-half courses. [CEP forwarded its own evaluation of the proposal to the Committee of Six, and the proposal itself, via a letter of November 1, 2017.](#) The CEP raised concerns about the proposal and does not support it, while holding the view that the proposal should “proceed toward the next stage of consideration.”

Professor Jaswal, who said that she favors the proposal, distributed a document that she had created to illustrate how the half-credit lab option might be applied in the context of the course schedule for a student who is undertaking the pre-medical curriculum. She noted that it would be helpful for some chemistry majors, for example, to have a reduced course load during their early semesters at Amherst, while others might benefit from having more time to put into the upper-level chemistry courses that many students find extremely challenging. Professor Jaswal expressed the view that the guiding principle for adopting the curriculum committee’s proposal should be increasing access to the science curriculum for students with less preparation. These students would be most likely to benefit if the proposal is implemented, she noted. In Professor Jaswal’s view, the changes would help students balance their workload.

Continuing the conversation, Dean Epstein noted that it appears that a relatively small number of students need a reduced load to help them achieve success. These students are likely the same cohort that participates in the college’s summer science program, the dean commented. She suggested that another approach to supporting students would be to offer college credit for the summer science program. Professor Call, who has taught in the program since 1994, expressed the view that, for such a plan to be workable, the program would need to become significantly more robust. He also noted that students would also continue to need support during the academic year. The dean agreed and informed the members that she would soon be meeting with Katie Fretwell, dean of admission and financial aid, and others interested in expanding the summer science program and in the possibility of awarding college credit for the program. Professor Jaswal commented that, with the shift to include only “first-generation” and low-income students in the summer science program, students who have less preparation and do not fit in these categories are not invited to participate. Therefore, credit for summer science could

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not replace the possibility of using a lab credit for a reduced course load for non-summer science students. Professor Call encouraged the dean to include faculty who teach in the program in this and other discussions about the program. Professor Call expressed strong support for the curriculum committee's proposal, conjecturing that students with more preparation would likely not take advantage of the possibility of taking a reduced load, while less well-prepared students would benefit from this opportunity in significant ways.

The dean noted that the curriculum committee and the CEP, beyond the half-credit proposal, has considered other ways of addressing the challenges that some students face in the sciences, with some colleagues expressing the view that the half-credit option would not have a significant impact. It might be preferable, some argue, for science faculty to reconsider the workload they assign, rather than awarding additional credit for the laboratory portion of the course. Providing different pathways through the curriculum, with the help of additional staffing, is another option, some Committee of Six members noted. Professor Call said that he favors exploring all options and providing all the support that is possible for students to achieve success. Professor Sitze concurred with this view, as long as the college has the necessary resources to implement all plans, including sufficient faculty. On this front, Dean Epstein noted that the chemistry department has just made two new hires and has just made a request for an additional FTE. Expansion of the science faculty is also a priority of the comprehensive campaign, President Martin commented. The dean noted that, over the past decade, which has included an increase in the student body, enrollments in humanities courses have remained constant, and growth in enrollments has been concentrated in STEM fields. The president and dean stressed that cuts in humanities FTE lines will not be made to increase the number of faculty in the sciences.

Continuing the conversation, the dean noted that some members of the curriculum committee and the CEP worry that, if half-credit laboratory course credit can be applied toward graduation, opportunities for curricular exploration could be reduced, since students would be able to take fewer courses during their time at Amherst. The dean commented, as did the CEP, that there has also been some concern that students in STEM fields might be less likely to explore courses in the humanities. Professors Call and Sitze wondered whether offering more science courses with the option of not taking an associated lab might encourage students outside the sciences to take more science courses, expanding the breadth of their liberal arts experience—a worthy goal. The dean noted that adopting a system in which science faculty make determinations about how much credit their courses are given has been another point of concern for some. The possibility that adopting the proposal could lead to expanding half-credit courses across the board has also been raised, Dean Epstein said, and the question of how far the college wants to go down such a path is another question that has been posed. It was noted that there are a very small number of half credit courses offered at present, and the dean noted that the proposal is limited to laboratory courses.

Professor Engelhardt, who said that he is not opposed to the proposal itself, is troubled that the curriculum committee framed its argument in terms of curricular inequity among the disciplines in regard to half-credit courses—pitting the implicit rigor and demands of STEM laboratories against courses in the arts and humanities, including those offered for half credit. Professor Engelhardt noted that a significant number of rigorous contact hours outside class is an intrinsic part of many courses in the arts and humanities. He also pointed to inaccuracies in the curriculum committee's discussion of half-credit music courses, which are generally taken as an overload and not to make up deficiencies after failing a course, as the curriculum committee has suggested. President Martin, who expressed support for the curriculum committee's proposal as a means of supporting students, agreed that the proposal should be considered on its own merits; invidious distinctions should be avoided, in her view. The committee concurred.

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Professor Sitze, who said that he is inclined to support the proposal, commented that both the CEP and the curriculum committee have made compelling arguments. Professor Moss expressed the view that the proposal is deserving of consideration by the full faculty and should not be foreclosed. The other members of the committee agreed. The committee decided that to inform discussion of this proposal, it would be helpful to learn more about peer liberal arts colleges' practices in regard to offering half-credit for laboratory courses in the sciences. It was agreed that some research should also be done to find out more about programs at Princeton and the University of Maryland, Baltimore, which are serving science students with diverse levels of preparation. Dean Epstein agreed to provide this information to the committee, as well as the full faculty. The dean suggested that there be a committee-of-the-whole discussion about the proposal at the next faculty meeting, which will likely be held on February 6. If there is support for bringing a motion forward to vote on the proposal, that step could be taken at a subsequent faculty meeting. It would be helpful for science departments to share the ways in which the proposal would support their majors, including how academic pressures might be eased, and the impact on their curricula.

The committee agreed that there should be a committee-of-the-whole discussion at a faculty meeting on February 6 and that it would be helpful if Professor Jaswal collaborates with other faculty in the sciences and Professor Honig, director of the Moss Quantitative Center, to provide a presentation about the benefits of the proposal. It would also be informative, it was agreed, if humanists offer commentary on the ways in which the proposal could address issues of curricular equity, as well as breadth, for Amherst's students.

Conversation turned to [the curriculum committee's letter of December 15, 2017](#) regarding [the curriculum committee's proposal](#) that the college allow students to declare either one major, or one major and one minor, or two majors. Under the proposal, triple majors would be eliminated, as the curriculum committee believes that triple majors limit students' access to the college's open curriculum, Dean Epstein noted. The CEP favors the elimination of the option to declare more than two majors, but a majority of CEP members oppose adding minors. These colleagues believe that minors could shift the overall tenor of the college. The CEP supports bringing two separate motions (one to eliminate triple majors and another to propose the adoption of minors) to the full faculty for consideration, the committee noted. ([For reference see the CEP's minutes on this topic](#))

Dean Epstein commented that consultation with departments and programs about the proposal has revealed that a significant number, including virtually all foreign language departments, are opposed to adopting minors, believing that doing so would have an undermining effect. (Prior to the meeting, the dean had shared departmental responses to the proposal that minors be adopted, which had been solicited by the CEP.) As an example, the dean noted that many students choose to major in a language department as a "second major." Like other small departments, language departments believe that the introduction of minors would reduce the number of students who choose to major in their department, with many choosing to minor instead. The dean noted that it appears the combination of not having minors and an open curriculum has led Amherst to have the highest number of humanities majors among peer liberal arts colleges; the dean fears that the addition of minors could lead fewer students to major in the humanities, which she sees as a significant concern. After many meetings about this topic, this is her thinking on this subject, she said.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Engelhardt noted that departments that might have fewer majors if minors are adopted, and more minors—for example music and language departments—have made it clear that they see no pedagogical or intellectually valid reasons to mount curricula that require less than what is offered now, which would be a necessity for a

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minor to be offered. He agreed that majors in smaller departments could disappear. Professor Moss commented that the motivation when considering minors should be what is best for students, including the opportunity to foster curricular innovation; the fears of departments should not be the focus. Professor Moss expressed the view that departments and programs should be permitted to make proposals for minors, and she argued against foreclosing this option. Responding, Professor Heim said that she understood Professor Engelhardt's point to be that important intellectual projects would need to be whittled down if minors are adopted. His focus did not seem to be on the need to protect departments' intellectual interests. In Professor Heim's view, these potential effects must be considered carefully. Professor Moss suggested that, perhaps, a pilot of adopting a small number of minors initially might be a good approach. Allowing experimentation with minors would enable curricular innovation to occur in a protected space. The dean said that she sees no reason that such innovation cannot continue to take place within majors, programs, or certificates. President Martin cautioned that it is difficult to eliminate initiatives once they are implemented, even if they are pilots. She expressed the view that it is important to consider the possible impact that adopting minors could have on the humanities at the college.

Professor Call expressed concern that adopting minors, in particular the pairing of a major and a minor in closely related fields, might introduce more of a drive for credentialing and curtail intellectual breadth. Fewer students might choose to pursue their interests in different disciplines—for example, theater and mathematics, as some do now. Professor Sitze wondered how the college might do justice to the energy and enthusiasm of the thirteen departments that seem to strongly favor the adoption of minors. Professor Jaswal expressed support for allowing departments to move forward with proposals to innovate. Some members posed the question of how deep support for minors is among departments, wondering if the departments that expressed support for minors might change their views on the subject, in light of the arguments against minors that have now been offered. Professor Moss suggested that it would be worth asking departments for their views about minors again to gauge the level of support that currently exists for the proposal to adopt minors. She feels that the full faculty should consider the proposal for minors, in any case.

Concluding the conversation, the members agreed that, at the next faculty meeting, there should be a committee-of-the-whole discussion about the proposal to adopt minors and to eliminate triple majors. Having proponents of the proposal speak to it would be particularly informative, the members noted. The remainder of the meeting was devoted to personnel matters.

The meeting adjourned at 4:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

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The eighteenth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2017–2018 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:15 P.M. on Monday, January 22, 2018. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Call, Engelhardt, Heim, Jaswal, Moss, Sitze, Dean Epstein, and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with President Martin noting that the board of trustees, during its meetings the previous weekend, approved an April 7, 2018, public launch of the college’s comprehensive capital campaign. The president outlined the effort’s priorities, which she noted focus on support for Amherst’s core mission and include the following six priority areas: supporting faculty and student excellence through endowed professorships and student financial aid; meeting student need in the sciences, mathematics and statistics, economics, and computer science by expanding the faculty in these areas; supporting innovation in teaching and learning, including funding for student research, field-based projects, internships (including funding to allow students from all socioeconomic backgrounds to have internship opportunities), the Center for Teaching and Learning, the Writing Center, the Moss Quantitative Center, and the Loeb Center for Career Exploration and Planning; supporting a diverse intellectual community, including endowed funding to support a stronger residential life program, wellness initiatives, and environmental sustainability activities; funding to support critical needs in the area of facilities, including raising the remaining funding for the new science center, the greenway, and the greenway residence halls and funding for other projects, including (if sufficient funds can be raised) repurposing Merrill Science Center and McGuire Life Sciences Building; and increasing support for the annual fund.

President Martin explained that the allocation and hiring of the seventeen new faculty in the sciences, mathematics and statistics, computer science, and economics will move forward during the campaign, as funding is raised. This hiring will not be delayed until the completion of the campaign, as the board of trustees has agreed that the current FTE cap of 188 should not be a barrier. The FTE cap will ultimately be raised, once all the necessary funding is in place. President Martin reiterated that there will be no expectation of a reduction in the number of FTE lines in the arts, humanities, and social sciences. Professor Sitze asked if there is any possibility that some of the new FTE lines will be allocated to the arts, humanities, and social sciences. President Martin said that there is no prohibition on growth in these areas, if sufficient funding is raised and the case can be persuasively made. She noted that increased research support for faculty in the humanities and social sciences, and for lab technicians in STEM fields, is linked to the priority on professorships and new lines. Professor Sitze asked if plans for allocating new FTEs will be connected to measures intended to ensure a diversity of political viewpoints within the curriculum, and in particular conservative viewpoints. President Martin said that there are no plans to allocate FTEs for this purpose. The college has made a commitment to enhancing the diversity of perspectives that students experience by bringing speakers with a range of views to campus and counting on departments to recruit and hire without political bias. The president also said that visiting faculty members can contribute to enhancing the diversity of perspectives at the college. Professor Call asked if a goal and time period have been set for the campaign. President Martin responded that a goal has not yet been confirmed for the campaign, an effort that will likely be under way for five years from the April launch.

President Martin informed the members that the results of the staff climate survey will be shared with staff at a “town hall” meeting on January 24. The president said that results indicate that overall job satisfaction among staff at the college is high, as is pride in working at Amherst and satisfaction with benefits. The results make it clear, however, that there are areas that are in need of improvement. The survey findings suggest that there is a need for clearer and increased levels of communication, greater opportunities for collaboration and involvement in decision-making for staff, more recognition of the value of staff members’ work, including in compensation levels, and more intentional, direct engagement throughout the institution, President Martin explained. Many

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staff members also expressed a desire for more opportunities for training and professional development. At the January 24 meeting, Rich Boyer from ModernThink, the consulting firm that developed and administered the survey, will present the results. There will be an opportunity for questions, President Martin said, both for Mr. Boyer and for the senior staff, and there will be a discussion of immediate priorities, processes, and next steps. Shortly after the town hall meeting, members of the senior staff will begin conversations with their divisions about specific actions the college will take to address the priorities that have been identified via the survey, both campus-wide and within divisions.

Continuing with her summary of the survey results, President Martin informed the committee that a significant portion of the staff conveyed that they do not feel that the faculty values their work. The senior staff did not score much higher than the faculty on this measure. Professor Call asked if the survey data will be shared with the faculty. President Martin said that the results will be shared with the Committee of Six and with the full faculty, and she noted that department chairs, in their role as supervisors of staff, as well as faculty-administrators who supervise staff, were invited to the town hall meeting. Professor Engelhardt said that he has heard concerns raised that the scheduling of the town hall meeting, during the first week of classes, will make attending the event a challenge for some staff. President Martin said that staff members indicated that they wished to be informed about the survey results as soon as the findings and the consultants were available, hence the scheduling of the meeting. There will be a number of other opportunities for staff to attend presentations about the results, President Martin said, as plans call for the consultants to return to campus to discuss the findings in smaller group settings. Professor Moss commented that, without the survey data, it will be difficult for the Committee of Six to consider the ways in which the college might respond to the survey findings. The president said that the Committee of Six will be provided with the information before the meeting at which the committee decides to discuss the survey. President Martin said that she seeks the committee's advice about the most effective format for sharing the survey results with faculty (e.g., via a presentation at a faculty meeting) and strategies for addressing staff members' perception that the faculty does not value their work. The president and senior staff are developing a series of steps to respond to other concerns that have been raised, the president noted.

Dean Epstein next informed the committee that her office will work to schedule the Committee of Six's annual meeting with the members of the Consultative Group for Tenure-track Faculty and a separate meeting with all tenure-track faculty. The dean and the president will also meet with the consultative group, as well as with all tenure-track faculty this spring, in accordance with regular practice. The members then approved the following dates for possible faculty meetings during the spring semester: February 6, March 6, March 20, April 3, April 17, May 17, (commencement meeting, 9:00 A.M.).

Conversation turned to [a letter that had been sent to the committee by the Faculty Committee on Admission and Financial Aid \(FCAFA\)](#). The members discussed the issues raised in the letter, i.e., the FCAFA's desire to gain greater clarity about the parameters of the charge (see [the Faculty Handbook, IV. S., 1., d.](#)) of the FCAFA and the College Committee on Admission and Financial Aid (CCAFA) and about whether the present procedures of the committees are consistent with their stated purpose. The FCAFA also raised governance questions surrounding the role, authority, and responsibilities of the faculty vis-à-vis admission. The FCAFA expressed the view that the current admission priorities, as articulated in the [Amherst College Admission Mission Statement](#), which was approved by the faculty in 1983, are vague, too broad, and outdated. In their letter, the members of the FCAFA also question the ability of the committee to be effective, given the concerns raised, and they note the particular importance of gaining greater clarity about the FCAFA's responsibilities regarding policies surrounding admission and athletics.

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President Martin commented that the FCAFA has raised important questions that are complex. In regard to the issue of authority, she noted that the college's by-laws (see section 3.10) and [the Faculty Handbook language \(II., C.\)](#) make clear that ultimate authority for admission rests with the board of trustees, which has delegated to the faculty the power to fix the requirements of admission and to the dean of admission and financial aid, the responsibility for policy and for selecting the class. Faculty oversight over admission policy is mentioned in the charge of the FCAFA, introducing ambiguity that could be productive if understood as having the effect of creating the space for consultation and collaboration. Responsibility for admission policy has been discussed in some past reports (including the 1982 report *Admission to Amherst: A Report to the Faculty and Administration*, referenced in the FACFA's letter), documents produced by the faculty. President Martin said that her understanding is that the role of the faculty is to formulate admission standards, provide broad policy guidance, and examine trends over time to determine whether standards are being implemented, and priorities are being followed.

Professor Moss noted that, when she had served on the FCAFA, she had been told by the admission office that it is the faculty that sets admission policy and the admission office (administration) that carries out policy. Professor Call said that, as a member of the FCAFA and, for eleven years, the CCAFA, he too had understood from the admission office that the faculty sets policy and the dean of admission implements it. The role of the CCAFA, as it was understood from the time it was formed, is to verify that policy is being carried out. The dean noted that, while the CCAFA votes to admit the students that have been recommended for admission each year, it does not make decisions about individual students. Professors Moss and Call agreed that this was the case in their experience. Professor Moss noted that the CCAFA traditionally has been given very little time to review the list of recommended students. The dean commented, that in recent years the list has been provided by the admission office forty-eight hours ahead of the meeting in which the CCAFA votes on the class. The Committee of Six agreed that it might be helpful for the CCAFA to have an additional meeting or two at end of admission cycle to review the process and its results.

Professor Moss commented that, as a member of the FCAFA, she shared many of the frustrations the FCAFA articulated in its letter. She had found the admission staff to be guarded about sharing information, which made it a challenge for the FCAFA to know what role it should be playing in the process. Professor Moss said that, on the other hand, she had found it helpful that the admission office invites the members of the CCAFA and FCAFA to sit in on its deliberations to learn about the process. After observing the deliberations, she had been impressed with the care in which each file had been considered, Professor Moss said. President Martin suggested that the characterization of the faculty as responsible for policy and the dean only for implementation does not adequately capture the complexities involved in the work of admission or the dean's responsibility for developing, as well as implementing policy.

Continuing, Professor Moss commented that the FCAFA has articulated in a helpful way the challenges it has faced. When asked what next steps should be, President Martin said that it would be wise for the Committee of Six to meet with the FCAFA to learn more about the FCAFA's concerns. President Martin, the dean, and the other members agreed that, if the FCAFA's schedule permits, the Committee of Six would meet with the committee the next week. As the search for a new dean of admission and financial aid is now under way, it is particularly important, all agreed, to arrive at a common understanding about the issues being raised. Professor Moss said that it is possible that issues surrounding athletics are driving some of the concern that the FCAFA has expressed about the lack of clarity surrounding its charge and the vagueness of the language about the college's admission priorities. President Martin expressed the view that it is important to discuss the concerns that led to the FCAFA's request for clarification.

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Continuing the conversation, the committee tried to recall the process that had been followed to arrive at the current interpretation of the priorities for admission, which has led to the diversification of the student body. Professor Call said that President Marx made diversity, coupled with academic excellence, an admission priority; as the dean of the faculty at the time, Professor Call and former Dean of Admission and Financial Aid Tom Parker had supported this priority. Professor Call said that support from the faculty would have been garnered through the regular committee structures, he believes. President Martin suggested that what is most important, in her view, is that the faculty and dean of admission and financial aid work together effectively. Professor Sitze agreed on the need for shared governance in this area, while noting that the *Faculty Handbook's* definition of the role of the dean of admission and financial aid ([Faculty Handbook, II.B.,2.](#)) contains no language expressly delegating power over admission to the dean of admission and financial aid. Continuing, Professor Sitze noted that the only express delegation of power over admission that appears in the *Faculty Handbook* is a delegation of power to the faculty ([Faculty Handbook language \(II., C.\)](#)). Because faculty are given the responsibility to do the work of teaching, Professor Sitze said, it makes sense that faculty also should have the authority to fix the requirements determining whom they teach. Professor Sitze added that he was struck by the numerous archival documents suggesting that, in the past, faculty were much more involved in admissions decisions than they are today. Even as recently as 1989, he observed, faculty seem to have been involved in the work of reading individual files.

President Martin noted that the world of college admissions has become more and more complex over the years. The college now has close to ten thousand applicants for about 470 first-year slots, and the federal laws that have an impact on admission policies and practices have become increasingly more complex, requiring the experience and time of dedicated admissions professionals. Professor Sitze responded that, without acquiring some taste for the details and being engaged in the particulars, it is difficult for the faculty to exercise its power to formulate standards and priorities and to know if the general is being translated into the specific—that is to know whether its priorities and standards are being followed. President Martin said that she agrees in principle, but noted that, as a general matter, faculty often raise concerns about the time that administrative work is taking away from their research and teaching. It may not be practical or sustainable over time to have faculty responsible for making individual decisions and assuming responsibility for assembling a class from among ten thousand applicants.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Moss commented that, while the “bins” of academic achievement and promise, diversity, and athletics are well-defined, she has found that the ways in which the bins intersect in the admission process are not well-articulated. Professor Call expressed the view that the role of the FCAFA and CCAFA is to offer feedback on whether admission is shifting too much in a particular direction. Professor Heim agreed that the faculty should not be “in the weeds” when it comes to admission decisions. The faculty should be asking the big questions, in her view, such as who made the decision that the rosters of athletics teams should grow along with the size of the student body. President Martin agreed that the FCAFA and CCAFA should have responsibility for tracking a trend of this kind and calling attention to it. The administration should also be tracking such trends and making adjustments. In this case, an incentive was put in place to ensure that recruited athletes were academically stronger than had been the case in the past. That incentive produced an increase in the number of varsity student-athletes. Professor Moss suggested that, in order to gain a longer view, it would be helpful to have past chairs of the FCAFA attend the upcoming meeting with the Committee of Six. Most of the current members have not served on the FCAFA for long, she noted. All agreed that doing so would enrich the conversation. The dean agreed to invite the past chairs.

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Discussion turned to the committee's work of the spring term. The dean said that taking a close look at the language of the criteria for tenure (see [the *Faculty Handbook III. E., 3.*](#)) should be a priority, as the committee had agreed in the fall. She reminded the members that the results of the most recent Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) survey revealed that a significant number of Amherst's tenure-track faculty members feel that the current criteria lack clarity. The members agreed that the committee should review the language of the tenure criteria, with the goal of enhancing clarity as much as possible. Professor Moss said that it will be important to stress that this work will focus on codifying current standards and policy, rather than developing new policies and expectations. She expressed the view that some tenure-track faculty may worry that expectations are being raised if the *Faculty Handbook* language becomes more specific. The dean said that it would be possible to "grandfather" those who were hired under the current criteria and to have any new language apply to new faculty only.

Under "Questions from Committee Members," Professor Moss asked if the committee would be meeting with the Committee on Education Policy (CEP) this spring. She feels that it might be informative for the Committee of Six to hear directly from the CEP. The dean said that she does not anticipate additional proposals coming from the CEP out of the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee this spring.

Professor Jaswal next asked the president if she anticipates having a conversation with the faculty about the self-study of the Presidential Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion, which was shared with the faculty last semester. President Martin responded that the study had been produced largely to inform the work of the External Advisory Committee on Diversity, Inclusion, and Excellence, which is no longer active. The task force, which is actively meeting, is focusing its work on bias reporting, a topic that the president anticipates will be the subject of a discussion with the Committee of Six and, possibly, the full faculty. President Martin suggested that another topic of conversation for the Committee of Six this spring might be a cluster of questions that have emerged out of concern about a pattern of excessive, dangerous drinking by some Amherst students. A related issue is a culture of partying at the college that is also worrisome and how to develop and put policies in place that ensure safety, while respecting students' desire for autonomy. Professor Heim suggested that the College Council be tasked with helping the administration address these issues. President Martin responded that the College Council may not have the time to undertake a comprehensive examination of these issues, but is no doubt discussing various aspects of student social life and should be consulted. On a related note, Professor Sitze said that he continues to have concerns about student mental health, as he had noted in the fall. He continues to think it would be a good idea to have Jackie Alvarez, director of the counseling center, give a presentation on this topic at a faculty meeting. All agreed that Ms. Alvarez should be invited to do so at a faculty meeting this semester, and that there should be a committee-of-the-whole conversation about student mental health.

Continuing the discussion about spring topics of conversation, Professor Sitze asked if plans are in place to try to "rationalize" the academic schedule. The dean said that Jesse Barba, director of institutional research and registrar services, and Ewa Nowicki, the new registrar, will be tasked with developing a proposal for consideration by the faculty. Professor Sitze thanked the dean and noted, in regard to another matter that should come to the committee this spring, that the Ad Hoc Faculty Committee on Athletics will soon complete its report. He also suggested that it would be helpful for the Committee of Six, and other faculty committees for that matter, to learn more about the administrative structure of the college. Making a governance map of the college available to all faculty members who serve on faculty committees would help make lines of authority less opaque, he noted. Associate Dean Tobin said that an effort is currently under way to produce an organizational chart for the entire college and for each division as part of the self-study being

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prepared for the college's upcoming reaccreditation review. She said that the charts will be included in the self-study and could also be provided to faculty committees as separate documents, as desired. In addition, the president and the dean said that they would be happy to provide more nuanced information about the ways in which the administration functions. The dean said that she has brought the issue of the "transfer-back" policy to the CEP and also would like to discuss the matter with the Committee of Six. Under this policy, which was not voted by the faculty but which has been a practice for decades, Amherst students who choose to transfer to another institution cannot rematriculate at Amherst. The dean said that she sees no educational rationale for this policy and would like to see it changed. If the CEP and the Committee of Six agree, the dean said that she plans to eliminate the policy.

Conversation turned to Professor Sitze's request of the fall that the committee revisit the practice, begun during the last academic year, of inviting faculty to communicate their preferences for service on committees to the dean. It was agreed that experience has shown that there are too many constraints on the process of making committee assignments to honor most such requests, which often has led to disappointment or irritation on the part of colleagues who expressed interest in a serving on a particular committee. The members agreed that this practice should be discontinued. Professor Heim raised another concern about committee service, that is the service burdens placed on associate professors in their first one to three years in rank. She noted that many associate professors return from their post-tenure sabbaticals to face crushing service obligations that can derail their scholarship. These obligations range from chairing departments, to running searches, to chairing faculty committees. She suggested that a policy be put in place that relatively new associate professors not be asked to chair major faculty committees and, perhaps, not be included on the ballot of the Committee of Six. Professor Heim wondered about the reasons for placing untenured tenure-line professors on the ballot as well. In regard to the latter point, the dean said that when this issue was raised with the Committee of Six in previous years, there was no appetite for removing the untenured from the ballot. The reason given was support for a spirit of inclusivity. Untenured faculty have not been elected to the committee recently, the dean noted. In regard to associate professors being on the ballot, Professor Engelhardt said that some associate professors may welcome the opportunity to gain the experience that comes with serving on the Committee of Six, and that he would not like to have a policy that denies them the opportunity to serve. He also feels that associate professors who are in their early years in rank may wish to chair a major faculty committee and should have that opportunity to do so in order to gain that professional experience. Professor Jaswal, a newly tenured associate professor herself, agreed with Professor Heim that associate professors in their early years should be given the option of not being on the Committee of Six ballot. Professor Call wondered whether it is beneficial to have colleagues with a range of experience around the table when considering personnel cases—some members who have undergone a tenure review recently, for example, and those who have greater personal distance from the process. It was agreed that the concern about the service burden put on those new to the rank of associate professor is an issue to which the committee should return at a future meeting. Professor Moss agreed with the problem Professor Heim identified. She hoped the committee would address not just the burden of service on the Committee of Six, but the compounded service burdens facing associate professors when they are serving on major committees and chairing simultaneously. She also wondered if more attention might be paid to distributing service work less unevenly, particularly among colleagues yet to be promoted to full professor.

The members then turned briefly to a personnel matter. The members then reviewed the motion below and voted four in favor, one opposed, with one abstention, on the substance of the motion and six in favor and zero opposed to forward the motion to the faculty. It was noted that approval of the motion will require a two-thirds vote of the faculty.

Motion to Undertake a Pilot to use Clickers as the Default Voting Mechanism

The Committee of Six proposes that clickers be used at faculty meetings as the default voting mechanism during the spring and fall semesters of 2018. During the pilot, a motion may be voted on by written ballot if requested by a faculty member.

The members then reviewed a revised motion to change the name and revise the charge of the Committee on International Education (an earlier version was discussed on December 11, 2017). Dean Epstein explained that the only revision made to the earlier motion is the addition of language to ensure that only the faculty members of the committee will vote on the selection of the Doshisha professor. The dean said that she had shared her concern on this point with the chair of the Committee on International Education, Professor Sánchez-Eppler, who has approved the revision. The members agreed that the revised motion is preferable and voted five in favor, zero opposed, with one abstention, on the substance of the motion and six in favor and zero opposed to forward the motion to the faculty.

l. k. The Committee on International-~~GLOBAL~~ Education The Committee on ~~International~~ **GLOBAL** Education is composed of three members of the faculty (each from a different department), one of whom will serve as chair, and the director of ~~education abroad,~~ dean for international students and global engagement (voted by the faculty November 2015); **THE OFFICE OF GLOBAL EDUCATION** and **THE** registrar, ex officio, **WITH VOTE**. The term for the faculty members of the committee is three years. ~~Members of the committee and the committee's chair are appointed by the Committee of Six~~ **APPOINTS THE FACULTY MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE FOR THREE-YEAR TERMS AND APPOINTS THE CHAIR**. The committee **ON GLOBAL EDUCATION** shapes policies and procedures for evaluating and approving study-abroad **AWAY** programs **AND INITIATIVES** for Amherst students. The members maintain and review a list of college-approved study-abroad **AWAY** programs, review student petitions for study-**AWAY** abroad programs that are not already on the college-approved list, review student evaluations of all international educational programs, facilitate ~~communication between the faculty and the director of education abroad to aid in advising~~ **OUTREACH TO DEPARTMENTS**, and consult with the director to identify new opportunities for international experiences **OFF-CAMPUS** and to facilitate student participation in them. The **FACULTY MEMBERS OF THE** committee reviews applications for the faculty exchange with Doshisha University (the Amherst-Doshisha Professorship) and **MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO AMHERST'S DEAN OF THE FACULTY. THE COMMITTEE ALSO REVIEWS, and OTHER POTENTIAL PARTNER INSTITUTIONS** and makes recommendations to Amherst's **THE** dean of the faculty (voted by the faculty, April 4, 2017).

The members then reviewed a draft faculty meeting agenda for a possible faculty meeting on February 6 and voted six in favor and zero opposed to forward it to the faculty. The committee turned to personnel matters for the remainder of the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 5:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

Amended February 26, 2018

The nineteenth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2017–2018 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:15 P.M. on Monday, January 29, 2018. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Call, Engelhardt, Heim, Jaswal, Moss, Sitze, Dean Epstein, and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

Under “Topics of the Day,” President Martin informed the members of plans to discuss with the committee at its next meeting the results of the staff survey. Dean Epstein noted that it would be informative to have a conversation about the finding that many staff members feel that the faculty does not value their work, and to consider how best to discuss this issue with the faculty as a whole. The committee then turned briefly to a personnel matter. Dean Epstein next informed the members that the student member of the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee, Natasha Kim ’18, has expressed interest in attending the February 6 faculty meeting, as there will be a committee-of-the-whole conversation about two of the curriculum committee’s proposals (the proposal to adopt minors and the proposal to allow half-credits for lab courses). The members agreed that the dean should inform Ms. Kim that she is welcome to attend.

Associate Dean Tobin informed the members that the first draft of the college’s reaccreditation self-study report, which had been shared with the Committee of Six in the fall, as well as with other major faculty committees, will be posted online for the Amherst community soon. Comments on the document will be invited. The final version of the document will be submitted to the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (CIHE) of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) by the end of February. A campus visit by an [external evaluation team](#) is set for April 15–18, 2018.

Under “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Engelhardt asked if President Martin would share her sense of the “town hall” meeting that had been held on January 24 to convey the results of the staff survey and to take questions about the findings. President Martin said that the meeting had gone well, it seems to her. Those in attendance who had submitted comments on cards that had been provided had conveyed that the presentation had been clear. About four hundred staff members attended the event. President Martin said that many of those who filled out the cards expressed support for the priorities and next steps that the senior staff has identified in response to the survey results.

Continuing with the committee’s questions, Professor Jaswal offered praise for the keynote address that poet and activist Sonia Sanchez delivered at the second annual Dr. Martin Luther King Legacy Symposium at Amherst, which was held on January 27. Professor Jaswal expressed thanks to the panel that had organized the event.

At 3:30 P.M., the committee was joined by the current faculty members (Professors Folsom, Kingston, Poe, and Ringer [chair]) of the Faculty Committee on Financial Aid (FCAFA) and some past chairs of the committee—Professors Crowley, Hall, Moore, and Sims. The dean began the conversation by thanking the current members of the FCAFA for sharing their concerns via [their letter to the Committee of Six](#). Dean Epstein also thanked the past chairs for their willingness to offer their perspective. The ensuing conversation focused on the issues raised in the FCAFA’s letter, i.e., the desire to gain greater clarity about the parameters of the committee’s charge (see [the Faculty Handbook, IV. S., 1., d.](#)) and that of the College Committee on Admission and Financial Aid (CCAFA), and about whether the present procedures of the committees are consistent with their stated purpose. In their letter, the members of the FCAFA had also raised governance questions surrounding the role, authority, and responsibilities of the faculty vis-à-vis admission. The FCAFA had expressed the view that the current admission priorities, as articulated in the [Amherst College Admission Mission Statement](#), which was approved by the faculty in 1983, are vague, too broad, and outdated. In their letter, the members of the FCAFA also questioned the ability of the committee to

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be effective, given the concerns raised, and noted the particular importance of gaining greater clarity about the FCAFA's responsibilities, and the policies surrounding admission and athletics.

Professor Ringer began the conversation by noting that the faculty members of the FCAFA have spent an enormous amount of time participating in the work of the Ad Hoc Faculty Committee on Athletics and as a result have come to believe that the FCAFA lacks clarity about its charge, which makes it challenging to carry out its role in setting clear admission priorities and evaluating compliance with these priorities at a granular level. The FCAFA, Professor Ringer noted, is unclear how it should be evaluating whether candidates for admission are meeting the college's admission priorities since the priorities themselves are vague. She commented that, based on the archival materials that had been shared with everyone at today's meeting, it seems that the same conversation concerning defining the role of the FCAFA has been going on intermittently for the past twenty-seven years. Prior to reading these materials, she hadn't been aware that the experience of the current FCAFA was not isolated to the present day.

Professor Hall asked how often the FCAFA has met when not participating in the work of the Ad Hoc Faculty Committee on Athletics. Professor Ringer responded that, apart from the weekly ad hoc committee meetings devoted to issues related to admission and athletics, the FCAFA had met about three times each semester. The first meeting in the fall is educational in nature, with staff from the admission office providing information on the process that will be followed and the role of the committee. The final meeting of the fall (a meeting of the CCAFA) is devoted to voting on the proposed admitted class, Professor Ringer said. Professor Hall reflected that, during the time that he had been a member of the FCAFA (2003–2006), the committee had met on a near-weekly basis and had discussed substantive matters on the initiative of the faculty. In addition, Tom Parker, the dean of admission and financial aid at the time, had provided the committee with a range of articles to spark discussion about particular issues.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Sitze asked if the FCAFA feels that the 1983 admission mission statement, which lays out the college's admission priorities, is so vague that it could justify the admission of almost any candidate, in which case it would be in need of revision, or if the FCAFA feels that it is "appropriately vague" and simply in need of better implementation. He noted that, in [the FCAFA's 1999 report, titled *Admission to Amherst: A Report to the Faculty and Administration*](#), the FCAFA had reaffirmed the admission mission statement, and that in [a subsequent letter to the Committee of Six from January 17, 2000](#), Professor Rockwell had made the case that the problem was not the admission priorities themselves, but rather their implementation. If the current FCAFA does feel that the priorities articulated in the admission mission statement should be revised, he asked, what revisions would be desirable in the FCAFA's view? In addition, he inquired, are there ideas and/or mechanisms that the committee would suggest for helping the faculty to become sufficiently knowledgeable about the admission process?

Professor Ringer responded that she feels that the current priorities are too vague and are insufficient to guide the selection process. She commented that, if the criterion is, above all, that of intellectual promise, as the admission mission statement articulates, she questions whether it is possible to judge whether the college is adhering to its stated priorities. She acknowledged the complexity and time-consuming nature of the admission process and stressed the challenges of faculty on the FCAFA having the time to absorb all of the information that would enable them to develop a full understanding of the process, in the time allotted. As a result, the members of the committee can feel like bystanders, rather than participants, which seems unproductive. Professor Ringer noted that the Ad Hoc Faculty Committee on Athletics plans to recommend the creation of a part-time faculty associate dean position to serve as a liaison to the admission office. One of the goals of doing so would be to have a faculty member develop deep knowledge, born of experience and continuity, about admissions. The associate dean could then work collaboratively with the

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FCAFA and the dean of admission and financial aid and provide guidance, as needed. Professor Ringer said that she can imagine a role of the FCAFA in which there are substantive discussions in which the committee examines admission trends over time to determine whether the admission standards set by the faculty are being implemented and to offer broad policy guidance to the admission office to ensure that the standards are being followed.

Professor Call expressed the view that the level of clarity about the specific criteria by which classes have been admitted, and the trade-offs that have been made, in some cases, to achieve them, has improved over the past several decades. Balancing the criteria is at the heart of the issue, in his view. Professor Sims said that a key problem with assessing whether priorities are shifting or not is that most of the data that are provided to the FCAFA are not comparative. To carry out its charge, the FCAFA needs to know more about how the admitted and matriculated classes compare to the applicant pool and about trends over time. Professor Sims observed that, while she was serving on the FCAFA, some members said that they observed priorities being implemented to make admission decisions, but it was not clear how those priorities were being set. Some FCAFA members said that they did not know if the FCAFA had the power to rebalance priorities. Professor Ringer noted that the admission office is doing its best to adhere to stated priorities, but that these priorities are not sufficient as guidance. For instance, it is not simply a matter of *adherence* to priorities, but how the various priorities are weighed against each other.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Crowley said that, when he served as chair of the FCAFA, he experienced very similar frustrations. The FCAFA sits through the process, but is exposed to a very small percentage of the class. There is no information provided about those who are not being recommended for admission. Thus it was unclear what was being traded off to achieve the final list of students being recommended for admission. Professor Moss commented that, in 1999, the FCAFA was forthright about the problems that it was experiencing and conducted an intensive review of the admission process, as detailed in its subsequent report. She asked if the current members of the FCAFA would like to see the current or a future committee complete a similarly intensive review of the admission process. Professor Moss pointed out that moments of turnover in the leadership of the admission office seem to have prompted such examinations in the past. The upcoming retirement of Dean Fretwell, she noted, provides such a moment for reflection and review, should the faculty wish to take advantage of it.

Professor Poe commented that the work of the FCAFA would be aided by having access to the “negative space” of admission. In order to know what trade-offs are being made, and to gain more clarity about the criteria by which policy and standards are being formulated, it is necessary to know the profile of students who are not being recommended for admission. Professor Moss asked whether the committee is trying to gain clarity about its charge or the substance of admission priorities or both. Professor Crowley said that, as chair of the FCAFA, he never knew what the priorities were, and, as a result, he found the experience of providing oversight on the basis of these priorities to be unworkable. Professor Sims agreed with others that the role of the FCAFA is unclear. She posed the question of how clarity might be gained about what authority resides with faculty and what authority resides with the president and the board. Professor Call agreed that admission has multiple constituencies.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Hall said that he understands admission to be a responsibility that is delegated to the faculty by the trustees, (see [Faculty Handbook, II. C.](#)), and that the board does not step into this realm without invoking its reserve power. President Martin said that the faculty has delegated authority for fixing admission standards, which is not the same as having sole authority for formulating admission policy. She noted that responsibility for admission policy is also assigned to the dean of admission and financial aid, as the position is described in the [Faculty Handbook \(II. B.,2.\)](#). She believes that the board would not agree that admission policy is

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formulated on the authority of the faculty, but that instead it is a shared responsibility. Any significant change in what the board understands to be the college's admission policies and practices would be a legitimate concern of the trustees, the president noted.

Professor Poe noted that, as he understands it, one of the jobs of the FCAFA is to ring an alarm bell if the standards of admission, as the faculty understands them, are not being followed. Professor Crowley said that, even if he felt that the standards were not being followed, he wouldn't have known when to ring the bell. Professor Ringer noted that timing is a problem. What would be the Plan B, she asked, if the CCAFA voted negatively when presented with the recommendations for admission? The letters about admission are about to go out at that point, and decisions about accepted students have gone down to the wire. Professor Call expressed the view that there should be a follow-up mechanism if the CCAFA feels that things are going "off course" and has concerns—follow-up not necessarily about the particular class, but about broader policy and trends in regard to trade-offs being made. It is the role of the CCAFA to verify that policy is being implemented, it was agreed.

Professor Hall said that it is informative to examine the make-up of the FCAFA over the past decade or so. He noted that, during at least two years (2008 and 2016), there were no continuing faculty members on the committee, and that, on occasion, there were more untenured than tenured faculty members serving. He feels that the students taught by the faculty are at the core of the institution, and that therefore the FCAFA is arguably one of the three most important committees at the college. The trend away from continuity and from having more senior professors serve on it has weakened the FCAFA and does not signal significant faculty focus on its admission responsibilities, in his view. Professor Hall argued that, when making committee assignments, the Committee of Six should pay close attention to the experience of those who will serve and their ability to serve for three years. In this way, the FCAFA is far more likely to achieve critical momentum on issues of admission. With more experience, members of the FCAFA know the questions that need to be asked of the dean of admission. Professor Hall also thinks that it would be helpful for the FCAFA to meet on a weekly or near-weekly basis—as the Committee on Educational Policy and the Committee of Six do—as it has in the past. He believes that doing so will allow for substantive, extended conversations and will enable the committee to monitor trends and to have an impact on the implementation of admission priorities.

Professor Crowley agreed that achieving greater continuity within the FCAFA would be beneficial. While he was on the committee, he could not turn to other experienced faculty members and relied only on the admission professionals, placing his trust in them. Professor Sitze suggested that the dean's office could help address this issue by creating an electronic archive of the reports from the FCAFA for easy review by all members of the FCAFA. More generally, Professor Sitze continued, it would be a good idea for the dean's office to take steps to ensure that all members of all faculty committees have easy access to college by-laws, information about lines of authority at the college, and the policies of the committee. Committee service should be treated as a chance for faculty to learn about the college, he observed. Professor Ringer said that she would like to learn how intellectual promise is defined in the admission process and how it is weighed in decision-making. If the faculty has a role in setting admission priorities, she wants to know what that role entails, specifically commenting that there appears to be a great deal of compromise at play when measuring intellectual promise. Professor Ringer expressed the opinion that there is little value in faculty serving on the FCAFA if the only purpose is to become better educated about admissions, without the possibility of participation in setting priorities and measuring compliance with them. Professor Sims said that she would like to know the mechanism for the faculty to shift admission priorities, if it is determined that it is necessary to do so. For example, if a priority of the college is to have all students succeed in all paths of study, then stronger preparation in math might be required. How

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would the faculty “move the needle,” if needed? Professor Poe commented that it remains unclear, at present, how the FCAFA can do so.

President Martin posed the question of what the faculty would want, stepping away from questions about authority and process and getting more concrete about the matter. Professor Poe commented that current efforts by the Office of Admission may be too flat. In his experience, the faculty and admission staff may have very different standards for evaluating intellectual promise, and there is currently no mechanism to compare such standards. Professor Call noted the challenges of measuring the level of intellectual engagement and commitment that individual prospective students might bring. Professor Kingston, while noting the tremendous good will and thoughtfulness that the admission staff brings to its decision-making, expressed the view that the admission process seems to lack a clear mechanism for weighing the trade-offs that arise in pursuing multiple admission priorities, or how these considerations affect the process of admitting individual students. He has not been able to understand the reasons why students with particular profiles are admitted or rejected. Professor Moss said that, while she was on the FCAFA, she saw a logic to the way in which the admission staff make their decisions. Professor Kingston expressed concern that many students arrive at Amherst in the expectation of benefitting from interactions with others from a variety of different backgrounds, but social and academic divisions within the student body mean that the college often fails to fulfill that promise as it ought. Dean Epstein said that providing the support that all students need to be successful is the responsibility of the college, once it chooses the students who will make up its student body. Professor Poe agreed, but expressed concern that the very processes of admission are resulting in the de facto segregation of the student body along multiple dimensions.

Continuing the conversation, President Martin said that she is aware of divisions on campus, is also concerned, and believes the college needs multiple integrated approaches to changing aspects of student culture. Professor Engelhardt, referencing Professor Rockwell’s letter, suggested that, when it comes to admission decisions regarding student-athletes, perhaps the college could explore priorities beyond creating winning teams. Other members proposed that there be more consistent overlap between athletics and intellectual promise and achievement. Professor Moss suggested that coaches could play an important role in the admission process in building teams that contribute to the Amherst community in myriad ways. Professor Sims noted that, with reference to Professor Kingston’s concern, when considering the admission of candidates who are student-athletes, more weight could be given to whether they have demonstrated positive contributions to their community and/or demonstrate strong intellectual curiosity—and/or some roster sizes could be reduced. Professor Poe suggested that the envisioned faculty associate dean position could provide support for such an effort.

Professor Sitze said that it is important that there not be a divide between admission and the faculty and expressed the view that, as a general principle of governance, it is desirable for responsibility and power to be intertwined. Because the faculty is given the responsibility to do the work of teaching at the college, he continued, it is reasonable for the faculty also to have the power to decide who will be in their classrooms. It is therefore essential, Professor Sitze said, that the FCAFA not allow its authority to be weakened. Professor Call agreed and noted that the faculty has, in the past, made its views clear to the dean of admission and financial aid through the FCAFA, and the dean has responded by showing the committee what the consequences would be of various adjustments and trade-offs. It’s a matter of negotiation, in his view, and the FCAFA serves as the faculty’s communication vehicle to admission. The CCAFA has the ability to apply pressure and to express dissatisfaction if it doesn’t like what it is seeing, he noted. In a gradual, communicative way, both committees play significant roles. Dean Epstein reiterated the importance of these faculty governance structures, while noting that, in the realm of admission, there will continue to be ambiguity at some level when it comes to issues of authority. President Martin commented that it

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may be more accurate to say responsibility is shared rather than that it is ambiguous. She agrees that the faculty has a crucial role in shaping policy. Unlike Professor Sitze, she does not feel it is realistic or sustainable to have faculty involved in the work of admission at the granular level, however, she stressed the importance of communication and negotiation among all constituencies.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Ringer said that she would like to see the mechanism for “moving the needle” on questions of admission clarified, as well as the charge of the FCAFA. Professor Poe said that he would like to achieve greater clarity about the power of the committee. President Martin explained that the power is shared, but ultimately resides with the Board of Trustees. Neither the dean of admission and financial aid or the faculty unilaterally sets or makes major changes to admission policy, she noted. Professor Call suggested that the committee’s power is derived from the CCAFA’s vigilance in reviewing the results and the power of conversation in the FCAFA, which can produce change, gradually, over time. The shared governance model is meant to be consultative, and the faculty has extraordinary influence. Professor Ringer said that she would like it to be made clear that the FCAFA has the authority to make recommendations and to have a real voice. She also believes that it is important to specify what the CCAFA is voting on when it votes, and what would happen if the committee voted “no.” If the CCAFA’s role is simply informational, then it should not vote, in her view. In response, Professor Hall commented that, at the time the CCAFA was established (in the fall of 1999), it was unclear whether or not its vote would be binding. He noted, however, that a vote of “no” would almost certainly be construed as a vote of *no confidence* in the admission office; things should never reach this point, in his view. If the CCAFA feels it cannot vote to accept a class, then something has gone greatly awry, and there would need to be a much deeper conversation between the faculty, the FCAFA, and the Office of Admission.

The president noted that the work of assembling a class cannot be done much earlier than it is now and reiterated that the role of the CCAFA is to monitor admission trends and to recommend adjustments, if the priorities are not being followed. Professor Ringer commented that, under the present system, with its time pressure, the trade-offs being made cannot be recognized until it is too late to have an impact, since decisions have basically already been made by the time the CCAFA votes. Professor Engelhardt suggested that the FCAFA have a formalized meeting each March or April, when there is no pressure to make decisions, in which it shares its views with the dean of admission and financial aid. Professor Poe praised this idea, noting that, in his experience, when the FCAFA has made its views known to admission, its advice has not always been taken. Having a formalized process would allow for clearer opportunities for evaluation. Professor Sims recommended that, to support the work of the FCAFA, it would be beneficial if the same set of comparative data were provided to the committee on an annual basis. Other materials that could inform the committee’s deliberation, should also be provided regularly, it was suggested. In addition, if there are important recommendations for change, it might be helpful for the committee to have a meeting with the president to report on its views, Professor Sims noted. The Committee of Six agreed that these and other changes should be considered, with the goal of strengthening the FCAFA.

President Martin said that the conversation has shown that the administration and the committee see the challenges facing the college in much the same way. She feels that the best approach to effecting change is to work together, taking shared responsibility and having shared authority, recognizing that the board would need to be informed about significant changes in policies and practices. On behalf of the committee, the dean thanked the current and former members of the FCAFA for meeting with the committee and the FCAFA members left the meeting at 5:27 P.M.

The members next reviewed the theses and transcripts of members of the class of 2018E who have been recommended by their departments for a summa cum laude degree and having an overall grade

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point average in the top 25 percent of last year's graduating class. The committee also reviewed the theses of two students who had received summa cum laude recommendations from their departments and whose overall grade point average was likely to land below the top 25 percent but within the top 40 percent of last year's class, since these students would qualify for a magna cum laude degree. The members voted unanimously to forward these recommendations to the faculty (if the students meet the GPA requirement for the level of honors being recommended) and offered high praise for the quality of the work done by this accomplished group of students. The committee then turned to personnel matters.

The meeting adjourned at 5:50 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

Amended March 2, 2018

The twentieth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2017–2018 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:15 P.M. on Monday, February 5, 2018. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Call, Engelhardt, Heim, Jaswal, Moss, Sitze, Dean Epstein, and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with Dean Epstein informing the committee that the Faculty Lecture Committee has selected Hannah Holleman, assistant professor of sociology, as the 2017–2018 Lazerowitz Lecturer. She will give her lecture, titled “Can We Survive Climate Change?: Lessons from the Global Dust Bowl of the 1930s,” on April 12. A member of the Amherst faculty below the rank of full professor is selected annually for this appointment, the dean explained.

Under “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Sitze asked if Dean Epstein has obtained information about the origin of the Benefits Committee, its charge, and its relationship to the Committee on Priorities and Resources (CPR) and the Board of Trustees. The dean said that she would invite Associate Dean Cheney and Kevin Weinman, chief financial and administrative officer, who are both members of the Benefits Committee, to the next Committee of Six meeting to discuss this topic.

Turning to the committee’s meeting of the previous week with the current members of the Faculty Committee on Financial Aid (FCAFA) and some past chairs of the committee, Professor Moss asked if the president and dean might share their reflections on last week’s meeting. Dean Epstein commented that the conversation had suggested to her that the FCAFA should be convening with greater regularity, having substantive conversations about admission, and monitoring admission trends; the impact of the committee appears to have diminished somewhat in recent years, she noted. The dean said that she will work to ensure that the FCAFA, as has been the case historically, is a mechanism by which the faculty has an impact on the implementation of admission priorities. Engaging in a continuing dialogue with the Office of Admission through the FCAFA, which makes the faculty’s views known, is essential and is a way of effecting change over time, Dean Epstein said. Professor Call agreed and commented on what he sees as a historical cycle—a period in which there is a strong FCAFA that carries out its role and has significant impact; followed by a period in which faculty voice is well-matched to admission policy and thus there is greater faculty contentment with it; followed by a period of slippage during which the committee seems to have less impact; followed by a period of anxiety and crisis and a recognition of this slippage; followed by more communication and oversight and the reemergence of a more robust FCAFA. The committee discussed making continuity and institutional memory a priority in recommending faculty to serve on this committee.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Sitze noted that the members of the FCAFA had told the Committee of Six that, when they have raised concerns about admission practices recently, they have felt that the admission office has not listened. In this context, it is useful, in his view, to return to the general questions that the members of the FCAFA raised about authority over admission at the college. Amherst’s by-laws, he noted, are clear that the board of trustees has delegated authority for admission standards to the faculty, which can exercise this authority unless it is revoked. It is difficult for the FCAFA to negotiate with the admission office if the committee does not feel that there is clarity about the faculty’s powers, in his view. The dean said that ensuring greater consultation and communication is essential. Professor Sitze agreed, while reiterating that the FCAFA has voiced its concerns and has felt that its views have not been considered. Professor Moss said that the current members of the FCAFA, as well as the past chairs who attended the meeting, emphasized structural challenges that should be addressed. Providing the FCAFA with more clarity about its role in the admission process would be very helpful, in her view. When interviewing candidates for the position of dean of admission and financial aid, the importance of this position’s relationship with the faculty should be stressed, she recommended. The dean said that this critical

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aspect of the job is being shared with candidates as part of the ongoing search. Ensuring that the FCAFA is working closely and effectively with the new dean of admission and financial aid will also be important, she noted.

Professor Call noted the important role of the College Committee on Admission and Financial Aid (CCAFA), as well, and he suggested that greater emphasis be placed on reflection and feedback as that body carries out its work. The dean agreed and commented that, while the CCAFA has been meeting four times a year, it is her hope that, going forward, two additional meetings will enable the CCAFA to offer its reflections on the recently completed admission cycle and to suggest tweaks and share expectations for the coming cycle. Professor Sitze agreed that doing so would be wise. He suggested that, if the FCAFA has concerns as it carries out its role, the members should feel free to talk with the trustees in a consultative way. Admission is a complicated issue, and it is essential to build trust, in his view. President Martin said that she would have no objection to the FCAFA speaking to the board and conveying any concerns that its members may have. She explained that the dean of admission and financial aid reports to the president, and that the trustees consult with the president about matters relating to admission. Thus the board would look to the president to decide about whether a meeting with the FCAFA should take place. Professor Jaswal said that she had been struck by Professor Hall's comment that the FCAFA is one of the three most important faculty committees. She wondered if the FCAFA should meet regularly with the board during Instruction Weekend, as the Committee of Six and Committee on Educational Policy do. The president and dean said that, perhaps after a new dean of admission and financial aid has made the transition to the college, scheduling such meetings could be a possibility.

Professor Moss said that she is sympathetic to the frustrations the current members of the FCAFA and the past chairs had shared, and she feels that some of the solutions that the Ad Hoc Faculty Committee on Athletics may propose would be worth contemplating. For example, she finds the idea of appointing a faculty liaison to the Office of Admission to be intriguing. Noting that the college has an exceptional group of coaches, Professor Call suggested that it would be beneficial for the faculty to communicate its goals in the realm of admission to the coaches, whom he feels would then work to meet these aspirations. President Martin agreed that it would be informative for the FCAFA to share the faculty's goals with the coaches. Professor Moss concurred, and she said that she was also pleased by Professor Poe's suggestion that mechanisms be found to evaluate candidates for admission in ways that are more holistic, bridging the silos that can be a feature of the current approach. President Martin said that the significant divisions that exist among students present a central challenge for the college; this is an issue that Amherst is trying to address on myriad fronts—including through admission and student life policies. Students are also finding their own ways of addressing this issue.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Jaswal commented that shared intellectual experiences among students go a long way to bridging difference. At the moment, first-year seminars and required courses in the sciences appear to be among the few venues in which this "mixing" of students from different backgrounds is taking place. President Martin agreed that providing students with additional shared and substantive intellectual experiences is critical. In the same vein, Professor Heim asked the dean if the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee plans to recommend a second or third required course for all students. The dean said that the committee is considering a proposal to require a second course in the sophomore year. It is felt by many on the committee that such a course could serve as an anchor of sorts for students who can feel "at sea" during this stage of their academic career.

The committee next reviewed drafts of the letters that the dean sends annually to candidates and chairs regarding tenure procedures and suggested some minor revisions to these documents. It was decided that, once the committee completes its review of the language regarding tenure criteria—

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with an eye toward making expectations clearer—and the faculty agrees on new language for the *Faculty Handbook*, that new language should be incorporated into the dean's letters. It was noted that this process will not be complete in time to revise this year's letters, which will be sent to candidates and chairs in February. Continuing the conversation, the members agreed that, in the interest of equity and consistency, all departments, when soliciting external reviewers for tenure cases, should be urged to use the letter template that the Committee of Six has approved for this purpose. In this way, all reviewers will be asked to comment on the same factors. At the moment, the letter template is provided to departments, but there is no encouragement to use it.

The committee turned to the topic of the results of the staff survey, and the finding that many staff members feel that the faculty does not value their work. The members expressed the view that it is difficult to address this concern without having more granular data about the issues that staff raised. President Martin said that it may not be possible to provide more specific information, as the college has made a commitment to ensuring the anonymity of those who responded to the survey. All responses were filtered through the consultant that developed and administered the survey, and the president said that she and the rest of the administration do not have access to raw data, nor should they. The dean commented that the consultant has communicated that the concerns that have been raised are consistent across all divisions. Professor Engelhardt offered the view that, to the extent it is possible, without breaching confidentiality, it would be helpful to disaggregate the responses in order to gain a more textured understanding of staff experiences in different divisions and roles. In his view, this could more effectively raise awareness among the faculty as to how recognizing and affirming the essential contributions of staff is vital to their teaching and research. President Martin said if it is possible to provide more textured information, she would be happy to do so and suggested that she ask the consultants to provide examples from written comments, ensuring their anonymity.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Call wondered if there is a sense that part of the concern the staff is expressing about the issue of value may be related to compensation. The president said that some staff have at times objected to differences in salary increases for faculty and staff, but other issues, most prominently the ways in which faculty interact with staff, seem more pronounced in responses to this question. The responses of many staff reveal the following views: that Amherst has a faculty-centric culture, that the culture overall is harsh and critical, that there should be more opportunities for career development, and that the staff's accomplishments are often not recognized and/or acknowledged. Professor Heim suggested that it would be helpful to gather more concrete information, which could help raise awareness and effect change. For example, what forms of negative behavior by faculty are viewed as the top three that staff in each division at the college would like to see change? Some members of the committee noted that some staff have shared with them that some faculty may not respond to emails from staff, may not meet deadlines (resulting in staff members having a compressed schedule in which to complete their work), may yell at staff, may embarrass staff in front of students, and may not know the names of staff with whom faculty interact regularly. There should be a safe and direct way for staff to share experiences of this kind, the members agreed. It was suggested that, if there is a way to develop an inventory of practices such as those just mentioned, it would be very helpful.

Continuing the conversation, the members discussed how faculty members might be held accountable when they interact with staff in ways that are clearly unacceptable. Professor Heim wondered what other institutions do in this regard. Professor Moss suggested that it might be helpful to invite the Employee Council, or other staff members, be invited to meet with the Committee of Six should they wish to do so. It is important that staff members know that the Committee of Six is eager to understand staff concerns and to consider how the faculty can best help to address them.

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Professor Call commented that such a conversation could be informative. It would be important to frame the issues at hand broadly and to convey that the faculty is taking the staff's concerns very seriously. President Martin noted that there is no formal entry to the governance system at Amherst for staff. She expressed the view that the staff has already shared its concerns through the survey and should not be responsible for communicating them again in this context. It was agreed that it is up to the faculty to hold itself accountable and to respond to the feedback that the staff has provided. President Martin will ask the consultants for concrete examples. For the protection of everyone involved when issues of problematic behavior by members of the college community are raised, Professor Sitze added, it is imperative to ensure due process and to have grievance procedures that are robust and fair. The members then turned to a personnel matter

The meeting adjourned at 5:50 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

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The twenty-first meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2017–2018 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:15 P.M. on Monday, February 26, 2018. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Call, Engelhardt, Heim, Jaswal, Moss, Sitze, Dean Epstein, and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with Professor Moss asking President Martin about the status of the Presidential Task Force on Accessibility and Inclusion. A member of the task force, Professor Moss said that she was disappointed and saddened to learn that some members and the co-chairs have resigned. While she has reached out to the co-chairs and several other members of the administration, she has been unable to learn anything more about the status of the committee. Others who remain on the committee have also been unable to gain clarity. Continuing, she stated that there needs to be a substantive and urgent conversation about how the college will move forward to address the problems regarding issues of disability and accessibility that led to the creation of the task force in the first place. It is her hope that this body might think collectively about how the college can continue the mission of the task force, even absent its existence. She also observed that returning to the status quo seems like a very disappointing possibility. She asked the president if the task force still exists, and if she would notify the remaining members about the current status of the task force and any plans to continue its work. The president said that, in light of serious concerns that have been raised and brought to her attention, she and the dean are considering next steps, including the possibility of dissolving the task force as it is currently constructed. President Martin said that she will communicate with the members of the task force. Professor Moss expressed the view that it would be useful to examine the structural challenges that the task force has faced in addition to the interpersonal dynamics of the individual body. In her estimation, all members of the task force—students, faculty, administrators, and staff—had approached their work with good faith and good intentions. Many put in a considerable time commitment. All members of the task force, she believes, shared the common goal of improving accessibility and inclusion at Amherst. She hopes that the administration, as it thinks about next steps, might consider the structural challenges that led to the interpersonal difficulties that often manifested themselves during meetings. For example, she wonders if having a single body charged with addressing and investigating issues of access and inclusion relevant to faculty, staff, students, and visitors to campus might have been an insurmountable challenge. These various contingencies have related but substantively different relationships to the institution. In her observation, she found that it was often difficult to consider all these constituencies in a common conversation. She emphasized that she remains appreciative of the hard work from all individuals on the task force and very much hopes that some of the results from these efforts will be used to inform future conversations about improving accessibility and inclusion at the college. President Martin said that she would welcome a conversation about the structure of the task force, but that she wants to think about the current situation further before engaging in such a dialogue. The president said, that, through the current structure, or through an alternative one, the work that the task force was charged with carrying out must continue.

Continuing with “questions,” Professor Sitze informed the president and the dean that, with the goal of moving several important issues forward that have been lingering on the agenda because of the volume of matters currently before the committee, the members would like to propose that two subcommittees be formed. Each committee could examine an issue, develop proposals, and then bring ideas to the full committee for consideration—and ultimately to the faculty, he suggested. The president and dean expressed support for this approach and thanked the committee for proposing it. All agreed that one subcommittee will focus on developing language to clarify and codify the standards for promotion to full professor, as well as on the related topic of ways to support faculty members’ scholarly and/or artistic growth and achievement during their time as associate professors. An examination of the burdens that the faculty at this rank assume should be part of this conversation, the

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members decided. Professor Moss asked that the subcommittee examine the distribution of associate professors' service load with an eye toward ensuring equity. Professor Call asked that information about the distribution of the faculty by rank, and how it has changed in recent years, be offered to inform the conversation about the service loads associate professors assume. The committee agreed that, at present, the standards for promotion are opaque and that there is little clarity surrounding the level of achievement and progress required for a positive decision. The members decided that it would be helpful, for the sake of candidates, departments, the Committee of Six, and the administration, to create greater transparency, if the standards could be made clearer. At least one member suggested that interpretations of the standards for promotion to full professor have been too low. The members, the president, and the dean agreed that the decision about promotion to full professor should be based on a meaningful evaluation of a faculty member's progress and contributions in the area of teaching, scholarship, and service to the college since the time of tenure and should not be pro forma. (Promotion is discussed [in the Faculty Handbook, III., G.](#)) The members decided that a second subcommittee will focus on developing language to clarify the language about the criteria for tenure.

Turning to another topic under "questions," Professor Engelhardt offered praise for the college's statement on "Admission Policy and Peaceful Protest," which had just been posted on social media, including the [web site of the admission and financial aid office](#), in the aftermath of the recent school shooting in Parkland, Florida. He said that he is heartened by the language of the statement and by the policy. The statement reads as follows:

A number of applicants to Amherst have expressed concerns about their admission being jeopardized by participating in protest regarding gun violence. First Amendment rights are among the most prized of Amherst's values and the college encourages all students to engage in civil and meaningful discourse on issues of critical importance. For that reason, the Office of Admission will, as always, consider the unique circumstances of any reported disciplinary action related to civic engagement. Peaceful protest has never been reason for a student to be denied admission or to have an offer of admission rescinded.

Professor Sitze next asked the president if she would offer a report about her experience attending "[Higher Ed in an Era of Heightened Skepticism](#)," part of a "leadership series" sponsored by *Inside Higher Ed* and Gallup, on February 15, 2018, in Washington. President Martin said that the conversations were thought-provoking. There was an interesting discussion about whether the current animus being exhibited toward higher education is largely a problem of perception that should be addressed as such, instead of focusing more attention on the need for higher education to change its practices in significant ways. Some participants argued that concerns about the rising costs of higher education, rather than anxieties about the prevalence of liberal bias on college and university campuses, are driving much of the criticism of higher education—and the punitive actions that are being taken, for example the new tax on educational institutions' net investment income. (Under the recently passed tax reform package, the tax will apply to institutions, Amherst among them, with at least five hundred students and net assets of \$500,000 per student.) President Martin said that some attendees expressed the view that there is growing resentment that colleges, most specifically elite colleges, are failing to educate low-income students. There now seems to be some recognition emerging among some government leaders, however, that there was a failure to work out the details of the tax. The result is that some institutions—such as Amherst—that are "doing the right thing" by admitting high numbers of low-income students and providing the resources necessary for them to enroll at the college, are being penalized and should be exempted from the tax. The view was also expressed that leaders within higher education created alienation by refusing to engage in a

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discussion with Congress about the issues at hand, and did not seem to be open to changing policies, President Martin noted. The event reinforced her view that it is important to have discussions with government officials and others about these issues, and she informed the committee that she plans to arrange meetings to do so. In conclusion, she noted that Gallop offered some interesting data that were drawn from the polling organization's daily survey of students at a range of institutions. These data suggest that students' views about their experiences at college are more positive if they feel that at least one faculty member cares about them. Professor Sitze thanked President Martin for offering this summary.

At 3:47 P.M., Associate Dean Cheney and Kevin Weinman, chief financial and administrative officer, joined the meeting to present information about the origins and role of the college's Benefits Plans Committee, which is known informally as the benefits committee. The Committee of Six's questions about the role of the benefits committee and its functions in relationship to the Board of Trustees prompted this conversation. The Committee of Six was provided with [the charter of the Benefits Plans Committee](#) in advance of the meeting.

Mr. Weinman began the discussion by noting that Amherst's board of trustees constituted the benefits committee in 2010, in part to meet a legal obligation to be in compliance with the regulations of the Department of Labor. Most of Amherst's peers had established committees of this kind earlier, he explained. The benefits committee is a "working committee" that reports to the trustees. Mr. Weinman explained that the committee is the plan administrator for the college's benefit plans (medical, dental, long-term and life insurance; retirement savings and health; grant-in-aid, etc.) and is the fiduciary for Amherst's pension and defined contribution retirement plans. He noted that the treasurer (now called the chief financial and administrative officer), general counsel, (now called the chief policy officer and general counsel), director of human resources (now called the chief human resources officer), and benefits coordinator (now called the director of compensation benefits and human resources information systems) comprised the original membership of the committee. Two years ago, an associate dean of the faculty and the chief of campus operations joined the committee.

Continuing, Mr. Weinman explained that the benefits committee is tasked with facilitating the annual operational work needed to manage Amherst's benefit plans and other benefits offerings. For example, in regard to medical insurance, the committee reviews claims activity and participates, with the help of an independent third-party adviser, in negotiations with medical insurance providers to determine pricing for the upcoming year. The committee considers plan offerings (current and alternatives) to meet the needs of the insured members of the Amherst community and to manage costs. Professor Call asked who is primarily responsible for negotiations with medical insurance providers. Mr. Weinman said that Christopher Casey, the college's director of compensation benefits and human resources information systems, plays a leading role in these efforts. A subcommittee of the benefits committee focuses on retirement plans, he said. With the help of the college's chief investment officer and an independent third-party advisor, the subcommittee evaluates investment options within the defined contribution plan—its performance and the range of offerings, and alternative investment products. The full benefits committee meets about every six weeks or so during the academic year, Mr. Weinman said. He emphasized that the benefits committee does not have budgetary authority and noted that the committee enjoys a good working relationship with the Committee on Priorities and Resources (CPR). The benefits committee also collaborates and interacts with the Employee Council and with the senior staff (largely as part of the annual budget process). The benefits committee serves to supplement and support the work of the Office of Human Resources, Mr. Weinman said.

In regard to "bigger picture" work, Mr. Weinman noted that the benefits committee evaluates trends in the medical and retirement marketplace and at peer schools and may recommend changes, based on its findings. He pointed out as an example the trend toward "retirement date" investment

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vehicles. After evaluating such vehicles, the college began to offer them, with the approval of the board, and these funds now constitute the majority (85 percent) of employee/faculty-directed investments at Amherst. In fiscal year 2016, the benefits committee commissioned a third-party review of benefit offerings at peer schools at the request of the CPR. Mr. Weinman informed the members. The study revealed that most of Amherst's benefits were equal to or exceeded those of the college's peers, but that the grant-in-aid benefit was less robust than similar programs at other institutions. This report was shared with the CPR and resulted in some recommendations, including a proposal from the CPR to increase the amount of grant-in-aid benefit above the current \$10,000 level. This proposal is still under consideration by the benefits committee and would need a budgetary allocation and board approval to take effect. A few years ago, the CPR issued a similar request to the benefits committee to increase the grant-in-aid benefit, which resulted in a change from \$8,000 to \$10,000 per year. Broadly speaking, Mr. Weinman said, the benefits committee views itself as responsible for routine and recurring administrative decisions around existing benefits offerings and plans (e.g., annual negotiations and renewals and periodic reviews of 403(b) investment options), in keeping with its designation as plan administrator and named fiduciary.

Continuing, Mr. Weinman noted that the work of the benefits committee is undertaken with the understanding that decisions that result in new costs to the college must go through Amherst's regular governance processes (review by the CPR, consideration as part of the internal operating budget process, review and approval by the board of trustees). Even proposals to fund increases in costs for a current suite of benefit offerings, which may be needed to keep pace with inflation, must go through the regular review process, he explained. Mr. Weinman stressed that the benefits committee does not presume to hold authority for structural changes to benefits plans or offerings, and the committee reaches out to governance bodies and the community, as needed, to solicit input and discuss ideas before making recommendations. As noted earlier, the committee also responds to requests from other college governance bodies. For example, the Employee Council, which often interacts with the benefits committee about benefits and compensation, expressed concern several years ago about retirement support for employees at lower income levels. The council then worked with the CPR to develop a proposal to address the situation; the benefits committee collaborated on a revised proposal; and, following a great deal of analysis of different options and conversation among these bodies over an eighteen-month period, the proposal was approved by the board. All such structural changes require the approval of the trustees, Mr. Weinman noted.

In regard to the CPR, Mr. Weinman commented that he believes that there is a high level of transparency in the benefits committee's work with this body. Information is shared about proposed changes to benefits plans and related costs that are seen as significant, and about presentations that are given to the board about these matters. Professor Sitze asked whether the recent change that the benefits committee had recommended regarding the health insurance plan for some college retirees had been shared with the CPR before the change went into effect. Mr. Weinman said that the benefits committee had viewed this change as modest—exchanging one plan for another that would be more cost-effective for many retirees—and had not consulted with the CPR for this reason. Associate Dean Cheney noted that the benefits committee was also under considerable time pressure to make a decision. In addition, the benefits committee had not been aware of the promise that President Marx had made in 2003 that this plan would not change. There may have been an error in the interpretation of what constitutes a major change, Mr. Weinman acknowledged, and the benefits committee will err on the side of sharing information with the CPR in the future. Associate Dean Cheney noted that, after some retirees raised concern, the college switched back to the original health insurance plan. Some retirees and their spouses would have gained benefits and reduced their costs under the new plan, he said. Mr. Weinman commented that that the prescription drug coverage offered through the

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2003 plan may cease to exist in the years to come, at which point the college will need to reexamine the plan.

The Committee of Six asked for more information about the benefits committee's criteria for bringing a proposed change in benefits to the CPR for discussion. Professor Sitze asked if a proposal to change the formula for health insurance costs that would be assumed by employees and by the college, for example, a shift from a 70 percent/30 percent formula to a 60 percent/40 percent one, would be brought to the CPR. Mr. Weinman said that such a proposal would indeed be shared with the CPR. Professor Call recalled that a shift from one dental insurance provider, Delta Dental, to another, Blue Cross, was shared with the CPR at the proposal stage, even though the costs and benefits for employees would be essentially unchanged. It was agreed that, perhaps, if a change is a "win" for everyone, with "no losers," it might not be necessary for the benefits committee to consult with the CPR.

Continuing with topic of regular interaction with other college governance bodies, Mr. Weinman informed the Committee of Six that the benefits committee also reports on an annual basis to the board's Committee on Human Resources and has additional conversations with the trustees, as needed. In addition, in recent years, an annual gathering of the full benefits committee has taken place at a CPR meeting, in order to discuss general trends and peer competitive data. Professor Call asked if the role of the benefits committee is unique at the college, as it plays an administrative role and reports to the board. The president offered the relatively new Enterprise Risk Management Committee as an example of a committee with a similar structure. The board mandated the creation of this committee, she noted, and Amherst began a comprehensive enterprise risk management assessment in 2016. An effective assessment of this kind is recognized as essential to institutional planning for financial and other contingencies and the prudent allocation of resources to manage risks, President Martin said. Such an assessment involves multiple steps. It began at the college with the identification of risks across areas, and the evaluation of the severity and probability of each risk, as well as of mitigating measures already in effect. This effort was conducted by the members of the senior staff, along with an associate dean of the faculty and the associate general counsel, and was under the direction of the Five College risk manager. The board is informed of the progress of this effort through the administration's communications with the board's own Ad Hoc Committee on Enterprise Risk, the president explained. Professor Sitze expressed interest in this committee, and asked that the results of its inquiries be shared with the Committee of Six.

Professor Engelhardt next commented that, in reviewing the charter of the benefits committee, he had noted the provision that "an individual serving on the Committee who is a participant in any plan for which the committee has responsibility will not vote or act on any matter relating solely to himself or herself." This provision seems analogous to the often-cited rule that the faculty cannot vote on its own benefits. Given the wording of this provision, he wonders how the members of the benefits committee, as employees of the college who receive benefits, can vote on any benefit, and he wonders if this language might be clarified. Mr. Weinman noted the term *solely*, which he interprets as meaning a benefit change from which a member might profit personally. If members have a child in college, for example, those members would presumably recuse themselves from a vote that would raise the grant-in-aid amount, he imagines, because of personal self-interest.

The conversation concluded with Professor Sitze recommending that greater emphasis be placed on making the activities of the benefits committee more transparent to the college community. Posting more information, such as the committee's membership, its appointment process, a description of its powers and its relation to the CPR, and its reports, on the [committee and projects web page](#) would be very helpful, in his view, and would go a long way in building greater trust with those affected by its decisions. Taking this approach seems particularly useful, he noted, in advance of the volatility in the health insurance marketplace that seems likely to occur in the coming years. In addition, he wondered

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whether it would be useful to expand the membership of the benefits committee to include additional faculty and staff, even as non-voting members. Dean Epstein responded that, given that the CPR works closely with the benefits committee, taking this step seems as though it would simply add an additional layer. Professor Jaswal asked if the benefits committee should, perhaps, meet more regularly with the Employee Council. Dean Epstein noted that there is staff representation on the CPR. On behalf of the committee, the dean then thanked Associate Dean Cheney and Mr. Weinman, and they left the meeting at 4:25 P.M. The remainder of the meeting was devoted to personnel matters.

The meeting adjourned at 5:50 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

Amended March 14, 2018

The twenty-second meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2017–2018 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:15 P.M. on Monday, March 5, 2018. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Call, Engelhardt, Heim, Jaswal, Moss, Sitze, Dean Epstein, and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with “Questions from Committee Members.” On behalf of a colleague, Professor Jaswal asked for clarification about the college’s often-stated goal to address some of the burdens of STEM faculty who conduct experimental research by providing a lab technician, “postdoc,” or “post-bac” for every two laboratory scientists at the college. In particular, she asked whether existing technical support staff are included in the overall count of expected positions of this kind. She explained that current staff play important roles within science departments, but that their work may differ from the work of those who would assume the envisioned positions.

Dean Epstein responded that the hiring of such individuals is an aspiration that has as its goal relieving STEM faculty of some burdens. Doing so would allow faculty to have more time to focus on teaching and research, the dean said. Meeting this goal will be dependent on the success of fundraising efforts, the dean commented. Dean Epstein noted that, while she was not involved in developing this proposal, as she was not the dean at the time it had been conceived, she thinks that the responsibilities of these staff members would be up to the faculty member to whom they would be assigned. Dean Epstein imagines that it would be possible that these staff could be tasked with supporting the faculty member’s research in a number of different ways—e.g., maintaining scientific instruments, helping to set up and oversee experiments, and/or allowing for the inclusion and supervision of a greater number of students in the faculty member’s labs (potentially expanding research opportunities for students). Professor Call, who developed the proposal while he was the dean, noted that some current technical staff in STEM departments are being supported by grants, at present. Professor Sitze asked if lab support was included in the fundraising proposals that would bring seventeen new faculty FTEs to the college. President Martin noted that not all of these proposed FTEs will be in STEM fields, as the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) has already recommended the allocation of some additional FTEs to these departments. In addition, some new STEM FTEs will be in fields (e.g., computer science and mathematics) that do not require laboratory support, she commented. The dean and the president had concurred with the CEP’s recommendations, and, as a result of new hiring, some science departments now have a larger number of FTEs than in the past. The dean said that available resources will determine how many additional staff can be provided to laboratory faculty. Professor Sitze asked how the dean will decide which faculty members will be provided with this additional form of support. Dean Epstein said that one approach will be to offer this resource to tenure-track faculty first. Professor Sitze inquired about whether the new science center has been designed to house the additional FTEs in STEM fields that are envisioned. President Martin said that there is enough space. If the science center reaches capacity in the future, the building has been designed so that a wing can be added, though it is not envisioned that this step will take place any time soon.

Turning to another topic, Professor Jaswal raised the question of the ways in which Consortium for Faculty Diversity (CFD) fellows are being supported. She suggested that, based on what she knows about the experiences of those in these positions within some Five-College institutions, including at Amherst, it would be helpful to make efforts to build a greater sense of community among the fellows. She proposed ideas such as a listserv for the fellows, as well as organizing special events for them across the Five Colleges. The dean said that it is her understanding that efforts of this kind are under way through Amherst’s Office of Diversity and Inclusion and in collaboration with Mount Holyoke, but she said that she would look into the matter. Professor Jaswal also noted that [the Consortium for Faculty Diversity](#) is doing important work to expand the “pipeline” of students from diverse backgrounds who wish to pursue careers in academia, in

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particular at liberal arts colleges. She suggested that it would be beneficial for colleagues from Amherst to attend the CFD's annual meeting. There would be opportunities to meet promising scholars at the early stages of their academic careers, which could aid the college's efforts to build more diverse applicant pools for faculty positions. The dean said that she would check in with Norm Jones, chief diversity and inclusion officer, to learn if he or others in his office attended last year's conference, and to learn more about his efforts to support CFD postdoctoral fellows. Professor Jaswal asked about the process for bringing CFD fellows to campus. Dean Epstein said that the dean's office reviews the dossiers of candidates in the CFD data base and then reaches out to departments to see if there is an interest in hosting and mentoring a fellow. There are currently six CFD fellows on campus, the dean noted.

Professor Call requested [that a letter that the members had received from the faculty members of the Presidential Task Force on Accessibility and Inclusion](#) be appended to these minutes, along with an [attached statement of principles](#) that the colleagues had included. Professor Call asked the president and the dean about how they envision moving forward with the work of the task force, now that this body has been dissolved. Dean Epstein responded that, while there were challenges with the task force, as it was constituted, the college is committed to the work of accessibility and inclusion. Acknowledging the complexities and breadth of the issues that must be addressed, President Martin said that she is considering whether to bring to bear additional expertise by engaging a consultant. If a new group is constituted, its structure and charge must be carefully considered, the president noted. Professor Call expressed the view that the statement of principles forwarded by the faculty members of the task force is well done. President Martin said that she agrees, while noting that more discussion is needed to ensure that all the formulations are workable in practice.

President Martin informed the members that she and the dean had met with the remaining faculty, staff, and student members of the task force the previous week. Some had expressed the view that a tendency toward advocacy among some members had created barriers for conducting the investigatory work that needed to be done. Others found it difficult to understand the roles of the task force and the level at which it should be operating. In addition, the group had faced challenges balancing aspiration and restraint, with some members arguing that the college should adopt goals and make changes in the area of accessibility and inclusion that would mean going beyond what is required by law; others focused on ensuring that the college meets code and complies with law. President Martin commented that Amherst, like most institutions, is still working diligently to comply with the law. When developing higher aspirations and thinking about accessibility in broader and deeper terms, which the president supports, it is critical to set priorities, consider trade-offs, and recognize that funding is required, she said. Professor Call said that the college must determine where it needs to be and how quickly it can get there.

Reflecting on the struggles of the task force, Professor Moss expressed her view that the "mega-committee" structure might not be the best choice going forward. The existing charge asked the task force to conduct a "comprehensive review of Amherst College's policies and practice in the area of disability and inclusion." It also directed the task force to consider multiple areas of "campus life, both academic and co-curricular," including "admission, athletics, human resources, and the accessibility of facilities." To her mind, one single committee, meeting bi-monthly, did not have the capacity to execute such a capacious and important mission. It also became clear as work progressed that the concerns of students differed substantially from those of staff and faculty, as employees of the institution. The existing model had also asked task force members to gather data in an informal and ad-hoc way. In her opinion, task force members often lacked the knowledge and time necessary to conduct this work with the care and attention it deserved. It also became clear that individuals who worked for the institution might be reluctant to share information about their

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experiences regarding disability and inclusion with their employer. For these reasons, she hoped that future work would not task individual members with sensitive data collection. She would hope, for example, that those with training in institutional research might help the task force more systematically construct a set of inquiries, and that the college might provide greater resources to help give a newly constituted task force the data and information necessary to fulfill its charge. She further added that she appreciated the administrative commitment to creating a new mechanism for continuing this very important work and looks forward to learning about what will replace the now-defunct task force. To gain a sense of work that has already been done, President Martin said that she has asked the members of the senior staff to create an inventory of projects in their divisions that have contributed to enhancing accessibility and inclusion at the college, those which they aspire to undertake, and those that are planned or under way. She anticipates that this exercise will offer affirmation of the importance of and far-reaching nature of this work and of the resources that the college is dedicating to it.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Sitze proposed that a small ad hoc faculty committee be charged with examining the current state of accessibility and inclusion at the college, defining Amherst's overarching educational goals, and making recommendations via a report. The structure of a faculty group of this kind, much like the Ad Hoc Faculty Committee on Athletics, is versatile and would allow for open-ended inquiry, difficult conversations with students, and broad consultation with all relevant staff colleagues. It is appropriate that faculty lead this effort, in his view. There are issues of academic freedom that must be considered, and, increasingly, accommodations for students are a part of the academic experience that faculty need to understand and address as educators. More generally, he commented, faculty governance, to be viable, must be flexible enough to allow for the creation of new structures that, in turn, are capable of addressing the new complexities that seem to be emerging in higher education. Dean Epstein expressed hesitation about setting up an ad hoc committee for this work. President Martin agreed that questions surrounding governance are important and should be explored and discussed. In regard to this particular issue and others of its kind, she noted the importance of respecting the expertise of the staff and having members of the community in different positions think through important issues together. Dean Epstein agreed. In this vein, President Martin informed the members that she had recently become aware that, following up on work done as part of college-wide strategic planning effort, staff members in the Office of Student Affairs took the initiative to create what they have called a [Strategic Plan to Increase Belonging](#). The president said that she finds many of the ideas in the plan to be interesting and applauds this effort.

Discussion turned to a draft of an agenda for a March 20 faculty meeting. Before reviewing that agenda, the committee discussed dates for possible meetings for the remainder of the academic year and possible topics for discussion. Dean Epstein explained that it will not be possible to have a faculty meeting in April because of preparations for the launch of the comprehensive campaign and the campus visit of the accreditation team (April 15–18). It was agreed that May 1 should be held for a possible meeting, as well as the previously announced dates of May 15 and May 17 (the commencement meeting).

Professor Sitze expressed hope that time will be allotted to discuss the report of the Ad Hoc Faculty Committee on Athletics and the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee. The dean noted that plans are in place to bring a motion to the faculty in May to adopt half-credits for labs. The members then turned to the agenda for the March 20 meeting and briefly discussed the curriculum committee's proposal that the college institute minors. It was agreed that the proposal should be the subject of a committee-of-whole conversation on March 20. The members discussed possible implications of adopting the proposal. Professors Heim and Jaswal argued that instituting a limited number of minors could encourage curricular innovation. Other members expressed

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concerns about the possible negative effects of minors—on small humanities departments, in particular. Professor Engelhardt noted that having a conversation about minors will allow for the airing of ideas about innovation that might result in the faculty thinking about ways of accomplishing innovation beyond minors. Professor Sitze expressed hope that a discussion of the college-wide values of equity and breadth will be part of the conversation about minors, the proposal for which he does not support. In regard to the impact that minors might have on humanities departments, Professor Heim strongly suggested that humanities departments and other small departments not offer minors in their departments so as not to compete with their own majors. However, they could consider developing a small handful of cross-department, interdisciplinary minors (for example, the college could benefit from a minor in “ancient worlds”). Beyond this, she thinks that it is only advisable for very large departments to offer minors, if the faculty votes for the proposal. In this way, there could be some curricular innovation, without having a negative impact on departments. This option might, in a small way, help to break down the college’s culture of departmentalism, a salutary effect, in her view.

After considering the other items on the faculty meeting agenda, the members agreed that it would be informative to have a report from Jackie Alvarez about trends in Amherst students’ mental health. The dean agreed to invite Ms. Alvarez to speak at the meeting. The members decided to approve the final agenda via email.

The committee turned to its annual review of senior sabbatical fellowship proposals and voted to forward them to the Board of Trustees for approval. The members next reviewed drafts of the dean’s letters to department chairs and candidates concerning promotion to full professor that are sent to department chairs and candidates each spring. It was agreed that, in the letters to candidates for promotion, candidates should be urged to submit letters on their own behalf. The Committee of Six has found such letters to be very helpful. Following that conversation, the committee set deadlines by which its two subcommittees will report to the full committee. It was agreed that the subcommittee that is developing language to clarify and codify the standards for promotion to full professor, as well as exploring the related topic of ways to support faculty members’ scholarly and/or artistic growth and achievement during their time as associate professors, will report back on March 26. The subcommittee that is focusing on the language about tenure criteria will report back on April 2.

Returning briefly to the topic of the findings of the staff survey, Professor Moss noted, on behalf of a colleague, that few staff have photos included on their online profiles. Having access to such photos could help address the finding that some faculty members do not know the names of staff members, including, sometimes, those who work in their buildings. Associate Dean Tobin noted that the photo of the sender of an email appears at the top of the recipient’s email when using a PC. Most staff members have their photos included in the online directory, she informed the members.

Continuing with the discussion of the survey results in the brief time remaining, the president said that she had recently asked the members of the senior staff to characterize problematic behavior of faculty that staff in their divisions have reported or described to them or they have witnessed. Some of the patterns of behavior were shared with the committee earlier. They include the following: not responding to emails from staff, not meeting deadlines, not knowing the names of staff members who work in the same building, not respecting the expertise of staff (e.g., questioning staff about whether a reimbursement is appropriate or tax rules are being applied appropriately), telling staff to do administrative work, asking staff to hang up the faculty member’s coat, insisting that their students receive exceptions, questioning staff members’ abilities in front of students, yelling at staff members, demanding to speak with a staff member immediately, asking to speak with supervisors when told “no” by a staff member when granting a request is not possible under college rules, ADCs invoking faculty members’ names to get something done, not expressing gratitude when a staff member attends a faculty member or department’s events, interrupting staff while they are working with demands for

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immediate responses or work, refusing to work with female staff, and berating staff when not getting what the faculty member wants. The president said that staff at ModernThink is compiling some themes from the survey responses, being careful not to expose individuals. The committee discussed ways of trying to address this and other forms of negative behavior. The dean said that she plans to discuss this topic, with an emphasis on departmental culture, with chairs at one of her meetings. Professor Moss suggested that orientation for new faculty could address the issue of respect for all members of the community. Professor Engelhardt proposed having someone with expertise in mindfulness speak with faculty about these interactions and their impact. Professor Moss suggested that the ombudsperson, Michael Stephens, could be very helpful in addressing these issues. President Martin agreed, praising Mr. Stephens's work and noting his expertise. Professor Sitze expressed the view that the norm at the college should be that respect and trust are preconditions for disagreement and criticism. The committee agreed to return to this topic after receiving the information provided by ModernThink. The remainder of the meeting was devoted to personnel matters.

The meeting adjourned at 5:50 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

Amended April 4, 2018

The twenty-third meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2017–2018 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:15 P.M. on Monday, March 19, 2018. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Call, Engelhardt, Heim, Jaswal, Moss, Sitze, Dean Epstein, and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with President Martin noting, with great sadness, the death of Jeffrey B. Ferguson, Karen and Brian Conway ’80, P’18 Presidential Teaching Professor of Black Studies, who passed away on March 11, 2018. The members mourned the loss of Professor Ferguson, an accomplished scholar, teacher, and citizen of the college. President Martin informed the committee of plans for a memorial service on campus, likely on May 6, as well as for a symposium in the fall that is being organized in Professor Ferguson’s honor. In addition, a fund is being created in his name to support excellence in teaching at Amherst, and President Martin said that she will inform the community about how to make gifts to the fund as soon as it is established. Professor Moss expressed appreciation to President Martin for [the letter that the president had sent to community on March 12](#), sharing her thoughts and memories of Professor Ferguson and conveying so well the qualities that defined him as a person and as a scholar-teacher.

Turning to another tragic loss, President Martin informed the members of plans to support members of the community who are struggling over the death of Andrew Dorogi, a member of the senior class who died in Mexico on March 16. The members expressed great sadness over Andrew’s death. President Martin said that a gathering is being organized for faculty, students, and staff to come together to share their thoughts and feelings about Andrew.

The dean next asked the committee for permission to extend an invitation to Natasha Kim ’18, a member of the curriculum committee, to attend the faculty meeting on March 20, when the proposal to institute minors will be discussed. The members agreed that an invitation should be extended.

Dean Epstein next provided information to the members about [the distribution of tenure-line FTEs by department](#). She informed the committee that the data would also be shared with the full faculty as an attachment to the committee’s minutes. Professor Sitze asked if the dean would provide equivalent data about the growth of administrative FTEs over the past decade. Dean Epstein responded that she would work with administrative colleagues to gather this information, noting that it might take some time to assemble the data in the same form. The members then turned to a personnel matter.

Under “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Engelhardt asked the dean if the new program to support and compensate chairs of academic departments and programs has had an impact on departments’ ability to mount their curricula. The dean responded that it is her understanding that roughly one-third of this year’s chairs chose to be compensated for their work as chair via an honorarium, one-third chose a course release, and one-third decided to receive an additional semester of leave at the conclusion of their (three-year) term as chair. Thus far, the dean has not heard that the chairs’ program has had an impact on the ability of departments to offer needed courses. She said that plans are in place to assess the program upon the conclusion of the three-year pilot.

Continuing with questions, Professor Call asked if a program is still in place that allows Amherst tenure-line and visiting faculty members, lecturers, and coaches to have six free meals each semester (a total of thirteen for faculty members who are teaching first-year seminars) with students at Valentine, simply by presenting their Amherst College I.D. Card to the meal checker. In addition, he asked if the free meals are “pre-loaded” on individuals’ I.D. cards, so that each meal can be deducted from the allotment when the card is used. Finally, he wondered if it is still possible for participants to check how many meals they have used via ACData. Dean Epstein said that she believes that the program is still in place and said that she would find out the answers to all of the questions that Professor Call had posed.

Conversation turned to matters relating to attendance and voting at faculty meetings. Professor Sitze commented that because the Committee of Six acts in “general advisory capacity” on “all matters of

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college policy,” it seems reasonable to craft a policy governing the Committee of Six minutes beginning from the basic principle that anyone who is governed by college policy should have access to the committee’s minutes in order to better understand the policies that govern them. The committee agreed and felt that sharing the minutes of the Committee of Six—as well as those of the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP)—with all staff of the college would enhance communication on campus. The dean noted that the CEP had considered this issue recently and had expressed support for sharing its minutes with all staff. She informed the members that the minutes of the Committee on Priorities and Resources, a committee with staff representation, are already shared with all faculty and staff at the college. At present, all faculty and some administrators have access to the minutes of the Committee of Six and the CEP, the dean noted. The members decided to draft a motion to revise the language in the *Faculty Handbook* about the minutes of these committees, or to add language about minutes if there is no language at present, to bring this matter before the faculty for a vote. It was agreed that access to the minutes should be conditional on some sort of assent to a confidentiality agreement. Developing a mechanism for faculty and staff to agree to keep information conveyed in the minutes confidential should be left to the dean’s office, the committee decided.

The committee then discussed other matters related to attendance and voting. These issues included the unique governance role that the faculty plays in decision-making for the areas that fall under its authority, and questions related to the staff’s advisory and voting privileges. It was agreed that the issues generated by this discussion are very complex and raise many fundamental questions of definition, authority, and shared governance, in particular. The members agreed to return to the topic of attendance and voting at a future meeting. Much of the remainder of the meeting was devoted to personnel matters.

The meeting concluded with the committee reviewing drafts of the dean’s letters to department chairs and candidates concerning reappointment that are sent to department chairs and candidates each spring. Several modest revisions to the letter were suggested, and the committee agreed that these changes should be incorporated.

The meeting adjourned at 5:50 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

Amended April 27, 2018

The twenty-fourth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2017–2018 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:15 P.M. on Monday, March 26, 2018. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Call, Engelhardt, Heim, Jaswal, Moss, Sitze, Dean Epstein, and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with President Martin informing the committee that she and approximately 150 students and alumni had just returned from funeral services in Cleveland for Andrew Dorogi ’18, who died on March 15. The president commented on the tremendous impact that Andrew had on the Amherst community and the grief that so many are experiencing over his loss.

In response to Professor Call’s question about AC Data and pre-loaded meals for faculty and coaches, the dean confirmed that the program is still in place and that [information about it is available on the dean of the faculty’s website](#). All Amherst tenure-line and visiting faculty members, lecturers, and coaches are eligible for six free meals each semester (a total of thirteen for faculty members who are teaching first-year seminars) at Valentine simply by presenting their Amherst College I.D. card to the meal checker. The free meals are pre-loaded on the individuals’ I.D.s, and one meal is deducted from the allotment each time the card is used. These meals are in addition to the \$200 entertainment allowance. There apparently were some problems with the “pre-loading” function for a short period, but this should have been rectified. As for how one finds out how many meals have been used, the dean’s office is consulting with IT to gather information. The dean said that she would report back to the committee once she learns more about this process.

Under “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Jaswal said that Professor Trapani had shared an article on gender bias in student evaluations with her and Dean Epstein, in their capacities as members of the Committee of Six, and with Professor Gentzler and Riley Caldwell-O’Keefe, faculty director and director of the center for teaching and learning, respectively. Professor Trapani had said that it is his hope that the piece can help to inform ongoing conversations about evaluations. Professor Jaswal commented that Professor Gentzler and Ms. Caldwell-O’Keefe had responded that they are researching and considering questions of bias and the evaluation of teaching, as part of the evaluation pilot work that is under way, as well as possible tools for mitigating bias. Professor Jaswal mentioned that she and Professor Heim are looking forward to attending a workshop on April 9 on the topic of the science of stereotyping and implicit bias. The Office of Diversity and Inclusion is sponsoring the workshop.

Continuing, Professor Jaswal informed the committee that a colleague has asked her to raise a number of issues surrounding accommodations for faculty and staff with disabilities. The colleague has been encouraged by steps that the college has taken to raise awareness about students who have disabilities and mental health issues. This sharing of information, the colleague noted, has been extremely helpful to faculty and staff with and without disabilities. This communication has led to a greater understanding of the accommodations and has provided assistance to help all students thrive. According to Professor Jaswal, the colleague contends that, while Amherst’s campus culture seems to have undergone a significant shift—with greater acceptance of the importance of providing accommodations to students—there is still a noticeable “lack of a corresponding normalization or recognition” that faculty and staff also have disabilities and health conditions that can have a significant impact on their ability to thrive at Amherst. The colleague had been looking forward to having the process for the consideration of accommodations for faculty and staff with disabilities clarified and addressed through the efforts of the Presidential Task Force on Accessibility and Inclusion, which has now been disbanded. Professor Jaswal said that the colleague feels strongly that, without a similar level of transparency and normalization of accommodations for faculty and staff, many colleagues will not seek the accommodations they need. Many, in the colleague’s view, are afraid of the stigma associated with such a request and of being judged to be unfit for their position. Professor Jaswal said that the colleague told her that the

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Office of Human Resources website includes [the following language](#): “In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Amherst College will provide reasonable accommodations to an otherwise qualified applicant or employee with a disability to enable such person to perform essential job functions and/or enjoy the benefits and privileges of employment, so long as such accommodation does not impose an undue burden on the College...” In addition, the following language appears on the site: “If you think you need a reasonable accommodation for a permanent or temporary disability, please contact the Office of Human Resources. A representative from Human Resources will provide you an overview of the required documentation. This documentation should be completed by the employee and the employee’s medical provider. Once the completed documentation has been received, the Office of Human Resources will conduct an assessment of the documentation and the ability of the college to provide reasonable accommodations, and will guide the employee on next steps.”

Continuing, Professor Jaswal said that the colleague has asked whether there is an HR specialist with expertise in disability and health accommodations; who determines what reasonable accommodations are; and what happens if someone comes forward and requests accommodations that are deemed to impose an undue burden on the college. Professor Moss commented that, in a letter that she had sent to Dean Epstein in May of 2017, she had articulated concerns that are similar to those of the colleague, as described by Professor Jaswal, especially about a lack of process, and a perceived risk among some faculty to ask for accommodations for fear of reprisals or stigma. Professor Moss noted that the dean, in response, had said that the task force would address these concerns. Now that there is no longer a task force, Professor Moss said that she would welcome the administration’s ideas for how to address these issues going forward. It is clear, Professor Moss commented, at least from the questions that had been shared with Professor Jaswal, that other colleagues have concerns that are similar to Professor Moss’s own. The dean asked Professor Moss to forward the letter to her again and said that she would work with other members of the administration to consider the issues raised. Professor Moss said that she would do so and expressed the view that the college needs a well-articulated and publicized process for dealing with disability requests from faculty members. Without such a process in place, she worries that some faculty members, particularly untenured faculty, will not ask for accommodations for fear of stigma or reprisals. She also noted her suggestion last year that chairs of academic departments and programs receive some form of training about the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990) and the college’s disability policies. It is important that chairs know how to assist faculty who need accommodations, and that all faculty understand how to request them. President Martin informed the committee that an effort has been launched to create a website that includes information about all of the steps already taken and ongoing projects, as well as plans that are under way, in the area of accessibility and inclusion at the college.

Turning to another question, Professor Engelhardt asked if Amherst has a clear policy about deaccessioning scholarly and creative materials owned by the college. President Martin said that the Office of General Counsel is drafting such a policy. Professor Engelhardt, noting that he is pleased that this effort is under way, said that modeling a broader college policy on the policy of the Mead Art Museum would be a good approach. President Martin said that she would report back about the status of developing the new policy. The members then turned to a personnel matter.

The members next considered a draft motion to revise the charges of the Committee of Six, the Committee on Educational Policy, and the Committee on Priorities and Resources in the *Faculty Handbook*, in order to expand the distribution of the minutes of these committees to include all staff at the college. The committee agreed that, as long as the quality of the minutes is not affected by doing so, taking this step will enhance communication and transparency. The members voted six in

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favor and zero opposed on the substance of the following motion and six in favor and zero opposed to forward the motion to the faculty:

In order to expand the distribution of the minutes of the Committee of Six, the Committee on Educational Policy, and the Committee on Priorities and Resources to include all staff of the college, the Committee of Six proposes the following changes to the committees' current charges in the [Faculty Handbook IV. S., 1., a.\(final paragraph\), h.\(first paragraph\), and q.\(first paragraph\)](#).

a...The Committee of Six normally meets every week during the academic year. Minutes of its meetings are normally circulated to the faculty **AND STAFF OF THE COLLEGE** in advance of regular faculty meetings. **THERE IS A GENERAL EXPECTATION OF CONFIDENTIALITY IN REGARD TO THE MINUTES. THE MINUTES SHOULD NOT BE SHARED WITH ANYONE WHO IS NOT OFFICIALLY ENTITLED TO RECEIVE THEM.** In case the Committee of Six should meet without the president and the dean, the senior faculty member of the Committee of Six will preside.

h. *The Committee on Educational Policy* (voted by the faculty, December 2006). The Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) is composed of five faculty members, each serving a three-year term; the dean of the faculty, ex officio, without vote; and three student members, each serving a two-year term. The humanities, the social sciences and the natural sciences must be represented on the committee, by both faculty members and student members. Each year the committee chooses its own chair and secretary from among its five faculty members. A researcher appointed by the dean of the faculty informs and supports the work of the CEP. The chair sets the committee's agenda. **THE MINUTES OF THE CEP'S MEETINGS ARE CIRCULATED TO THE FACULTY AND STAFF OF THE COLLEGE. THERE IS A GENERAL EXPECTATION OF CONFIDENTIALITY IN REGARD TO THE MINUTES. THE MINUTES SHOULD NOT BE SHARED WITH ANYONE WHO IS NOT OFFICIALLY ENTITLED TO RECEIVE THEM.** Nominations of the faculty members for the Committee on Educational Policy are made by the Committee of Six and reported to the faculty in advance of the faculty meeting at which they are to be elected.

q. *Committee on Priorities and Resources* (voted by the faculty, May 2010). The Committee on Priorities and Resources (CPR) is a committee of faculty, students, and staff (with a faculty member as chair), with officers of the administration (the president, the dean of the faculty, the chief financial and administrative officer and the director of budget and analysis, and the chief human resources officer) present ex officio (amended by vote of the faculty, May 2014). The four faculty members, at least one each from the humanities, the social sciences, and the natural sciences, normally serve for a term of three years, and their terms of office are generally staggered so that each year no more than two new members of the committee and the chair are nominated by the Committee of Six and elected by the faculty. To assure continuity of membership on the CPR, the Committee of Six will endeavor to nominate members of the faculty whose service on the committee will not be interrupted for two or three years. **THE MINUTES OF THE CPR'S MEETINGS ARE CIRCULATED TO THE FACULTY AND STAFF OF THE COLLEGE. THERE IS A GENERAL EXPECTATION OF CONFIDENTIALITY IN REGARD TO THE MINUTES.**

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THE MINUTES SHOULD NOT BE SHARED WITH ANYONE WHO IS NOT OFFICIALLY ENTITLED TO RECEIVE THEM.

See the [Faculty Handbook for the committees' full charges](#).

The members also considered the following draft motion to expand the distribution of the minutes of faculty meetings to the staff:

In order to expand the distribution of the minutes of faculty meetings to include all staff at the college, the Committee of Six proposes the following changes to current language in the *Faculty Handbook Faculty Handbook, IV., R.*

Faculty Meetings

1. Attendance and Voting

The following members of the college have the right and responsibility to attend faculty meetings, with voice and vote: (1) the president, the dean of the faculty, professors, associate professors, and assistant professors appointed to regular full-time or part-time tenured or tenure-track positions; (2) all individuals on non-tenure-track, renewable contracts, who teach regularly in the college curriculum and whose primary affiliation is with Amherst College; (3) all persons with visiting teaching appointments, for the duration of their appointment at Amherst College, provided that appointment is their primary professional responsibility at the time; and, (4) the following members of the administration: the dean of students, the class deans of students, the dean of admission and financial aid, the director of financial aid, the librarian of the college, the chief information officer, the director of the academic computer center, the director of health services, the director of the counseling center, the director of athletics, the registrar, and the director of the Mead Art Museum.

Questions before the faculty may be decided by a voice vote, or by show of hands, or by written ballot if requested by a faculty member (voted by the faculty, May 1990).

Faculty members on phased retirement retain the right to attend and vote in faculty meetings, though in their individual agreements with the dean of the faculty they may determine not to do so.

2. Attendance Without Vote

a. *Administration and Temporary Faculty.* Interchange faculty members from other colleges in the valley or part-time appointees teaching on a per-course basis and retaining primary concurrent affiliation with another academic institution (including adjunct appointees and teaching assistants and associates) are welcome to attend meetings of the faculty with voice but without vote, as are contract coaches of the Department of Physical Education, and the associates and assistants of administrative officers named above, unless individually otherwise designated.

Other members of the administration are statutorily designated as guests at faculty meetings. They include: the chief financial and administrative officer; the chief advancement officer; the alumni secretary; the secretary and assistant or associate secretary for public affairs; the assistant or associate registrar; assistants to the president; the assistants to the deans, specifically the Wilson and Mayo-Smith interns in the admission office; and the Five College coordinator. Other guests may be invited to specific meetings of the faculty by the president with the concurrence of the Committee of Six. These persons, as guests, are not normally expected to participate in debate, although they may speak if questions are addressed to them.

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b. Students. By vote of the faculty in October 1970, in order to provide improved communication of student sentiment concerning proposals originating in college committees whose membership includes students, student members of some faculty-student-administration committees and officers of the Association of Amherst Students (AAS) are invited to be present with the faculty during regular meetings of the faculty as participating, non-voting members of the meeting. Participation includes the right to speak and to make and second motions.

Student members of these committees and those officers of the Association of Amherst Students include: student members of the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP), the College Council, the Committee on Priorities and Resources, the Committee on Admission and Financial Aid, the Committee on Discipline, and the Library Committee, and the four executive officers of the student governing body. The editor-in-chief and the publisher of the *Amherst Student* are invited guests at faculty meetings for purposes of information.

3. Regular Faculty Meetings

During the academic year the faculty holds at least three stated meetings that normally take place in Cole Assembly Room in Converse Hall: one at the opening of college, one before spring vacation for the approval of new courses or changes in courses for the coming college year, and a meeting immediately before commencement.

The meetings at the opening of college and before commencement are normally held in the morning. Other faculty meetings are normally held on Tuesday evenings at 7:30. The first and third Tuesday evenings of months when the college is in session are reserved for meetings of the faculty. [faculty meetings schedule](#).

4. Special Faculty Meetings

A special meeting of the faculty is held when in the opinion of the president or of the Committee of Six there is necessary business to be transacted. A special meeting may also be held at the request of eight or more members of the faculty.

5. Presiding Officers

The president of the college presides at meetings of the faculty. In the president's absence, the dean of the faculty presides. The dean of the faculty serves as secretary and may designate a recorder to keep the minutes of the meetings of the faculty. ~~Any faculty member may have access to the minutes upon request to the secretary.~~ In the event that the dean of the faculty is presiding at a faculty meeting, a member of the faculty will be asked to serve as secretary *pro tem*.

6. Quorum

The quorum for the transaction of business at a faculty meeting is met when the number of those required to attend, eligible to vote, and present at the meeting is greater than one-half of the number of tenure-line faculty, lecturers, and resident artists not on leave in a given semester. Faculty on leave are not required to attend, but retain the privilege of attendance and vote; if faculty members attend a meeting of the faculty while they are on leave, they will be counted when constituting the quorum (voted by the faculty December 2017).

7. Agenda

An advance notice of the agenda of each meeting is normally sent to members of the faculty. Items not on the agenda may be discussed at any meeting and voted upon at any meeting of the faculty. Whenever possible, the minutes of the meetings of the Committee of Six held since

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the last faculty meeting and copies of all recommendations to be considered by the faculty will be sent to each member of the faculty with the agenda.

In October 1980, the faculty voted that:

Except in a grave emergency, the Committee of Six, in setting the agenda for a faculty meeting, shall not include any motion on a constitutional matter or a matter of policy unless it has assured that the motion, and the reasoning considered by the committee for and against it, will reach faculty members in time to allow reflection and informal discussion (normally by the Wednesday before the Tuesday of the meeting). This is known in local parlance as the Romer-Hawkins rule.

On the agenda and at meetings of the faculty, the usual order of business is:

- a. Call to order*
- b. Reading or review of the minutes of the preceding meeting of the Faculty if they have not already been made available; approval of these minutes*
- c. Reading or review of the minutes of the meetings of the Committee of Six held since the last faculty meeting if they have not already been made available*
- d. Remarks by the President of the College*
- e. Remarks by the Dean of the Faculty*
- f. Election of committee members*
- g. Consideration of recommendations made by the Committee of Six and/or the Committee on Educational Policy to the faculty*
- h. Consideration of recommendations from other committees*
- i. Questions to the Administration*
- j. Unfinished business*
- k. New business*
- l. Adjournment.*

8. Rules of Order

The rules of parliamentary procedure as found in Robert's *Rules of Order* govern the meetings of the faculty in all cases to which they are applicable and when they are not inconsistent with the customs or regulations of Amherst College. A member of the faculty is designated as the faculty parliamentarian.

9. Voting

Those eligible to vote are defined in the section on faculty meetings above. Questions before the faculty may be decided by voice vote, by a show of hands, or by written ballot if so requested. Abstentions are in order.

10. Concurrence of President

The concurrence of the president is necessary to all acts and resolutions of the faculty, unless, after non-concurrence, the act or resolution shall again be passed by a two-thirds vote of the faculty, a quorum being present, at the same or at the next succeeding meeting thereof. In all cases where there shall be a non-concurrence between the president and a majority of the faculty present at the time, the names of those voting on each side of the question shall be entered on the minutes, and each member shall be entitled to have entered on the minutes the reason for his or her vote.

11. Binding Nature of Decisions

All decisions of the faculty arrived at by vote in the meetings of the faculty shall be binding, and all members are expected to adhere to the spirit and intent of such decisions.

12. Confidential Nature of Meetings

Discussions at faculty meetings are confidential, and public announcements of decisions taken at faculty meetings should be made only by the president or the dean of the faculty. Students wishing to report on matters discussed by the faculty will consult with the dean of the faculty to ensure the degree of confidentiality deemed necessary by the faculty.

13. MINUTES OF FACULTY MEETINGS

THE MINUTES OF FACULTY MEETINGS ARE CIRCULATED TO THE FACULTY AND STAFF OF THE COLLEGE. AS NOTED ABOVE, THERE IS A GENERAL EXPECTATION OF CONFIDENTIALITY REGARDING FACULTY MEETINGS, WHICH EXTENDS TO THE MINUTES. THE MINUTES SHOULD NOT BE SHARED WITH ANYONE WHO IS NOT OFFICIALLY ENTITLED TO RECEIVE THEM.

When reviewing the current *Faculty Handbook* language as part of the proposed motion, Professor Engelhardt noted the language under 10., “Concurrence of President,” and commented that he is unsure of its meaning and finds it puzzling. The other members agreed and felt that learning more about the context of the language would be helpful. The committee decided that the dean’s office should research the history of this passage. The committee then voted six in favor and zero opposed on the substance of the motion and six in favor and zero opposed to forward the motion to the faculty.

Conversation turned to a proposal by the subcommittee of the Committee of Six (Professors Engelhardt, Heim, and Jaswal) that is exploring ways to address the service burdens on associate professors, in response to the findings of the COACHE (Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education) survey. The subcommittee suggested that no associate professors in their first, second, and/or third year in rank be asked to serve on the Committee of Six. In order to ensure that such service would not take place, associate professors at this career stage would not be included on the ballot, under the proposal. The members of the subcommittee commented that it is unclear to them whether to suggest a reprieve from service on the Committee of Six for two or three years after faculty members return from the leave that follows a positive tenure decision. In addition, the subcommittee proposed that all untenured professors be removed from all Committee of Six ballots (visitors are not on the ballot). While the proposals just described would require a vote of the faculty to implement, the subcommittee also suggested the following advisory directions, which would not require such a vote. The proposed advisory language to the dean of the faculty and the Committee of Six read as follows: “We strongly advise that associates in their early post-tenure years not be asked to serve as chairs on the largest and most onerous committees, but service on those committees (often combined with first-time service as department chair) is appropriate.”

The subcommittee members said that their rationale for making these proposals is to provide “extra breathing room” for new associate professors. In particular, the subcommittee feels that new associate professors often make progress on their scholarship during their post-tenure leave and can become stalled when, upon their return to their regular duties, they are immediately faced with chairing their departments and/or service on major faculty committees, or both. Chairing a major committee such as the Committee on Educational Policy or the Committee on Priorities and Resources at this career stage, particularly coupled with chairing a department for the first time, seems overly onerous, in the subcommittee’s view. In regard to the Committee of Six, the subcommittee feels that serving on the Committee of Six soon after the tenure decision can, for some faculty, be challenging, placing a significant burden on associate professors. Often, the subcommittee noted, new associate professors have not yet considered a tenure case in their own

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departments, and it seems unfair to individuals at this career stage to put them in the position of having to serve on the Committee of Six without the benefit of more experience—a circumstance that can exacerbate what can already be a steep learning curve. In regard to assistant professors, Professor Heim commented that it is not impossible for an assistant professor to be elected, and that it seems odd to keep assistant professors on the ballot when it could be politically perilous for them, and perhaps make them personally vulnerable, to consider the tenure cases of others before having tenure themselves. The argument that assistant professors will not be elected does not seem like a sensible reason to keep them on the ballot, the subcommittee believes. The subcommittee argued that it is time to get rid of this relic of the past. Professor Jaswal noted that saddling an assistant professor with service on the Committee of Six is inconsistent with the practice of protecting assistant professors from other significant service burdens during their pre-tenure years.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Moss noted that the proposal to spare associate professors in their early years in rank from service on the Committee of Six seeks to address what she considers to be a real problem, an uneven distribution of service work among associate professors. She feels, however, that this approach would not have much of an impact on the service burdens experienced by nearly all associate professors, as it is relatively rare for individuals to be elected to the committee soon after they are tenured. She does not think that an assistant professor has been elected for some time. It was noted that, in the past, individual assistant professors have sometimes been asked to serve for the benefit of the collective—in some cases to ensure demographic and disciplinary diversity—the members agreed. The dean, who said that she sees the reasoning behind the proposal and does not necessarily disagree with the idea of relieving associate professors from Committee of Six service in their early years in rank, agreed with Professor Moss about the degree of impact of the proposal. She wondered whether the subcommittee had considered proposals that would work to relieve all associate professors equally from service responsibilities, rather than focusing only on the Committee of Six.

Responding to the dean's question, Professor Heim commented that it would be problematic, in some cases, for small departments to excuse associate professors from serving as chair. She expressed the view that, at some point, associate professors need to learn to be chair and that they should not be excused from all administrative duties. The dean asked if chairing a department is seen as less onerous than chairing a major committee. It was agreed that associate professors should serve on major faculty committees, but that it would be desirable to excuse them from chairing such committees. Professor Moss said that she found that the combination of chairing and serving on a major committee, in her case the CEP, coupled with having young children, created a tremendous burden. She feels that it was the bundling of multiple service responsibilities at once that could be the most problematic. Because of the course release, the Committee of Six by itself didn't represent a unique burden. She urged the subcommittee to take a more holistic approach when thinking about the service responsibilities assumed by associate professors and encouraged the Committee of Six to take a more holistic approach when assigning faculty to committees. Professor Jaswal commented that the impact of serving on the Committee of Six depends on the place that associate professors are in their professional development. The committee agreed that it would be informative to have Jesse Barba, director of institutional research and registrar services, provide projections of the impact of the subcommittee's proposal, that is if associate professors are removed from the ballot for the Committee of Six for several years after tenure and, possibly, excused from chairing departments. In addition, the members agreed that they would like to see the impact of removing assistant professors from the Committee of Six ballot. Learning more about the anticipated make-up of the faculty by rank over the next decade would be helpful, the members concurred. President Martin noted that Amherst's faculty is now a very "young" faculty, having undergone a demographic shift as a result of retirements.

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Continuing the discussion, Professor Call agreed with the goal of relieving some of the service burden often placed on recently tenured faculty. He commented, that, historically, however, assistant professors have, for the most part, been elected to the Committee of Six only when the college has been undergoing a significant change. In the past, these changes generally coincided with demographic changes in the faculty. In keeping with the real desire for change, he might conjecture that many colleagues felt that the demographic shift should be represented within the Committee of Six. He noted that, when, for example, an untenured African-American faculty member was elected approximately fifty years ago, the faculty member had felt that this service was important. Similarly, an untenured woman was elected to the Committee of Six when there were few women faculty at the college. Professor Engelhardt expressed hope that, as the college places more emphasis on being mindful and thoughtful about hiring faculty who more closely resemble the make-up of the student body, and is more successful at doing so, tokenism will no longer be a part of the election process, and assistant and early-stage associate professors will not be put on the committee at the expense of their own careers—in particular for the good of the institution. The goal should be to allow faculty to acquire the experience and expertise that allows them to engage fully in the work of the committee, in his view.

Professor Call expressed concern about the proposal to remove all associate professors in their early post-tenure years and all assistant professors from the Committee of Six ballot. He said that he feels uncomfortable foreclosing the possibility that an assistant professor or recently tenured associate professor could serve. Professor Sitze, while supporting the idea of protecting associate professors, agreed, arguing that, if even one assistant professor would like to serve, the option should be open to that person. He commented that some faculty may view service on the Committee of Six as an opportunity to help shape the institution, rather than as a burden. Professor Sitze suggested that the subcommittee's proposal include a provision for assistant professors to "opt-in" to being on the Committee of Six ballot. Professor Heim said that she imagines that, under such a system, it would be difficult for an assistant professor to know what the unspoken rules might be, creating stress and anxiety. How would opting in or out be perceived by senior colleagues, for example? She feels that tenure-track faculty members' anxiety would increase. If elected, their own careers could suffer, and they would be put in a position that would be deeply fraught; since most of the work of the Committee of Six is personnel decisions, it may be the most politically sensitive committee at the college.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Call asked the members of the subcommittee if they had considered ways, beyond relieving associate professors of service on the Committee of Six for a number of years, to alleviate the service burdens of this career stage. The members discussed such options as allowing all associate professors to refuse to serve on the committee, if elected, once—a "free pass" of sorts. Professor Moss argued against skewing the Committee of Six toward more senior faculty, a scenario that she envisions resulting from removal of early-stage associate professors from the ballot, and which would mean that some ranks, and the perspectives and issues that are important to them, may not be represented on the executive committee of the faculty. She believes that such a decision runs counter to the language of the [*Faculty Handbook \(IV., S., 1., a.\)*](#), which states that "members of the Committee of Six... are elected without restrictions of rank, tenure status, age, or departmental affiliation." Removing assistant and early associate professors from the Committee of Six ballot, in her opinion, represents a significant departure from the current practice, which strives for the possibility of universal access and inclusion. President Martin pointed out that the relatively new Consultative Group for Untenured Faculty enables assistant professors to have a representative body beyond the Committee of Six. The president said that she finds the subcommittee's proposal of allowing associate professors to be off the Committee of Six ballot for two years after they return from their post-tenure leaves to be compelling. Professor Call

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suggested that there could be what one might call a “service sabbatical” following the post-tenure leave. Faculty could choose a semester or year during their associate professor years during which they would not have any service obligations, in order to focus on research and teaching. Professor Sitze expressed support for this idea, as it would keep decision-making in the hands of associate professors. Other members were also favorably inclined toward establishing a “service sabbatical.” All agreed that it would be desirable to build in choice and flexibility to any proposal to alleviate the service burdens on associate professors. Professor Engelhardt expressed the view that it seems likely that having chairs serve for longer periods, a feature of the new program to support and compensate chairs, may mean that associate professors experience fewer service burdens, as chair duties may be spread more broadly within departments.

Conversation turned to the subcommittee’s proposal to clarify the standards for promotion to full professor. It was noted that part of the reason for relieving associate professors of significant service burdens would be to create more space for them to continue to be productive scholars, effective teachers, and engaged citizens of the college during the years between receiving tenure and promotion to full professor. The subcommittee proposed the following revision to the [Faculty Handbook language \(III.G.\)](#) about promotion:

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 promoted to the rank of professor (voted by the faculty, May 2007).

THE BASIS OF PROMOTION TO PROFESSOR IS ESSENTIALLY THE SAME AS THAT USED FOR THE TENURE DECISION: TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS, SUSTAINED SCHOLARLY and/or GROWTH AS INDICATED IN PEER-REVIEWED WORK AND/OR PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION, AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE GENERAL LIFE OF THE COLLEGE COMMUNITY.

Promotion to the rank of professor may originate with the department or with the candidate and usually occurs between six and eight years after the tenure decision. A candidate’s promotion committee consists of all tenured full professors in ~~his or her~~ **THE CANDIDATE’S** department(s) and, at the request of the candidate, may include up to two other tenured 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 chair of the promotion committee, and signed by all members of the committee, 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 e~~**CandidateS** may also submit a letter on ~~his or her~~ **THEIR OWN** behalf (voted by the faculty, May 2007).

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

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hoc committee of tenured full Professors from related departments to serve as the promotion committee. Should the department have one member at the rank of tenured full professor, ~~he or she~~ **THAT PERSON** will also serve. At the request of the candidate, the promotion committee may include up to two other tenured full professors from the college faculty, chosen by the candidate in consultation with the dean of the faculty. 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 **THE PRESIDENT'S** ~~his or her~~ own views. All promotions must be voted by the Board of Trustees (voted by the faculty, May 2007).

Professor Heim commented that the members of the subcommittee like the language that is in the dean's letter to chairs about promotion and feel that the *Faculty Handbook* should be revised to echo this language. The proposed motion reflects this view. Professor Heim noted that one of the purposes of clarifying the standards for promotion is that future members of the Committees of Six will have consistent criteria on which to base their recommendations. Since the subcommittee is charged with clarifying current expectations, rather than developing new standards, the members did not consider whether more evidence of meeting the standards should be gathered as part of the promotion process.

Professor Sitze expressed support for the proposed language. Professor Moss said that she finds the proposed language about the basis of promotion to full professor being essentially the same as that used for the tenure decision to be problematic. In her view, promotion and tenure processes are not, nor should they be, the same, unless the college wants to move toward external reviews for promotion to full professor. She believes that the committee should be able to take a more holistic approach to evaluating excellence at the time of promotion. She has appreciated being able to consider teaching, research, and service contributions holistically when evaluating promotion cases. Professor Heim thought she heard someone say that excellence in service could be considered sufficient for promotion for full professor, and she stated that she disagrees with this view. She suggested that scholarly and/or creative growth needs to be demonstrated, and that effectiveness in teaching and service cannot compensate for a lack of growth as a scholar. It was pointed out that Amherst calls itself a "research college." Professor Heim also noted that faculty get sabbatical support to advance their research. Professor Sitze agreed that evidence of peer-reviewed work since the time of the tenure decision should be an expectation for promotion. President Martin said that the expectation is that candidates for promotion must be effective teachers and effective scholars, as demonstrated by the publication of scholarly and creative work. Professor Jaswal expressed the view that the responsibility for ensuring that Amherst's diverse student body thrives falls unevenly on some departments and faculty. Faculty who devote considerable time to working with students one-on-one, providing additional support, and making use of a range of pedagogical techniques should have their efforts recognized, in her view. This work can leave less time for faculty to focus on research productivity, but is a valuable contribution to the college and a fulfillment of Amherst's mission, she commented. Professor Heim agreed that the Committee of Six should strive to understand candidates for promotion to full professor holistically and should seek to understand candidates in all of their complexity.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Call commented that, while the balance might shift among the three pillars by the time of promotion to full professor, in his view the standard at the time of promotion to full professor should be overall excellence, including continuing accomplishment in research and teaching. The discussion ended with the members returning to the idea of creating a "service sabbatical." It was noted that there could be many complexities and

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ripple effects, such as the possibility of interrupting continuity of service on major faculty committees, and the burden on other faculty who would have to step into the breach on those committees and in small departments that have a tight rotation for chairs. Professor Moss reiterated her view that taking associate and assistant professors off the Committee of Six ballot for a time does not address in broad enough ways the problem of the uneven distribution of service responsibilities among associate professors. President Martin said that she can see the virtue of allowing associate professors to choose which year they might wish to take a service sabbatical, so that departments and major committees could make plans to address the gap that might occur as a result of the faculty member's release from service for a semester or year. Professor Sitze wondered if the service sabbatical should always take place after the post-tenure leave, and expressed a preference for leaving the decision in the hands of the professor in question. The members of the subcommittee agreed to reflect on the conversation and perhaps to revise their proposal, based on the views that had been expressed. In addition, the subcommittee will look forward to receiving the projections from Mr. Barba.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

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The twenty-fifth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2017–2018 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:15 P.M. on Monday, April 2, 2018. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Call, Engelhardt, Heim, Jaswal, Moss, Sitze, Dean Epstein, and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with President Martin commenting that the college has arranged for transportation to the funeral of Chris Collins ’20, a service that she and other members of the Amherst community will attend. The president said that Chris’s father has expressed to her what a comfort the Amherst community has been to the family during this very difficult time. The committee thanked President Martin for her leadership during the period of tragic loss that the college has experienced in recent weeks. Professor Jaswal then read [a statement](#). Professor Call, who noted that he has not, in the past, always supported the idea of taking time out of the academic day for a community hour, said that he was moved by Professor Jaswal’s argument and is open to considering the idea again.

Continuing the conversation, Dean Epstein noted that Jesse Barba, director of institutional research and registrar services, and Ewa Nowicki, the registrar, have been charged with re-examining the academic schedule from the ground up. The committee asked the dean to convey that, in developing a proposal for the schedule, a serious effort should be made to carve out a timeslot for a community hour. President Martin said that she strongly supports the idea of having a community hour, if a way can be found to do so, as well as other efforts aimed at enhancing the sense of community at the college.

At 3:30 P.M., Rick Griffiths, chair of the College Housing Committee; Jim Brassord, chief of campus operations; and Liz Gallinaro, director of rental housing management, joined the meeting to discuss the housing committee’s proposal to equalize the market-discount rate for those who rent housing from the college. On behalf of the committee, Dean Epstein welcomed these colleagues and noted that she understands that there is widespread support for the proposal. It is hoped that the requested changes can be implemented for the coming academic year. See [the letter from Professor Griffiths’s to the Committee of Six](#).

As background for the discussion that ensued, Professor Griffiths noted that the rental housing system had been revamped in 1998 in order create a compelling and sustainable benefit for untenured faculty at Amherst. Over the years since, he explained, the housing committee has periodically undertaken comprehensive reviews to determine if the college is meeting this goal. He commented that a 2012 review had resulted in the current market subsidy program for untenured faculty who cannot be accommodated in the rental units. The committee’s latest review, from 2015 to 2017, revealed disparities in the discount rates and an unsustainable gap in maintenance funding (that gap currently amounts to \$800,000 in deferred maintenance). In response, last year’s housing committee undertook an analysis of the problem and did a great deal of work to consider a solution, Professor Griffiths noted.

Continuing his remarks, Professor Griffiths stressed that the current system is not equitable (with discounts ranging from 11 percent to 46 percent), which, in addition to being unfair, prevents the college from being able to quantify the benefit during the recruitment process. Under the housing committee’s proposal, the rate would be set at 25 percent, and current renters (untenured faculty and visitors) who currently receive less than a 25 percent discount would receive a rent reduction to reflect that level (Professor Griffiths indicated that there are eight current renters who will have their rent reduced). For units with a discount currently greater than 25 percent, the reset to the 25 percent level will occur only at the time that that unit “turns over” to a new tenant. Having a uniform discount has the virtues of equity and transparency, Professor Griffiths explained. He commented that the proposed 25 percent discount benchmarks favorably with Swarthmore’s subsidy, because it is the highest that the committee had found among peer institutions. Most

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comparable housing systems are expected to pay for themselves and charge market rents, Professor Griffiths explained.

Continuing his remarks, Professor Griffiths commented that, in developing the proposal, the committee had built on the work done by the housing committee last year. This year's committee consulted broadly, conducting some six presentations to renters, chairs, and the Committee on Priorities and Resources (CPR). According to Professor Griffiths, these sessions revealed that there is enthusiasm for implementing the proposal. Professor Griffiths said that he had also spoken with interested colleagues who could not attend the presentations. He noted that, during the meetings, related topics, including eligibility, the affordability of the largest units, and the unpredictability of utility costs, had been discussed. It has been agreed that the rental housing office will strive for greater specificity, in writing, about the range of costs to be expected with various units. Ms. Gallinaro indicated that the average costs for each unit will be indicated on her office's website. The dean noted that information about faculty housing, including related links, is [available on the dean's website](#).

Professor Engelhardt asked if implementing the proposal would have any tax implications. Mr. Brassord responded that there would not be, as there would be no change to the way in which imputed income is calculated. Amherst provides this benefit, and those who receive it must treat it as income if their rent is less than 5 percent of the appraised value of the property, according to IRS regulations. It was noted that, when a suitable unit is not available for those who are eligible to participate in the housing program, the college provides a non-college housing subsidy of \$375.00 a month to defray some of the cost of rent on the open market for the equivalent of a two-bedroom Amherst unit. The housing committee will continue to evaluate whether this subsidy represents a contribution that represents a 25 percent discount. This subsidy is only available to those who cannot be accommodated via the college's rental program. A "suitable unit" is described as housing that meets the needs of a potential college renter. Professor Moss asked if a unit would "meet the needs" of a renter, in the college's view, if the renter has children and all available units have lead paint. Mr. Brassord responded that, under these circumstances, the college would offer the individual the subsidy. He noted that, once individuals receive the subsidy, they do not have to apply to be in college housing to continue to receive the funds. If they would like to rent college housing, they can, if they wish, reapply. Mr. Brassord noted that the college's costs for subsidizing the housing program amounts to \$400,000 a year, including the cost of taxes on the properties and maintenance. This deficit is intentional and is a result of keeping the rent under market value, he noted. Professor Moss asked if utilities are part of the rent. Mr. Brassord responded that, under the proposals, the 25 percent discount would be "normalized" for utilities and services.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Jaswal asked how many individuals typically cannot be accommodated through the college's rental housing system. Ms. Gallinaro responded that, in the past, there has not been sufficient college rental housing available to accommodate visitors with appointments for one or two years. Because of the higher number of tenure-track faculty being hired now, it is likely that there may not be enough college rental housing to accommodate all of these colleagues. She noted that approximately fifteen units "turn over" each year, but that there is some variation annually. The rental subsidy is largely offered to visitors, Ms. Gallinaro commented. Continuing, she noted that her office begins working with new faculty as early as possible to assess their needs. The dean noted that many faculty members have told her that the office has been very helpful to them. The conversation concluded with the Committee expressing unanimous support for the housing committee's proposal. The committee thanked Professor Griffiths, Mr. Brassord, and Ms. Gallinaro, who left the meeting at 3:52 P.M.

The dean next raised the topic of a request made by Professor Martini, the class dean for the senior class, to have the faculty vote as soon as possible on the proposal to allow students to take

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four courses as either NRO (non-recorded option) or pass-fail. If such a vote is positive, Professor Martini wondered whether the policy could be applied retroactively. She had informed the dean that many students are struggling to complete end-of-semester work, some of them because they are trying to cope with feelings of grief and loss. In Professor Martini's view, some of these students would benefit from the enhanced flexibility that the proposal will offer, if implemented. The committee noted that, under the proposal, an NRO request must be filed by the last day of the add-drop period. A pass-fail form must be filed by the eighth week of the semester. The dean said that a faculty meeting cannot be held until May 1, in any case, due to obligations related to the launch of the comprehensive campaign and the upcoming reaccreditation team visit.

Continuing, the dean noted that there are a number of policies relating to grading and commencement that offer flexibility and can help students. The committee suggested that faculty be reminded about these policies, and the dean agreed that she and Ms. Nowicki would write to share this information with colleagues. Making sure that everyone is aware that this flexibility is available is particularly important during this difficult time, it was agreed. The dean noted the following policies:

- Any first-, second-, or third-year student may withdraw from one course, without penalty, and graduate with thirty-one courses. [This policy](#) is available only to students who have not withdrawn from courses previously and who do not have any other deficiencies.
- Faculty may grant extensions for students to complete final examinations, per the [Completion of Work and Policy on Extensions](#). Faculty who want to grant such extensions should work with a student's class dean to reschedule exams. If an extension will result in a delay in recording a student's final grade by the deadline, faculty should record an "I" grade until the examination is complete, per the policy. Once final examinations have been completed, faculty may change the "I" grade to a letter grade via AC Data by choosing the ["Grade Change Requests"](#) option.
- All students and faculty should be aware, however, that the final grading **deadline for graduating seniors remains Monday, May 14, at 9 A.M.** If graduating seniors request an extension for a final examination that delays submission of final grades beyond May 14, they will not be eligible to have their degree conferred in May. Grades may not be changed after students have completed the degree. The earliest opportunity for the faculty and board of trustees to vote on new degree cases will be in the fall. Please note, per the next bullet point, that eligible seniors can still participate in commencement proceedings with their class.
- If a student is within four courses of degree completion, the student [may participate in commencement](#). Students who will participate in commencement but not have a degree conferred in May must submit the [Application to Participate in Commencement](#) to the Office of the Registrar as soon as possible.

Once the dean's note to the faculty about these policies has been sent, it was agreed that faculty could reassure students, in particular seniors, and offer any extensions that are requested as quickly as possible, if professors choose to grant them. Professor Call asked for clarification about the NRO. If a student takes a course under the NRO and receives the grade that would trigger recording the grade, would the student have used the NRO? The dean replied that indeed such a

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scenario would qualify as the student's use of one of the four courses that would be allotted to be taken under the option, as outlined in the proposal.

Professor Engelhardt said that he feels that it will be valuable to have the proposal in place before the faculty returns to a discussion and vote on the proposal to adopt minors. He sees a relationship between the open curriculum and relieving pressure on students by providing structured options and flexibility in navigating and exploring a range of courses. In this way, the NRO pass-fail proposal and the minors proposal address a specific, shared concern. In his view, the NRO pass-fail proposal solves some of the problems that the minors proposal seeks to address. The committee expressed support for the revised NRO pass-fail option ([see the letter of March 27, 2018, from the Committee on Educational Policy \[CEP\] to the Committee of Six](#)), which incorporates feedback ([see the Committee of Six minutes of December 14, 2017](#)) that the Committee of Six had provided to the CEP. The members discussed whether to bring the CEP's motion to revise the catalog language to reflect the current proposal to the faculty at the next faculty meeting, or whether to have a committee-of-the-whole conversation first.

Conversation turned to the college's policy of not allowing students who transfer from Amherst to another institution to re-enroll at the college if they wish to do so. The dean noted that the following language is found on page seventy-three of the 2017–2018 *Amherst College Catalog*, under "Transfer Policy." "Amherst College students who are considering transferring to other institutions should understand that the college will not readmit those who choose to become degree candidates at other colleges and universities. All Amherst College students who transfer to and enroll as degree candidates at other institutions will forfeit their opportunity to re-enroll in the College." The dean informed the members that she had brought this issue to the CEP and had asked for that committee's approval to end this aspect of Amherst's transfer policy and to remove the above language from the 2018–2019 catalog. ([See the dean's December 5, 2017, note to the CEP, in which she discussed the history and rationale for the policy.](#)) The dean said that she had informed the CEP that Amherst's Dean of Admission and Financial Aid, Katie Fretwell, has asked colleagues at other institutions whether they have such a policy on the books. The University of Chicago is the only institution that does. All other schools that responded permit students to transfer and then return to their original institutions. In all cases, students must be readmitted and, in some cases, students must reapply as transfer students.

The dean reiterated that she sees no educational benefit associated with maintaining this policy and believes that it would be best to remove this "bureaucratic hurdle" for those who wish to return to the college. The dean noted that it appears that this transfer policy was never voted by the faculty and that it was simply inserted into the catalog. Accordingly, with CEP and Committee of Six approval, this language could be removed from the catalog, the dean noted. In its [letter of March 23, 2018](#), the CEP endorsed removing the "transfer-back" policy from the catalog, while making some recommendations about a process for considering requests from students to return to Amherst.

Lisa Rutherford, chief policy officer and general counsel, and Bett Schumacher, chief of staff and secretary of the board of trustees, joined the meeting at 4:18 P.M. to discuss draft policies developed by the Incident Readiness Working Group (IRWG) for the use of drones on and off campus and for posting materials on campus buildings and grounds. Ms. Schumacher noted that the IRWG is seeking the Committee of Six's feedback about the policies. In advance of the meeting, Ms. Schumacher had sent a letter to the Committee of Six ([see the letter of March 30, 2018](#)) describing the reasons why it is felt that these policies are needed and had provided the policies. She noted that the policies reflect revisions that were made after a conversation that Ms. Rutherford and she had had with the College Council on March 21, 2018. Students had been supportive of the policies, she noted, but had raised some concern about the possible repercussions of violating them. Ms. Rutherford noted that, while there could be legal ramifications associated with some violations,

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consideration would be given to the seriousness of any violations before any punitive steps would be taken.

The conversation began with the drone policy, which Ms. Rutherford noted would allow the college to have some limited control over the use of drones on campus. Amherst's insurance company has recommended the adoption of a policy, she noted. The college has one drone within the information technology division, which David Hamilton, chief information officer, believes has not flown in some time. Under the current policy, members of the Amherst community must ask Mr. Hamilton's permission to use the drone. Athletics has had one in the past, and the Office of Communications may also have one, it was noted.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Sitze asked about the work of the IRWG more generally. Ms. Schumacher said that the committee had been constituted during the summer of 2017 in order to continue to bolster the college's readiness for potentially challenging situations. Developing policies is one part of the group's work. Professor Sitze asked if the group feels that Amherst is prepared for incidents such as those that have occurred in Charlottesville and at Trinity College, where members of academic communities have been threatened by outside groups. He wondered if Amherst has all the policies that it needs, and protocols for what to do in these sorts of incidents, which now seem to occur with great regularity, and which in certain exceptional cases may require external law enforcement. Are there other policy areas that the IRWG has on its agenda, he asked? Ms. Rutherford responded that there is a need to develop policies in an array of areas. The IRWG is well positioned to consider such policies, given the expertise and experience of its members. In addition to Ms. Rutherford and Ms. Schumacher, the members are Jim Brassord; John Carter, chief of public safety; Suzanne Coffey, chief student affairs officer; Dean Epstein; Dean Gendron, senior associate dean of students; Sandy Genelius, chief communications officer; Norm Jones, chief diversity and inclusion officer; Betsy Cannon Smith, alumni secretary; Justin Smith, associate general counsel; and Angie Tissi-Gassoway, associate dean for diversity and inclusion. Other members of the college community are consulted, as needed.

Professor Engelhardt commented that the language of the drone policy focuses on physical risks rather than on privacy concerns. Professor Sitze said that he finds both policies to be well crafted, and the other members agreed. Professor Sitze added that, although he does see the necessity of this policy given the present political climate, a part of him will miss unregulated posting, because of the spontaneous and sometimes even anarchic energy it enabled. In regard to the posting policies, Ms. Schumacher commented that the college has been an outlier in not having a policy about posting materials on campus. The goal in developing a proposal was to allow for as much flexibility and freedom as possible, while putting some guidelines in place. She noted that student organizations are excited that the Office of Student Activities will post their materials for them, under the policy. Professor Sitze expressed some concern that an appeal process is not part of the posting proposal, commenting that the drone policy includes one. Ms. Schumacher responded that this is a good point. Ms. Rutherford said that she will consider whether the [Student Code of Conduct](#) may already include language about an appeal process that could apply to those who are accused of violating the posting policy, whether it might make sense to add language to the code, or whether a separate appeal process should be developed.

Professor Call asked why Seeley Mudd had been categorized as an administrative building in the policy's appendix that lists designated posting places. Ms. Schumacher said that she believes that the thought was that the Office of Information Technology is located in the building. After learning that it is the Department of Mathematics and Statistics that controls the posting space in the lobby of the building, Ms. Schumacher said that she would be happy to change the categorization of Seeley Mudd to an academic building. Professor Moss asked if staff had been consulted during this policy discussion. Ms. Schumacher said that members of the IRWG had polled the ADCs and they

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seemed to prefer having oversight over department-based posting spaces. It was noted that they could enlist the help of student workers to do posting for them. Professor Call said that he would ask that Ms. Schumacher reach out to his department's ADC, Anne Torrey, to make sure that she is informed about any additional responsibility that she may assume for posting materials under the new policy. Ms. Schumacher agreed to ensure that ADCs receive adequate communication about the new policy.

The members commented that the policy holds students accountable for their speech, which seems appropriate, particularly in a world of diminishing anonymity. The committee asked about next steps. Ms. Schumacher said that, with the Committee of Six's endorsement, the IRWG will work to implement the policies. The IRWG is working on other policies that will be brought to the Committee of Six as well. Some may become a part of the Student Code of Conduct, rather than separate policies. She offered the example of a facilities and events space policy. Professor Sitze asked if the IRWG is drafting a social media policy for the college. Ms. Schumacher said that the college has general guidelines at present, and that creating a more comprehensive social media policy is on the IRWG's agenda. Professor Sitze asked if members of the faculty would be welcome to participate in IRWG meetings. Ms. Rutherford said that faculty members are welcome to bring issues of concern to this group. The members thanked Ms. Rutherford and Ms. Schumacher, who left the meeting at 4:48 P.M.

The members next considered a proposal by the Committee of Six's subcommittee on tenure criteria to revise, for the purpose of clarification, the language about the criteria for tenure and procedures followed in tenure decisions that appears in the [Faculty Handbook \(III.E., 3. And 4.\)](#). The proposal includes statements of values at the aspirational level, as well as clarification about what constitutes growth and achievement. The committee as a whole found the proposed language to be compelling, and some members suggested small revisions. It was agreed that, after these changes are incorporated into the draft, it would be helpful to share the proposal with the chairs of academic departments and programs and at the committee's annual meeting with tenure-track faculty, which will take place on May 1 this year. The issue could then be taken up again in the fall and brought to the faculty for a vote, after considering feedback that is received. It was agreed that it would be helpful for the president to consult with the board of trustees about language that is included in this section [\(III. E., 3.\) of the Faculty Handbook](#) that was adopted by trustee vote in 1992. The language focuses on institutional considerations that may play a role at the time of tenure.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

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The twenty-sixth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2017–2018 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:15 P.M. on Monday, April 9, 2018. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Call, Engelhardt, Heim, Jaswal, Moss, Sitze, Dean Epstein, and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with President Martin informing the members that she and other members of the Amherst community had attended funeral services for Christopher Collins ’20. Chris’s family is very appreciative of the college community’s support, the president said. Plans are under way for a celebration of the life of Andrew Dorogi ’20, the president informed the members. (It was later announced that there would be an evening gathering on Memorial Hill on the evening of April 17.) Some students have been speaking with President Martin about other ways that the college can honor Andrew and Chris and draw attention to important mental health issues that many students face. Professor Sitze commented that his recent conversations with some of his students suggest that they would welcome an event in which they could take part. President Martin said that she would keep the committee posted as plans take shape. The president commented that members of the campus community continue to struggle with the tragic losses of the past month. Many are taking advantage of grief counseling and other forms of support that the college is providing.

Continuing with her remarks, President Martin thanked the members of the community who had helped to make the public launch of the college’s comprehensive campaign, *Promise: A campaign for Amherst’s Third Century*, so successful. The alumni who had returned to campus the previous weekend for a series of events had expressed support for the campaign’s priorities— attracting and supporting outstanding students and faculty; meeting student need in the sciences and mathematics; promoting innovation in teaching and learning; providing critical facilities; creating a stronger sense of community and belonging; and supporting the annual fund. President Martin said that she had announced at last Saturday’s event, which had included students, faculty, staff, families, alumni, and other friends of the college, that the *Promise* campaign will be a five-year, \$625 million fundraising effort. The president noted that the college is already more than halfway to this goal, having received significant early support from numerous donors, including a \$100-million gift from an anonymous graduate. This gift, she said, will be used to provide matching funds for other donations to campaign priorities at significant levels. The members offered congratulations on the early success of this effort.

Turning to a different topic, the dean noted that the committee’s meeting with the reaccreditation visiting team on Monday, April 16, would take the place of that week’s regular Committee of Six meeting.

Under “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Engelhardt asked if notification about the posting online of the minutes of the Committee on Priorities and Resources (CPR) and the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) could be added to the email that is sent when the minutes of the Committee of Six are posted on the dean’s website. Dean Epstein agreed said that this process will be followed in the future.

Conversation returned to the work of the subcommittee of the Committee of Six that has been considering questions surrounding the service burden of associate professors and clarification of the standards for promotion to full professor. The members of the subcommittee continue to believe that untenured faculty members should not be on the ballot for the election of the Committee of Six, they said. Professor Heim noted that service on the Committee of Six for faculty at early career stages, unlike all other committee assignments for untenured faculty, cannot be considered in a deliberative way—since service is decided through an electoral process. In addition, when discussing the other subcommittee’s proposal to clarify tenure criteria, the Committee of Six expressed support for stating that less emphasis is placed on service than on scholarship and teaching when evaluating tenure

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dossiers. If the weight of service is less, untenured faculty should not be given such a significant service burden and should be removed from the ballot of the Committee of Six, she argued.

Professors Call, Moss, and Sitze reiterated their view that untenured faculty members should remain on the ballot as a matter of access and inclusion. In her view, Professor Moss noted, removing assistant professors and early-stage associate professors from the ballot would fundamentally alter the make-up of the Committee of Six, a body that is meant to be a representative of the faculty in its role as the executive committee of the faculty. Professor Call commented that more associate professors have been elected in recent years, which argues for retaining the current policy of keeping associate professors who are in their early years in rank on the Committee of Six ballot. He feels confident that the faculty can rely on its own excellent judgement in regard to electing untenured professors. Professor Jaswal commented that it is hard for her to see how the election is truly representative when unwritten rules may not be uniformly communicated and the relevant experience and qualifications of those being elected are not openly presented. In her experience, colleagues newer to the college are limited to basing their judgement on recognizing names of those who speak at faculty meetings and discussing other names with colleagues who have a longer history at the college. It was noted that, in addition to being the executive committee of the faculty, the Committee of Six is also the tenure and promotion committee. Some members commented that it is problematic that, as such, associate professors who are members vote on promotion cases (to full professor) in which they cannot participate at the department level; likewise, and in ways that may strike some as even more problematic, in the current system, assistant professors cannot take part in tenure decisions at the departmental level, but they are required to do so on the Committee of Six. Professor Call commented that there is a tension between the desire for the executive committee of the faculty to be open and representative, and the benefits that come with having experienced members serving on the personnel committee that makes some of the most critical personnel decisions at the college.

Continuing the conversation, the committee noted that responses to the COACHE (Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education) survey indicate that many faculty members feel that the college is generally doing well when it comes to governance, but that associate professors reported that they suffer disproportionately from the burdens of service. The committee returned to the idea of a “service sabbatical,” a concept that some members find appealing. Professor Heim commented that she sees problems with the idea. She noted that, if implemented, the proposal could result in less continuity of membership on faculty committees and the need, particularly, in small departments, for others to step into a chairing role when another colleague opts for a service sabbatical. Professor Sitze, commenting that adopting a service sabbatical could have unanticipated consequences, wondered if such a sabbatical should be taken only in a year after returning from a sabbatic leave. Professor Moss asked if it is envisioned that a medical leave would “count” as a leave for these purposes. The committee agreed that it might be best, if a service sabbatical is adopted, to limit such a sabbatical to the year following any type of leave, including a medical or parenting leave. Under this system, Professor Moss wondered whether service burdens might shift to assistant and associate professors in their early years in rank.

Professor Engelhardt commented that providing clarification for the standards for promotion to full professor is intertwined with the idea of seeking ways to alleviate the service burden for associate professors. The purpose of the latter would be to allow more time for research and attention to teaching. The subcommittee asked for guidance from the other members of the committee on whether there is an appetite for clarifying the promotion language, before moving forward with considering ways to address the service burden on associate professors. Professors Call and Moss argued that the subcommittee’s current proposal, which conveys that the basis of promotion to professor is essentially the same as that used for the tenure decision ([see the Committee of Six minutes](#)

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[of April 2, 2018](#)), would represent a shift in standards, rather than a clarification of current practice. A change to ensure that there is ample evidence of scholarly accomplishment may be appropriate and consistent with the college's expectations, Professor Call noted, but it should be presented as a change.

Professor Sitze expressed support for the proposal, in particular noting that the word "essentially" suggests that, while research, teaching, and service are considered at the time of promotion, there is a difference in expectation between the evaluation at the time of tenure and the time of promotion. President Martin commented that the proposal, in her view, makes the expectation of accomplishment in the areas of scholarship, teaching, and service explicit rather than implicit. The dean concurred. The criteria should be the same as those measured at the time of tenure, but the accomplishment across the criteria could be different, they agreed. Professor Call noted that, for many years, the level of contribution and the balance across the three criteria of scholarship, teaching, and service has varied widely among candidates. Professor Heim argued that, if there is agreement that associate professors should be relieved of service burdens, this change should come with increased expectations in regard to scholarly accomplishment. Other members expressed the view that relief from the Committee of Six ballot would not have a broad enough impact to mitigate what would be a higher standard of scholarly productivity than is currently the case. Professor Heim said that it is her understanding that most associate professors expect that an evaluation at the time of promotion to full professor will include a consideration of publications since the time of tenure. Professor Jaswal pointed out that the service burdens of some faculty are greater than others, and that there is a direct and inequitable impact on faculty members' productivity. Professors Heim and Engelhardt commented that, if there is no agreement on how to clarify the language about promotion to full professor, the subcommittee may not be able to recommend any language that could address the concerns that emerged through the COACHE survey. Professor Moss said that the new program that allows chairs to have course relief should alleviate some of the burden associate professors face after returning from their post-tenure leave, when multiple service obligations often fall to them. Professor Call reiterated that, if there is a new program adopted to alleviate the service burdens of associate professors, he favors a system in which as much choice in the timing of the relief as possible is left in the faculty member's hands.

At 4:10 P.M., Professor Honig, in his role as a member of the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee, joined the meeting to discuss two motions (described in [an April 9, 2018, letter from him to the Committee of Six](#)) that have been developed to bring forward a proposal to award half credits for laboratories. He noted that the first motion seeks a revision to language in the course catalog regarding half credits. In the view of the curriculum committee, these changes are worthwhile independent of awarding half credits for labs, for the reasons described in the letter. The second motion, he commented, directs the registrar to award half credits for labs, unless an opt-out mechanism, as described in the motion, is used. Professor Honig commented that, while the CEP has expressed reservations about the proposal, that committee did review the language of the motions and suggested improvements, which have been incorporated. He noted that, if the faculty does not approve the first motion, it would not make sense to go forward with the second motion. If the first motion is not approved, Professor George, the parliamentarian, has suggested that President Martin, as chair of the faculty meeting, simply suggest to the body that there is no point in taking up the second motion.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Honig, in regard to the first motion, noted that currently, the course catalog states that students need the permission of a class dean to take two half-credit courses in the same semester. However, if it is agreed that half credits may be awarded for labs, science students would have to go to their class dean every time they take two science courses with labs, which happens regularly. Professor Honig explained that this process would be a logistical nightmare for students and for the class deans. He informed the members that he had discussed this issue with

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science faculty members, who had told him that they would prefer that this not be the procedure. Professor Honig had also met with all the class deans about this issue, and their view is that they do *not* need to give permission to take two half credits, as long as the student is taking four full (one-credit) courses. In their experience, taking four courses plus two half credits does not pose the same challenges to students as taking five full courses, which requires class dean approval. Professor Honig said that the class dean would like to remove the language in the catalog that states that four full courses plus two half credits requires approval of a class dean, whether it is decided that labs will be awarded a half credit or not. This catalog change would allow students to take four courses plus two half credits without obtaining permission, which would benefit all students who take half-credit courses.

Professor Honig informed the members that the class deans *do* want to require the approval of a class dean for students who wish to take two half credits, if the student is only taking three full courses (for a total of four credits). The class deans also want to require the approval of a class dean when students take three courses plus one half credit, for 3.5 credits in total (this is current practice, but it is not stated in the catalog). The class deans would like the catalog to reflect this procedure. Professor Honig noted that it is important for the class deans to check that the half credits match in a way that allows the credits to be used for graduation. In addition, it is an opportunity to tell students who are taking 3.5 credits that they are not allowed to drop one of their one-credit courses because it would drop them to two-and-a-half credits, which is below the minimum to be considered a full-time student. The class deans could also have a conversation with stronger students about whether a reduced course load is really necessary, Professor Honig noted. He pointed out that the catalog currently states the following: “All students except Independent Scholars are required to elect four full courses each semester and may elect an additional half course.” He noted that this statement is incorrect since there are students who occasionally take three-and-a-half courses in a semester. Adding the word “normally” before “required” would address this problem. After reviewing the motion, the CEP had also suggested a minor change to the language about taking five courses in a semester, Professor Honig said.

Turning briefly to the second motion, Professor Honig reiterated that it proposes that the registrar be directed to award half credits for labs beginning in the 2019–2020 academic year, unless an opt-out mechanism, as described in the motion, is used.

Professor Sitze wondered whether the first proposed change might play into students’ tendency toward perfectionism and how advisors would be able to say “no” to strong students who wish to take a reduced course load. Professor Call expressed the view that the majority of stronger students will take four-and-a-half credits. Professor Sitze wondered if a reduced course load should perhaps be triggered by a grade threshold, for example a B-minus. The dean expressed concern about legislating such a threshold, and the members agreed that it would be up to advisors to offer guidance to students who wish to take a reduced course load.

At the conclusion of the conversation with Professor Honig, the members decided to make some slight revisions to the motions, which appear below in their revised form, and to vote on them at their next meeting. Professor Honig then left the meeting.

Motion

As recommended by the Curriculum Committee, the Committee of Six proposes the following revision, to become effective in the 2019–2020 academic year, to the language of the *Amherst College Catalog* on pages seventy-five and seventy-six of the current catalog, as indicated below:

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS

All students except Independent Scholars are **NORMALLY** required to elect four full courses each semester ~~and may elect an additional half course.~~

~~The election of a half course in addition to the normal program is at the discretion of the student and without special permission. A student may not elect more than one half course in any semester except by consent of the class dean and the departments concerned. In such cases the student's program will be three full courses and two half courses. Half courses are not normally included in the 32-course requirement for graduation.~~

~~A student may combine two half courses to be counted as equivalent to a full course if (1) the student completes 4.5 courses in one semester and 3.5 courses in a subsequent semester, and the two halves match in a manner designated by the offering department, and with permission of the academic advisor; or (2) the halves match within the same semester in a manner designated by the offering department, and with permission of the academic advisor and the class dean. No more than four half courses may be so combined for credit toward the degree.~~

STUDENTS MAY ELECT ONE OR TWO HALF COURSES IN ADDITION TO FOUR FULL COURSES AT THEIR DISCRETION AND WITHOUT SPECIAL PERMISSION. HALF COURSES ARE NOT NORMALLY INCLUDED IN THE REQUIREMENT OF THIRTY-TWO COURSES FOR THE DEGREE; HOWEVER, WITH PERMISSION OF THE ACADEMIC ADVISOR AND THE CLASS DEAN, A STUDENT MAY COMBINE TWO HALF COURSES TO BE COUNTED AS EQUIVALENT TO A FULL COURSE IF (1) THE STUDENT COMPLETES 4.5 COURSES IN ONE SEMESTER AND 3.5 COURSES IN A SUBSEQUENT SEMESTER, AND THE TWO HALVES MATCH IN A MANNER DESIGNATED BY THE OFFERING DEPARTMENT; OR (2) THE HALVES MATCH WITHIN THE SAME SEMESTER IN A MANNER DESIGNATED BY THE OFFERING DEPARTMENT, WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE OFFERING DEPARTMENT (IN THIS CASE, THE STUDENT'S PROGRAM WILL BE THREE OR FOUR FULL COURSES AND TWO HALF COURSES). NO MORE THAN FOUR HALF COURSES MAY BE SO COMBINED FOR CREDIT TOWARD THE DEGREE.

In exceptional cases a student may, with the permission of both the student's academic advisor and class dean, take five full courses for credit during a given semester. Such permission is normally granted only to students of demonstrated superior academic ability, responsibility, and will. Fifth courses cannot be used to accelerate graduation. On occasion, a student who has failed a course may be permitted to take a fifth course in a given semester if, in the judgment of the Committee on Academic Standing, this additional work can be undertaken ~~without prejudice to the student's regular program~~ **WITHOUT JEOPARDIZING THE SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF ALL COURSES TAKEN IN THAT SEMESTER.** Students may only retake a course for which they have received a failing grade or from which they have withdrawn in a prior semester.

Motion

As recommended by the Curriculum Committee, the Committee of Six proposes that, beginning in the 2019–2020 academic year, science laboratories be awarded a half credit. However, departments or programs—for courses that are taught by different faculty members in the same semester or a different semester—may opt out of awarding a half credit for a laboratory. In addition, faculty

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members may opt out of awarding a half credit for their laboratories if they are the sole instructor offering a course title. The department, program, or faculty member must inform the registrar of the credit to be awarded prior to pre-registration.

Continuing with “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Moss asked, on behalf of a colleague, if it is correct that the college will have a budget deficit of \$900,000 in the coming fiscal year. If such a shortfall exists, she asked what the process would be to cut the gap, and to what extent the CPR would be involved. The dean said that the Office of the Chief Financial and Administrative Officer has found savings that have eliminated the shortfall. It is possible that \$450,000 will be available for new spending. The dean noted that the budget remains a challenge. While the college experienced returns of 15.5 percent in fiscal year 2017, well above benchmarks and the peer median, the three-year average from fiscal year 2015 to fiscal year 2017 totaled 5.5 percent. These returns are lower than the long-term average, and are contributing to slower overall growth in revenues that are available for the budget. Amherst makes use of a “smoothing” formula, and thus a rolling three-year average of returns is used as the basis for determining the budget. It is anticipated that most requests for new funding will not be granted, but cuts are not expected, Dean Epstein said. The CPR is consulted regularly, she noted, and weighs in on recommendations for staff FTE requests.

Professor Sitze next asked the president about the ongoing investigation that has been undertaken by the Department of Justice into some colleges’ practice of sharing information with one another about prospective students who make early-decision commitments. The investigation is seeking to determine whether colleges are violating antitrust laws by doing so. President Martin confirmed that Amherst has been contacted by the Department of Justice, and is cooperating fully. She said that Amherst and other schools share lists of students who are admitted through early decision. Early-decision is a moral contract, the president said, and colleges will release students from an early-decision commitment only for financial reasons. Colleges want to ensure that students are not applying to more than one school through early decision, so that slots are not being taken up by students who have not made a commitment to attend if admitted. Some may feel that the collaboration among the schools may benefit institutions more than it does students. President Martin said that she does not feel that there is ill intent on the part of the colleges. It may be that the practice is no longer needed, as the Common Application does not permit students to submit more than one early-decision application. Professor Sitze next asked if Amherst is offering opportunities for students to register to vote, and encouraging them to do so, in advance of the mid-term election. The dean said that she will contact the Office of Student Affairs, which should move forward with this project, in her view. The other members and the president agreed that doing so is important.

The committee next reviewed information provided by the Faculty Committee on Student Fellowships on its nominees for Rufus B. Kellogg University Fellowships. The fellowships committee informed the committee that, in recent years, the fellowships committee has awarded the Rufus B. Kellogg University Fellowship to three students in one year (with one of the three going to a student planning to study in Germany). The “open” Kelloggs offered \$30,000, and the “German,” \$19,000. The fund has increased sufficiently to now allow for a total of four awards. In consultation with the Offices of Advancement, the Controller, and General Counsel, the fellowships committee has decided to award one “German” Kellogg and only one “open” Kellogg, leaving the second “open” award to be conferred next year, and the third in the year after. The cycle will begin again three years from now. In this way, one student in every graduating class will have the opportunity to receive this generous and prestigious award. The amount of the “German” Kellogg this year will be \$20,000, and the “open” Kellogg, \$30,000, each renewable for up to three years. The committee voted six in favor and zero opposed on the recommendation of nominees for Kellogg Fellowships.

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The committee returned to the proposal of the subcommittee on tenure criteria, which had been revised to incorporate feedback offered by the other members at the committee's last meeting. The members expressed support for sharing the proposal with the chairs of academic departments and programs at the chairs' meeting on April 13, as well as with tenure-track faculty at the Committee of Six's meeting with this cohort on May 1. After receiving feedback, the committee will continue to revise the proposal, as needed, the members agreed. The hope is to have discussions about the proposal with the full faculty in the fall.

The members next discussed how to move forward with the Pass-Fail/NRO proposal, which has been recommended by the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee and forwarded to the Committee of Six by the CEP. It was agreed that the dean should share the proposal with the chairs of academic departments and programs on April 13. If questions arise, it might be best to have a committee-of-the-whole conversation at the May 1 faculty meeting, it was agreed. Professor Engelhardt wondered whether departments might not wish to have the NRO or pass-fail for classes that are required for the major. Another question that was raised was the process that the registrar would follow for keeping track of students' use of the NRO.

The members then briefly discussed [a proposal, forwarded by the CEP \(along with the attached documents\)](#), for a Five College Certificate in Reproductive Health, Rights and Justice. President Martin said that she would appreciate having more time to review the proposal. She wonders if it might be too focused on a particular point of view. The president raised concern about an over-emphasis on advocacy that might emerge should the college approve the certificate. Dean Epstein said that some members of the CEP had had similar concerns, but that they had been reassured by [Professor Basu's responses to their questions](#). Some members and the president wondered whether incorporating the goals of the proposed certificate into the existing Five College Certificate in Culture, Health and Science might be preferable to approving the new certificate proposal. Some members expressed concern about the balance of courses within the proposal, commenting that are only a relatively small number of courses that would be taken at Amherst and Mount Holyoke. It was agreed that, even if the current proposal is approved, graduating seniors who have taken the requisite courses before there was a formal certificate could not be awarded a certificate this year.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

Amended May 3, 2018

The twenty-seventh meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2017–2018 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:15 P.M. on Monday, April 23, 2018. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Call, Engelhardt, Heim, Jaswal, Moss, Sitze, Dean Epstein, and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder. The meeting began with Dean Epstein reminding the members that the Committee of Six’s annual meeting with untenured faculty members has been set for May 1. Turning to another matter, the dean thanked the committee for meeting with the members of the NEASC reaccreditation team, which had been on campus April 15–18. The team will send a first draft of its report to President Martin no later than May 30, 2018, and the president will have the opportunity to respond to any inaccuracies of fact, Dean Epstein explained. The final team report will be sent to the college by June 20, 2018. President Martin and President Liebowitz, chair of the visiting team, will meet with the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (CIHE) in the fall of 2018. The CIHE will later notify the college about its “action on accreditation.” The members then turned to a personnel matter.

Continuing with her remarks, the dean requested that Natasha Kim ’18, a member of the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee, be invited to attend the May 1 meeting of the faculty. The members agreed that an invitation should be extended to Ms. Kim. In response to Professor Moss’s earlier inquiry, Dean Epstein noted that faculty and staff who would like to request accommodations should [follow the process outlined on the web site of the Office of Human Resources](#). Professor Moss commented that she was very pleased to learn about the process, which seems clear and reasonable in her view. She asked if, in addition to including a link to the site in the minutes of this discussion, information about the process could be communicated to faculty and staff in other ways. President Martin said that she would soon be writing to the community about the topic of accessibility and that she would be happy to include this information and to share the link to the site. Professor Moss thanked the president for her willingness to do so. Professor Jaswal asked if there is a specialist with the Office of Human Resources who focuses on issues of accessibility. Dean Epstein said that it is her understanding that there is no single person who focuses on accessibility. Those who have questions should contact the office, and a representative will help them. The dean noted that she will not be involved in making any determinations about eligibility for accommodations and accommodations that should be provided. She will simply be informed about the accommodations that will be provided. When appropriate, her office will help implement them.

Under “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Moss, on behalf of a colleague, asked if there is a college policy governing breastfeeding at faculty meetings. The colleague had noted the recent rule change in the United State Senate that has made it possible for Senator Tammy Duckworth to breastfeed on the Senate floor. The dean said that she is not aware of a policy that would prevent breastfeeding. The committee expressed support for welcoming mothers to nurse their babies at faculty meetings.

Dean Epstein next raised the topic of the proliferation of departmental and program prizes. It has been her understanding, she said, that a decision had been made a number of years ago that departments and programs that already have at least one prize that is announced at Senior Assembly would not be permitted to have any new prizes announced. Professor Call said that this has been the practice for the most part, he believes, but that he knows that departments with a large number of majors can find it particularly challenging to limit themselves to the number of awards that they had when they had fewer students. The dean asked if the practice should continue to be limiting the number of prizes that are announced. The members agreed that the dean should use her discretion in considering opportunities to have new departmental prizes announced when departments already have one or more prizes. The members also discussed the practice of dividing an individual prize among a number of students. It was agreed that departments should be encouraged to take this

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approach sparingly, unless a prize carries a good deal of funding with it, in which case it often makes sense to divide the funds among a number of students.

Conversation turned to the committee's proposal to revise, for the purpose of clarification, the language about the criteria for tenure and procedures followed in tenure decisions that appears in the [*Faculty Handbook* \(III.E., 3. and 4.\)](#). The proposed revisions were shared at the recent meeting of chairs of academic departments and programs, the dean noted. The members decided to make some changes to the proposal, based on feedback that the chairs had provided. These suggestions were shared with the Committee of Six via notes that Associate Dean Tobin had taken at the meeting. The next step, it was agreed, should be to share the proposal, with the revisions incorporated, with tenure-track faculty who attend the May 1 meeting with the Committee of Six, and to get their feedback. On the related topic of evaluating teaching effectiveness, President Martin and Dean Epstein said that, in their meetings with tenure-track faculty, there have been repeated requests that a common teaching evaluation form be developed as a matter of equity and fairness. Professor Heim expressed support for developing a form as soon as possible. The president, dean, and Committee of Six agreed that this effort should be a top priority, while noting the complexities involved in gaining consensus among departments. It was further agreed that the college should continue to take a qualitative approach to evaluating teaching effectiveness and should not switch to a numeric rating system.

The members next discussed the revised proposal of the Committee of Six's subcommittee that is considering the service loads of associate professors and the clarification of the *Faculty Handbook* language (III. G.) about promotion to full professor. Taking into account the full Committee of Six's discussion of the subcommittee's earlier proposal, the subcommittee is now proposing that tenured associate professors be given the option of receiving a "service sabbatical" in conjunction with any one of their sabbatical leaves. Under the proposal, a service sabbatical would come the year following a one- or two-semester sabbatical leave. Tenured associate professors would elect a service sabbatical in consultation with their department, and with the approval of the dean of the faculty. In addition to responding to the COACHE (Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education) survey, the sub-committee views the proposal of a service sabbatical as linked to—or laying the groundwork for—clarifying the criteria for promotion to full professor. A service sabbatical, the subcommittee feels, clears additional space for research and creative work. In turn, associate professors, with the benefit of promotion criteria that have been clarified (or changed) to reflect the extent to which research and creative work, teaching, and service factor into promotion, can, the subcommittee hopes, more effectively manage the cross-pressures on associate professors' time and energies.

The members expressed support for the proposal. It was agreed that the revised version of the proposed language about the criteria for tenure should be incorporated into the language being developed by the subcommittee to clarify the criteria for promotion. Professors Moss and Call reiterated their view that the new language represents a change rather than a clarification, and should be brought forward as such. It was noted that adopting the new language, whether it is seen as a clarification or a change, will require a vote of the faculty. The members concurred that, after the committee reviews the promotion language at its next meeting, and ties it to the associate professor service sabbatical proposal, the full proposal, with the two components, should be shared at the next meeting of the chairs. Professor Moss commented that the new program to compensate chairs of departments and programs, which includes the option for a course release, should be seen as major step toward addressing the service burdens on associate professors. She expressed the view that, with this program, the dean has already demonstrated an awareness of this problem and has responded to it in ways that are significant.

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The committee reviewed a draft agenda for a possible faculty meeting on May 1. The members first considered the following motions and voted, in each case, six in favor and zero opposed on the substance of the motions and six in favor and zero opposed to forward the motions to the faculty:

Motion

As recommended by the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee, the Committee of Six proposes the following revision, to become effective in the 2019–2020 academic year, to the language of the *Amherst College Catalog* on pages seventy-five and seventy-six of the current catalog, as indicated below:

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

All students except Independent Scholars are **NORMALLY** required to elect four full courses each semester ~~and may elect an additional half course.~~

~~The election of a half course in addition to the normal program is at the discretion of the student and without special permission. A student may not elect more than one half course in any semester except by consent of the class dean and the departments concerned. In such cases the student's program will be three full courses and two half courses. Half courses are not normally included in the 32 course requirement for graduation.~~

~~A student may combine two half courses to be counted as equivalent to a full course if (1) the student completes 4.5 courses in one semester and 3.5 courses in a subsequent semester, and the two halves match in a manner designated by the offering department, and with permission of the academic advisor; or (2) the halves match within the same semester in a manner designated by the offering department, and with permission of the academic advisor and the class dean. No more than four half courses may be so combined for credit toward the degree.~~

STUDENTS MAY ELECT ONE OR TWO HALF COURSES IN ADDITION TO FOUR FULL COURSES AT THEIR DISCRETION AND WITHOUT SPECIAL PERMISSION. HALF COURSES ARE NOT NORMALLY INCLUDED IN THE REQUIREMENT OF THIRTY-TWO COURSES FOR THE DEGREE; HOWEVER, WITH PERMISSION OF THE ACADEMIC ADVISOR AND THE CLASS DEAN, A STUDENT MAY COMBINE TWO HALF COURSES TO BE COUNTED AS EQUIVALENT TO A FULL COURSE IF (1) THE STUDENT COMPLETES 4.5 COURSES IN ONE SEMESTER AND 3.5 COURSES IN A SUBSEQUENT SEMESTER, AND THE TWO HALVES MATCH IN A MANNER DESIGNATED BY THE OFFERING DEPARTMENT; OR (2) THE HALVES MATCH WITHIN THE SAME SEMESTER IN A MANNER DESIGNATED BY THE OFFERING DEPARTMENT, WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE OFFERING DEPARTMENT (IN THIS CASE, THE STUDENT'S PROGRAM WILL BE THREE OR FOUR FULL COURSES AND TWO HALF COURSES). NO MORE THAN FOUR HALF COURSES MAY BE SO COMBINED FOR CREDIT TOWARD THE DEGREE.

In exceptional cases a student may, with the permission of both the student's academic advisor and class dean, take five full courses for credit during a given semester. Such permission is normally granted only to students of demonstrated superior academic ability, responsibility, and will. Fifth courses cannot be used to accelerate graduation. On occasion, a student who has failed a course may be permitted to take a fifth course in a given semester if, in the judgment of

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the Committee on Academic Standing, this additional work can be undertaken ~~without prejudice to the student's regular program~~ **WITHOUT JEOPARDIZING THE SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF ALL COURSES TAKEN IN THAT SEMESTER.** Students may only retake a course for which they have received a failing grade or from which they have withdrawn in a prior semester.

Motion

As recommended by the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee, the Committee of Six proposes that, beginning in the 2019–2020 academic year, science laboratories be awarded a half credit. However, departments or programs—for courses that are taught by different faculty members in the same semester or a different semester—may opt out of awarding a half credit for a laboratory. In addition, faculty members may opt out of awarding a half credit for their laboratories if they are the sole instructor offering a course title. The department, program, or faculty member must inform the registrar of the credit to be awarded prior to pre-registration.

The members next voted unanimously to have a committee-of-the-whole discussion for up to an hour to discuss the proposal from the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee that is presented in the proposed revision to the language of the *Amherst College Catalog* on page seventy-one of the current catalog, as indicated below:

NON-RECORDED/PASS-FAIL OPTION

Amherst College students may ~~choose, with the permission of the instructor, a pass/fail arrangement in two~~ **ELECT TO TAKE UP TO FOUR DESIGNATED COURSES** of the ~~32~~ **THIRTY-TWO** courses required for the degree **AS EITHER NRO OR PASS/FAIL**, but **MAY** not ~~in~~ take more than one **SUCH** course in any one semester. **INSTRUCTOR PERMISSION IS REQUIRED FOR BOTH OPTIONS.**

TO ELECT A COURSE AS NRO, STUDENTS FILE THE NRO FORM, SIGNED BY THEIR ADVISOR AND THEIR INSTRUCTOR, WITH THE OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR. AFTER OBTAINING THE INSTRUCTOR'S SIGNATURE, STUDENTS SHOULD INDICATE THE LOWEST LETTER GRADE THEY WISH TO HAVE RECORDED ON THEIR PERMANENT RECORD. THE MINIMUM GRADE SET BY THE STUDENT FOR THE NRO WILL NOT BE SHARED WITH THE INSTRUCTOR. THE DEADLINE FOR FILING THE NRO IS THE FINAL DAY OF THE ADD-DROP PERIOD. TO ELECT A COURSE AS PASS/FAIL, STUDENTS FILE THE PASS/FAIL FORM, SIGNED BY THEIR INSTRUCTOR AND THEIR ADVISOR, WITH THE OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR BEFORE THE EIGHTH WEEK OF THE SEMESTER.

IN EITHER CASE, INSTRUCTORS WILL ASSIGN A LETTER GRADE AT THE END OF THE COURSE. IN THE CASE OF THE NRO OPTION, IF THE GRADE IS EQUAL TO OR HIGHER THAN THE MINIMUM GRADE SET BY THE STUDENT, THAT GRADE WILL BECOME PART OF THE STUDENT'S PERMANENT TRANSCRIPT. IF THE GRADE ASSIGNED IS LOWER THAN THE STUDENT'S ELECTED MINIMUM GRADE, BUT IS STILL PASSING ("D" OR BETTER), A "P" WILL BE ENTERED ON THE PERMANENT RECORD. IF THE LETTER GRADE ASSIGNED BY THE INSTRUCTOR IS AN "F," AN "F" WILL BE RECORDED. IN THE CASE OF THE PASS/FAIL OPTION, ONLY "P" OR "F" CAN BE RECORDED. ~~The choice of a pass/fail~~

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~~alternative must be made by the last day of add/drop at the beginning of the semester and must have the approval of the student's instructor and all major advisors. No grade-point equivalent will be assigned to a "Pass.;" but courses taken on this basis will receive either a "P" or an "F" from the instructor, although in the regular evaluation of work done during the semester the instructor may choose to assign the usual grades for work submitted by students exercising this option.~~

The Committee then voted six in favor and zero opposed to forward the faculty meeting agenda to the faculty.

Conversation turned to [the proposal](#) from the College Council to revise its charge. The members suggested a number of revisions to the proposal, noting in particular that some of the existing language is antiquated. It was agreed that these changes would be discussed at the committee's next meeting. In addition, the committee discussed the College Council's proposal to revise the honor code. The members decided that it would be helpful for Justin Smith, associate general counsel, to review the document and to offer some suggestions to the College Council to enhance clarity, further define some terms that are used, and modernize the language of the code. After this step has been completed, and changes have been incorporated into the document, the Committee of Six will consider the honor code once again.

The meeting concluded with a discussion of [a letter from Professor Wagaman](#), which relates to the honor code and focuses on issues surrounding intellectual responsibility. In the letter, she requests that the Committee of Six "consider a discussion around intellectual responsibility at Amherst, with the hope that such a discussion may expand to the faculty as a whole, and may extend into discussion of policy regarding student conduct in general." Professor Wagaman notes that incidents surrounding intellectual responsibility are underreported on campus, and that policies and practices for reporting and addressing such incidents are in need of re-examination. The committee, the president, and the dean agreed that Professor Wagaman has raised important issues. The dean confirmed that that underreporting of incidents surrounding intellectual responsibility is indeed a problem at the college. The committee decided that the dean should share Professor Wagaman's letter at the next meeting of the chairs of departments and programs and should ask chairs to confer with colleagues to try to gain a sense of the number and type of incidents that have taken place within their departments. In the fall, it was agreed, there should be a discussion at a faculty meeting about intellectual responsibility, during which departmental information could inform conversation.

The meeting adjourned at 5:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

The twenty-eighth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2017–2018 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:15 P.M. on Monday, April 30, 2018. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Call, Engelhardt, Heim, Jaswal, Moss, Sitze, Dean Epstein, and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with a brief discussion of a personnel matter. Under “Topics of the day,” in anticipation of the faculty meeting on Tuesday (May 1), President Martin shared her plans to announce the names of those who will be awarded honorary degrees at this year’s commencement. Dean Epstein then informed the members that the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee wishes to share its final report with faculty, students, and staff later in the week. Professor Sitze asked when the Committee of Six and the faculty will discuss the report. The dean responded that she expects that the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP), the Committee of Six, and the faculty as a whole will consider the report early in the fall 2018 semester. The committee then approved the distribution of the report, which the dean said will be done via a password-protected web page.

Under “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Jaswal informed the members that Professor Bishop has indicated to her that he may offer amendments to two of the motions—the proposal to revise the catalog language about half courses, required permissions, and “matching,” and the other proposal to award half credit for science laboratories—that are on the faculty meeting agenda for Tuesday’s meeting. The committee asked Professor Jaswal to ask Professor Bishop if he would be willing to share his amendments in advance of the meeting. In this way, if he chooses to propose the changes, it will be possible to project the language, which would aid discussion. She agreed to do so.

Professor Jaswal noted that Professor Bishop may suggest eliminating the requirement that two half courses must be determined to “match,” in a curricular sense, in order to be counted as a full course. Professor Call commented that making it easier to combine half courses to make a full course, for all students—rather than just students taking labs—may not be a positive step. The point was raised that the music department has long held the view that a music lesson taken as a half course should not be combined with a different half course to make a full course. Professor Engelhardt said that, if the matching requirement is eliminated, it would be important to discuss whether departments have the authority to determine if courses that they offer as half courses can be combined across the curriculum to form a full course.

Continuing with “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Sitze asked if Amherst’s new chief student affairs officer, Hikaru “Karu” Kozuma, who will begin his position at the college on July 1, will reconsider the wisdom of the anonymous reporting system that is currently in place. Professor Sitze expressed concern that, under this system, it is not possible for students to face their accusers, which he noted is at odds with basic principles in the Constitution and the criminal justice system. President Martin noted that the Presidential Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion is exploring different reporting systems and may make a recommendation for a new system. Professor Engelhardt, who is a member of the task force, said that the group feels that the college should work toward a restorative justice model that does not include anonymous reporting. He believes that a good long-term foundation will be built to facilitate change.

Professor Moss, on behalf of a colleague, next asked about the status of the campus climate action plan. President Martin responded that the basic tenets of the plan have been shared on the college’s website and with the board of trustees, as have some early recommendations. The trustees expressed support for the principles of the plan, which is not yet at the stage of being brought forward for approval. There are issues of cost that surround some of the recommendations, for example, the president said. The next step will be an on-campus process

of consultation, she noted. President Martin commented that some activities that will become part of the plan are already under way, in particular through the work of Laura Draucker, director of the college's Office of Environmental Sustainability.

Continuing with questions, Professor Call asked Dean Epstein, who is co-chairing the search committee for the new dean of admission and financial aid, for an update on the progress of the search. The dean said that plans call for bringing candidates for the position to campus over the next several weeks for meetings with small groups of faculty, students, and staff. The dean and Professor Hall, co-chair of the search, in collaboration with President Martin, will determine the members of the community who will speak with the candidates. It is hoped that a new dean of admission and financial aid will be in place by July 1, Dean Epstein said.

Professor Jaswal next noted that she had just returned from a summit at Yale about the Being Human in STEM Initiative, during which Tricia Serio, dean of the College of Natural Sciences at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, had reported that UMass faculty are asked to include information in their annual reports about the ways in which they have worked to enhance the climate on campus. Professor Jaswal expressed the view that having Amherst faculty share information about what they do in this realm would signal the value of this work. She noted that, at the time of reappointment, tenure, and promotion, candidates and departments could be asked to provide this information. The dean suggested that Professor Jaswal discuss this idea with next year's Committee of Six, which could consider whether to request this information via the dean's letters to chairs and candidates about reappointment, tenure, and promotion.

Noting that there would be a meeting of the chairs of departments and programs on May 4, the committee asked the dean to seek the chairs' feedback about the sub-committee's proposal to address the service burdens of associate professors and the clarification of the *Faculty Handbook* language (III. G.) about promotion to full professor. Professor Moss suggested that the proposals also be shared with all associate professors, as a relatively small number of chairs are associate professors, and because, if implemented, the proposals will have the most impact on those in this rank, she noted. The dean agreed to do so in the fall.

Conversation turned to the report of the Ad Hoc Faculty Committee on Athletics. Professor Moss began the discussion by saying how impressed she is with the thoughtfulness and balance of the ad hoc committee's consideration of what is a serious and sensitive topic. She and the other members of the Committee of Six thanked the members of the ad hoc committee for the time and care that they have devoted to this report. Professor Engelhardt offered praise for the report's focus on the integration of athletics and academics, rather than athlete/non-athlete identities. Professor Sitze, a member of the ad hoc committee, noted that the final version of the report, which was preceded by two draft iterations, is the result of a great deal of consultation between faculty and staff from athletics, advancement, and admission. Professor Jaswal expressed appreciation for the broad range of perspectives covered in the report.

Noting the transition in the leadership of admission and financial aid and that the Faculty Committee on Admission and Financial Aid (FCAFA) is being encouraged to return to meeting with greater regularity to ensure the robust fulfillment of its charge, it was agreed that ensuring that trust is built on all sides is essential. The dean commented that, while the faculty does not oversee admission, the faculty must feel that admission policy and practice is reasonable and transparent. Dean Epstein said that colleagues in admission want the faculty to understand what is going on with this very important function of the college. Professor Engelhardt noted that having greater specificity will be another step forward. Some members expressed the view that some of the recommendations of the report may not gain traction. Dean Epstein said that

she would not assume this to be true. President Martin expressed tremendous admiration for the work of the ad hoc committee and for its report. While she does not agree with all of the recommendations that have been made, and anticipates that some of these ideas, in their current form, may present a challenge to implement, she looks forward to discussion and consideration of all of the recommendations.

Professor Heim also praised the report. She expressed concern about the proposal to strengthen the position of faculty athletics representative (FAR) and to give those who occupy this position two course releases in each year that they occupy the role. The description of the FAR's responsibilities suggests to her that some of the duties should be performed by staff in athletics, rather than by a faculty member, and she worries about cutting a Professor's teaching load in half for this purpose. She noted that the members of the Committee of Six, which is tasked with very important and time-consuming work, are given a single course release each year. Professor Sitze said that the idea of having faculty "translators," and building up institutional memory within the faculty about athletics, is appealing to the ad hoc committee. He also acknowledged that the position should have been described in ways that better convey the ad hoc committee's conception of the position. It was agreed that many of the responsibilities seem to have a compliance function that perhaps should be within the purview of a staff member who could serve as a compliance officer. President Martin expressed support for this idea, rather than having a faculty member take on the role. She agrees that the athletics department should not be the only "check" on athletics. Some members felt that having an "enforcer" of this kind would be valuable, but would not serve the purpose of helping to strengthen the relationship between the faculty and athletics. Dean Epstein noted that her office has been taking steps in this area, for example through organizing lunches for faculty and coaches. Professor Call suggested that it would be preferable to ensure that there is a faculty position that is more relevant and specific to Amherst to support the goals that have been described, rather than combining such a position with the one that is required under the rules of the NCAA. Professor Moss agreed that it is not ideal for a faculty member to serve in a compliance role. She likes the spirit of embedding a faculty member within athletics, however. Professor Sitze commented that the position, as envisioned, is intended to address concerns of the faculty that go beyond integration. He expressed the view that the course-release proposal could be re-visited. The idea of having the FAR serve, ex officio, as the chair of the Committee on Education and Athletics was raised. The dean said that the college does not offer course release for chairing faculty committees.

Professor Call noted that the ad hoc committee's report seems to suggest that particular trends within athletics at the college came as surprise to the committee, rather than taking the view that some of these are the result of policy decisions that the admission office made with the support of the faculty and the FCAFA at the time. He commented that a lack of awareness of some trends within athletics correlates with a transition within the faculty, partially replicating a paradigm that occurred two decades ago. At that time, the creation of the College Committee on Admission and Financial Aid (CCAFA) was thought to be a vehicle that would enable faculty to monitor trends more effectively and help to rebuild trust between the faculty and the admission office. New faculty, Professor Call commented, may be less aware of past history because of the loss of some institutional memory that has occurred during this period of transition, less communication, and less knowledge of the faculty's role in monitoring trends. Professor Moss expressed the view that it is the responsibility of the admission office to provide the members of the FCAFA with the information that enables them to understand these complex trends. In her view, the current system can present barriers for faculty when it comes to acquiring the concrete knowledge that is needed to do so. President Martin expressed the

view that the report of the ad hoc committee will help provide such information. Professor Jaswal agreed and said that the report lays out nicely what data should be provided on a regular basis to the FCAFA from admission as a matter of course. It was agreed that the FCAFA should return to the practice of sharing annual reports of its work with the faculty to ensure that the faculty is kept informed.

Concluding the conversation about the report, Professor Sitze, turning to another topic covered in the report under the rubric of strengthening relations between faculty and coaches, commented that the ad hoc committee feels that it would be informative for the Committee of Six, rather than just the dean of the faculty, to review the reappointment and promotion cases of coaches. In this way, faculty would be able to learn more about the work of coaches. The members noted that greater communication between faculty and coaches would be beneficial for coaches as well, who in some cases have greater influence on students' academic decisions and habits than faculty members. In considering possibilities for close interactions beyond the faculty liaison model, Professor Jaswal suggested a variation on the group-advising model mentioned in the report of the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee, in which a group of students might meet with a faculty member and a coach for joint advising sessions. The faculty/coach advising partnership could enable non-athletes to benefit from some of the leadership mentoring that is typically limited to athletes, while exposing the coach to academic advice and mentoring from a faculty perspective. Professor Sitze noted that, while some of his students definitely seemed to benefit from their team communities during the difficult spring semester, other students have reported feeling limited by team communities. He also stressed the need for "captains' practices," and the time commitment they impose for athletes, to be examined carefully and addressed based on the findings. The members discussed the emphasis in the report, as a faculty report, on the need to find the appropriate integration between academics and intercollegiate athletics, rather than the appropriate balance. The members agreed that the goal should be for athletes to have co-curricular experiences at the college that extend beyond athletics, while noting that the time commitment that is required for athletics makes doing so a challenge. The dean noted that the admission office is cognizant of this goal and is already taking it into consideration when considering candidates. President Martin stressed the important role that the Office of Student Affairs should play in helping to create a social life on campus that is more inclusive. The members said that they look forward to the faculty's discussion of the report on May 15.

Dean Epstein next informed the members that the college will soon launch the Meiklejohn Fellows Program. The new program is intended to enhance the experience of low-income and first-generation students at Amherst, the dean explained. Currently, the graduation rates for these cohorts are distressingly low. The dean noted that, for the purposes of this program, *low-income* will be defined as a parental contribution of \$5,000 or less. Amherst will invite all low-income and first-generation college students, more than one hundred in number, in the class of 2022 to become Meiklejohn Fellows. Participants will be guaranteed a meaningful summer experience, either a paid internship or research opportunity, during their first or second summers at the college. To receive this funding, participants will be required to attend programming organized by the Loeb Center for Career Exploration and Planning and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. It is hoped that this programming will help foster a sense of belonging at the college, and that it will also prompt participants to think about career exploration so that they can make the most of their guaranteed summer experience, the dean noted. The remainder of the meeting was devoted to the consideration of committee assignments.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

The twenty-ninth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2017–2018 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 2:45 P.M. on Monday, May 7, 2018. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Call, Engelhardt, Heim, Jaswal, Moss, Sitze, Dean Epstein, and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with the dean noting that the memorial service for Professor Ferguson, which had taken place the day before, had been lovely. The other members who had attended agreed. Professor Moss commented on the outstanding work that Austin Huot, director of conferences and special events, and his team had done to make all of the arrangements that the planning group had requested. On behalf of the group, of which she was a member, Professor Moss expressed her appreciation.

The dean informed the committee that she had received a request from the Association of Amherst Students (AAS) that a representative of that body, Renai Foster ’19, be permitted to attend the faculty meeting to be held on May 15. The purpose would be to announce the recipient of the Association of Amherst Students (AAS) distinguished teaching award. The committee agreed that Ms. Foster is welcome to attend the faculty meeting.

After confirming the final revisions that the committee has proposed to the charge of the College Council, Dean Epstein informed the members of her intention to share these suggestions with the College Council. The dean said that she anticipates that a discussion about the charge, and a vote by the faculty on some revisions to it, will take place in the next academic year. The members then turned to a personnel matter, after which the members discussed some committee assignments.

Under “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Moss expressed appreciation to President Martin for the email that the president had sent to the former members of Presidential Task Force on Accessibility and Inclusion. In that correspondence, the president had offered the task force members an update on the college’s efforts to improve accessibility and inclusion at Amherst. Professor Moss, who has served on the task force, noted that she had been interested to learn that a consultant will be engaged to conduct an “accessibility audit” of the campus, beginning this summer. She expressed some concern that this work would take place during a time when many faculty members and most students are not on campus, limiting participation by these important constituencies. The president responded that it is her understanding that Norm Jones, chief diversity and inclusion officer, has decided that having the audit process begin during a less pressing time, when there is more time to focus on the project, will be helpful. President Martin commented that the project will continue into the fall, and perhaps into the spring. There will be opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to engage with the consultant in the fall, she said. Professor Jaswal next commented on the success of the Walk for Mental Health, which had been organized to raise awareness about mental health concerns on campus, and of CareFest, which had featured a number of fun activities to relieve stress. Professor Jaswal expressed thanks that the college had organized the two events, both of which had taken place on May 2, and that Amherst had so generously contributed funds as a result of the impressive community turn-out.

Conversation turned to [a summary, forwarded to the committee by the Consultative Group of Untenured Faculty](#), that describes the activities of the group for this academic year, and a set of concerns held by untenured faculty members. The dean described some steps that are already being taken to address many of these concerns (see the summary for a description of them), and plans to address others. For example, Dean Epstein informed the members that her office is currently developing a more robust two-and-a-half-day orientation program for new faculty, which will begin in the fall of 2018 and cover a number of topics that untenured faculty members have identified. She noted that the director of institutional research and registrar services and the registrar have been asked to propose a new academic schedule that could allow for a community hour and daytime faculty meetings. The dean described plans to constitute an ad hoc committee in the fall of 2018 to consider

the issue of a common teaching evaluation form for all untenured faculty, an instrument and approach for which many untenured faculty members have argued. Working with the chairs of departments and programs, the dean also hopes to develop a new protocol/checklist that she hopes will enhance the effectiveness and equity of mentoring practices across departments and programs. Dean Epstein informed the members that she has already collaborated with the chairs to develop [a protocol for mentoring visiting faculty](#) members, which is now posted on the chairs' web pages.

The dean also informed the members that the Center for Teaching and Learning will be exploring ways of sharing information about implicit bias in teaching evaluations. Commenting on the untenured group's suggestion that the system of reimbursement be improved, the dean noted that a pilot is currently under way that will result in such a system soon, it is hoped. The committee noted that the untenured group had suggested that it might be helpful if pre-tenure colleagues meet prior to faculty meetings to discuss their views on agenda items. While supporting efforts to enhance understanding of faculty governance, and acknowledging the basic right of any group on campus to meet for any purpose at its own discretion, Professor Sitze warned against the possibility of inadvertently introducing a bicameral structure into faculty meeting. To formally partition discussion on the basis of rank, he said, would risk creating the conditions for the sort of factions that faculty warned about when the consultative group was first established. Some members felt that, rather than having meetings that focus on motions or other items on specific faculty meeting agendas, and trying to provide explanations about them, it might be best for new faculty to consult informally with other colleagues. In addition, new faculty could be urged to read with care the materials that are distributed with agendas, as such information is useful. Professor Jaswal agreed that a meeting leading to the consultative group reporting on behalf of untenured colleagues would not be advisable. However, she feels that advising new colleagues to navigate individually all of the information, and then to ask colleagues informally for explanation, could lead to a variable quality of understanding and objectivity. A facilitated discussion for all interested colleagues together that focuses on the facts and relevant background of the motion might be a more efficient and standardized way to support newer colleagues in gaining the information they need to participate fully in deliberations of the faculty during the meeting. Professor Sitze commented that the problem the consultative group identified could be solved by other means, suggesting that it would be helpful if the Committee of Six places emphasis on ensuring that motions do not rely on institutional assumptions and/or jargon, so that meaning is not obscured. Ensuring accessibility in this way will be particularly helpful to those who are new to the college. It was agreed that the dean should continue the new practice of holding a meeting for new faculty before the first full faculty meeting to introduce and discuss faculty governance. Added to this meeting could be a brief overview of *Robert's Rules of Order*, and the local culture of how these rules are implemented.

Turning to the culture of anxiety that surrounds the tenure process, another topic of concern, the dean said that her office will continue to provide information about the tenure process to candidates and chairs in a variety of formats and venues, and to consider other ways to try to make the tenure process more transparent. Dean Epstein noted that, in the next academic year, she intends to hold faculty-wide discussions of the Committee of Six's proposal to clarify the tenure criteria, as well as the committee's proposals to address the service load of associate professors and the standards for promotion to full professor. The committee agreed that demystifying the criteria for tenure should help to reduce some anxiety among tenure-track faculty, while recognizing that the nature of the tenure process makes it impossible to alleviate all worry. The members briefly discussed the view that is held by some untenured faculty, as conveyed by the consultative group, that there needs to be more respect for "9-to-5 business hours." The members agreed that additional efforts can and should be made to address some issues of work-life balance. The committee felt, however, that the unique role that faculty play in the life of the college and in the lives of students, a hallmark of the liberal arts

residential mission, often requires professors not to be confined to “business hours.” Some members felt that this is often offset by a greater flexibility in the college’s scheduling than that permitted in the corporate model of 9 to 5.

Continuing the conversation, the committee agreed that there are drawbacks to implementing the idea, brought forward by the consultative group, of the dean’s office organizing social hours for untenured faculty members. Professor Engelhardt commented that formalizing the social hour in this way could lead faculty to feel implicit pressure among tenure-track faculty to attend such gatherings. The dean concurred that having her office organize the social hour seems problematic, while noting that she is pleased to provide funds to support these events. In regard to the current time of faculty meetings, another concern of tenure-track faculty, Professor Jaswal expressed the view that gathering in the evening is likely not the best time for tired faculty to engage in deliberative work. In her view, the college would be better served if meetings were held during the day. Other members noted that many tenure-track faculty members do not like the idea of holding faculty meetings from 4 to 6 P.M., which is an option that has been explored in the past. Concluding the conversation about the issues brought forward by the consultative group, the dean noted that the college is considering ways to better support science faculty who provide research experiences and mentoring to science students over the summer, an issue that has been raised and that has not yet been addressed.

Turning to a related topic, the committee described its recent dinner with tenure-track faculty members who had met with the committee in response to an open invitation to do so. The members expressed the view that the event had provided a good opportunity to have informal conversations, in small groups (attendees sat at small tables with members of the Committee of Six). It was agreed that it would be helpful to have these sorts of dinners once or twice a semester, before faculty meetings, perhaps, and also to continue the practice of holding more structured meetings with tenure-track faculty once or twice a year, to allow the Committee of Six to respond to questions and convey information in a more unified way. The president and the dean, who had also met with the consultative group and tenure-track faculty this semester, commented that many of the concerns conveyed by the consultative group were also shared with them during these gatherings.

The dean next shared a brief summary of the views of the chairs of departments and programs, with whom she had recently shared the Committee of Six’s proposals regarding the criteria for tenure, the service burdens of associate professors, and the standards for promotion to full professor. While some chairs had asked about the ways in which scholarship, teaching, and service might be evaluated for promotion to full professor, if the standards are clarified or change in the ways that the proposal suggests, most chairs seemed to feel that the proposal should be brought forward for discussion. The dean noted that the chairs had also discussed the idea of having a length of time in rank by which all associate professors would be promoted to full professor, perhaps after twelve or fifteen years in rank. Some chairs had expressed the view that a more rigorous standard for scholarly productivity should be in place. Others had felt that different pathways should be made available to associate professors, in particular those that allow for creativity, new pursuits, and exploration, and that may not have publication as an outcome. Many members of the committee were in favor of finding ways to avoid the creation of a cohort of perennial associate professors. Professor Heim commented that, after debating the idea of automatic promotion to full professor after fifteen years in rank, faculty at a peer institution had recently voted the proposal down. President Martin said that she would support consideration of the idea of promoting all associate professors after a certain time period, largely because those who remain at the associate professor rank do not benefit from the salary increase that comes with promotion. As a result, their salaries, over time, become somewhat lower than those who are promoted. Professor Jaswal expressed the view that differential service burdens (often not clearly visible to all) for associate professors can underlie differentials in the ability of colleagues to advance. As such, remaining at the rank of associate professor would naturally lead to bitterness, which is not

healthy for the institution. Concluding her discussion of the meeting of the chairs, the dean noted that some chairs were in favor of the idea of a “service sabbatical” for associate professors, either before or after leaves, though some chairs of small departments had expressed concern about the burdens that would be placed on other members of the department if such a proposal were to be implemented.

Conversation turned to two letters that had been sent to the committee following the May 1 faculty meeting, [one from Professor Hall](#), and [the other from Professor Reyes](#). Professor Heim commented that she rejects Professor Reyes’s suggestion, that, as a matter of bad faith, the administration and/or the Committee of Six might be “intentionally” overloading the agendas for faculty meetings, “thereby pressing important decisions to be made in a hurried manner.” The other members agreed. Professor Sitze commented that some of the suggestions that Professor Reyes makes in her letter might be helpful. In particular, he said, he thinks it would be a good idea to set aside time at a faculty meeting once every year to familiarize faculty with the basic principles of *Robert’s Rules* and faculty governance.

The members agreed that, in setting the agendas for faculty meetings, it can be very difficult to anticipate the length of conversations about agenda items. Professor Moss commented that, as an example, the length of the discussion of the motions to distribute the minutes to staff at the May 1 faculty meeting, had been surprising. Professor Sitze noted that *Robert’s Rules* allows individual faculty members considerable freedom to make and alter motions, which increases the difficulty of judging, in advance, how long a particular discussion will take. Although efficient time management certainly is important, he argued, it should not be emphasized to such an extent that it extinguishes the freedom and agency that individual members have to alter debate in service of reaching a conclusion to discussion. Professor Call commented that, in retrospect, the agenda for May 1 included too many motions. Professor Sitze agreed that this certainly was true in retrospect. Professor Engelhardt suggested that the agendas likely became overloaded this semester because not enough of the available faculty meeting times, which were being held, were used earlier in the semester. Thus there was a backlog of business. The dean noted that the NEASC team visit and the launch of the comprehensive campaign presented challenges to holding meetings in April this year, which was unusual. Professor Engelhardt suggested that, in the future, the committee should plan for more frequent faculty meetings, and should set agendas with the whole semester in mind, when possible.

Concluding the discussion, Professor Jaswal commented that, in bringing motions forward, the Committee of Six has tried to be sensitive to, and respectful of, the efforts of faculty committees that have been doing extensive work, often for years, on important issues. As part of its commitment to robust faculty governance, the committee’s goal has been to bring the work of these committees before the faculty, she commented. While agreeing, and noting that the language in the motion already had been vetted by two other committees before it reached the Committee of Six, Professor Sitze said that, in the end, he thinks that the points in Professor Hall’s letter are correct. However procedurally complicated it sometimes may be to revise other committees’ language, he suggested, it is ultimately the Committee of Six’s responsibility to ensure that the language of motions forwarded to it by other committees is clear and conveys the intended meaning. More time might need to be devoted to achieve this goal. In this way, some procedural problems and delays could be avoided, in his view. Continuing, Professor Sitze raised concern about some of the commentary at the May 1 meeting during the discussion of the motion to provide staff members with access to minutes. He urged the Committee of Six to take care in the future when framing morally fraught motions for faculty debate. It is essential, in his view, to respect the rights of those who express unpopular, dissenting, or minority opinions. In particular, he said, it is important to remember John Stuart Mill’s maxim that it is undesirable to stigmatize those who hold unpopular opinions as “bad or immoral.” In addition, he noted, *Robert’s Rules of Order* stipulates that speakers “should avoid injecting a personal

note into debate. To this end, they must never attack or make any allusion to the motives of members” (*rules, 11th ed.*, pg. 43). In his view, debates over morally fraught motions should be framed in such a way so that those debates can be conducted without attacks on motives, without stigmatization of dissenters, and with explicit recognition of the legitimacy of dissenting or unpopular views. The members briefly discussed whether to bring forward revised language for the proposal to offer the laboratory component of each science course as a separate half course, with an opt-out option for departments and programs. The members felt that the meaning of the motion that was passed at the May 1 faculty meeting is understood, and the committee chose not to do so.

The members next considered two motions (A and B), forwarded by the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee (see [the letter of May 2 from members of the curriculum committee](#)) to adopt minors. Professor Engelhardt reiterated his view that that it will be valuable to have the proposal to allow students to take four courses as either NRO (non-recorded option) or pass-fail in place before the faculty returns to a discussion and vote on the proposal to adopt minors. As he has said in the past, he sees a relationship between the open curriculum and relieving pressure on students by providing structured options and flexibility in navigating and exploring a range of courses. In this way, the NRO pass-fail proposal and the proposal to adopt minors address a specific, shared concern. In his view, the NRO pass-fail proposal solves some of the problems that the motions about minors seek to address, as did the motion to award credit for half-courses. He also raised concern that advising students who wish to undertake minors is underplayed in the motion to revise the *Faculty Handbook* that is currently under consideration. Providing guidance to students to help them navigate a minor, as part of their overall academic program, is important in his view. Other members felt that advising for minors might not play a significant role, as the courses involved may be limited and prescribed. Professor Sitze raised concern about the absence within Motion A of an educational rationale for adopting minors, though he otherwise found the motions to be clear and well-worded. Professors Moss and Jaswal expressed the view that interdisciplinary minors drawing from two or more departments would allow for innovation and could support greater exploration of the curriculum. The members agreed that the current motions address the creation of minors only through the administrative apparatus of departments and programs. The committee agreed to focus on bringing these motions to the faculty at this time, and, depending on the outcome of the current proposals, to consider developing, in the fall, a process for the creation and adoption of interdisciplinary, cross-departmental minors and to bring a motion to the faculty.

The members discussed whether, before bringing the motions about minors forward, the faculty should first have a discussion of the NRO pass-fail proposal, as the committee-of-the-whole conversation about that proposal, which had been scheduled for the May 1 faculty meeting, did not take place because of insufficient time. Most members agreed that, since a committee-of-the-whole discussion of the proposal to adopt minors had already taken place, at the March 20 faculty meeting, it would make the most sense to bring the motions regarding minors forward first. Mindful of the points raised in the letters from Professors Hall and Reyes, the members agreed that the faculty meeting agenda would become overloaded if both the discussion of the NRO pass-fail proposal and the conversation about the proposal to adopt minors take place at the same meeting.

At the conclusion of the discussion about minors, the Committee decided that the first of the two motions (motion A, to revise catalog language) would be stronger if a small number of revisions were made. The most significant revision, which was later shared with the curriculum committee, was the inclusion of two sentences that set forth the general educational rationale for a minor. The rest of the revisions, which were also shared with the curriculum committee, were made for purposes of clarity. The curriculum committee supported these changes. Incorporating the revisions, the members later agreed to bring forward the version of Motion A that appears below, along with the original version of Motion B to revise the *Faculty Handbook*, as noted below:

Motion A

As recommended by the Ad hoc Curriculum Committee, the Committee of Six proposes the revision (see below) to the language in the *Amherst College Catalog on pages seventy-seven and seventy-eight* of the current catalog. Departments and programs may begin the development of minors following approval of this motion. The Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) will review all proposals for minors, and a vote of the faculty will be required for approval, as is the case for all departmental and program majors. Following approval of a minor by the faculty, it will be possible for students to declare and graduate with that minor.

~~THE MAJOR~~ AND MINOR REQUIREMENTS

Liberal **ARTS** education seeks to develop the student's awareness and understanding of the individual and of the world's physical and social environments. If one essential object in the design of education at Amherst is breadth of understanding, another purpose, equally important, is mastery of one or more areas of knowledge in depth. ~~Upperclassmen~~ **STUDENTS** are required to concentrate their studies—to select and pursue a major—in order to deepen their understanding: to gain specific knowledge of a field and its special concerns, and to master and appreciate the skills needed in that disciplined effort. **A MINOR IS A SECONDARY AREA OF STUDY THAT IS DISTINCT FROM THE MAJOR. IT CONSISTS OF A SET OF COURSES THAT LEADS TO STRUCTURED KNOWLEDGE OF A FIELD, ALTHOUGH WITH LESS DEPTH AND MASTERY THAN A MAJOR.**

THE COLLEGE OFFERS BOTH DEPARTMENT AND PROGRAM-BASED MAJORS, AS WELL AS INTERDISCIPLINARY MAJORS. MINORS MAY BE OFFERED BY DEPARTMENTS OR PROGRAMS, AT THEIR DISCRETION.

STUDENTS HAVE THE OPTION OF COMPLETING:

- **ONE MAJOR; OR**
- **ONE MAJOR AND ONE MINOR; OR**
- **TWO MAJORS.**

A major normally consists of at least eight courses pursued under the direction of a department, ~~or special group~~. **PROGRAM, OR INTERDISCIPLINARY MAJOR COMMITTEE. A MINOR NORMALLY CONSISTS OF AT LEAST FIVE COURSES PURSUED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF A DEPARTMENT OR PROGRAM. A major may begin in either the first or second year and must be declared by the end of the second year. A STUDENT MUST DECLARE A MAJOR BY THE END OF THE SECOND SEMESTER OF THE SOPHOMORE YEAR. Students may change their majors at any time, provided that they will be able to complete the new program before graduation. STUDENTS MAY ADD, DROP, OR OTHERWISE CHANGE A MAJOR OR DECLARE A MINOR AT ANY TIME PROVIDED THAT (I) ANY CHANGES SATISFY ONE OF THE MAJOR/MINOR OPTIONS LISTED ABOVE, AND (II) ALL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS CAN BE MET.**

~~The major program can be devised in accordance with either of two plans:~~

DEPARTMENTAL/~~PROGRAM~~ MAJORS AND MINORS

Students may complete the ~~requirement of at least~~ **REQUIREMENTS OF A MAJOR BY TAKING** eight **OR MORE** courses within one department **OR PROGRAM OR BY COMPLETING**. They must complete at least six courses ~~within one~~ **IN THE MAJOR AND** department and the remaining two **ADDITIONAL** courses in related fields **AS** approved by the department **OR PROGRAM**.

Some Amherst students may wish to declare a **SECOND** major ~~in more than one department or program~~. This curricular option is ~~available, although it~~ entails special responsibilities. At Amherst, departments **AND PROGRAMS** are solely responsible for defining the content and structure of an acceptable program of study for majors. Students who elect a ~~double~~ **TO PURSUE A SECOND** 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~~ **BOTH** academic **MAJORS**. ~~programs~~ **DEPARTMENTS AND PROGRAMS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR DEFINING A MINOR, SHOULD THEY OFFER ONE. FULFILLING A MINOR DOES NOT REQUIRE ADDITIONAL FACULTY SIGNATURES FOR COURSE APPROVAL.** ~~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.~~ **DEPARTMENTS AND PROGRAMS WILL DETERMINE WHETHER A COURSE MAY COUNT TOWARDS MORE THAN ONE MAJOR AND/OR MINOR.** ~~In their senior year, students with a double major must verify their approved courses with both academic advisors before registering for their last semester at the College.~~

INTERDISCIPLINARY MAJORS

Students ~~with special needs~~ who **WOULD LIKE** ~~desire~~ to construct an interdisciplinary major will submit a proposed program, endorsed by one or more professors from each of the departments **OR PROGRAMS** concerned, to the Committee on Academic Standing and Special Majors. Under ordinary circumstances, the proposal will be submitted during the first semester of the junior year and ~~not under any~~ **NO** circumstances later than the eighth week of the second junior semester. The program will include a minimum of six upper-level courses and a thesis plan. Upon approval of the program by the Committee on Academic Standing and Special Majors, an ad hoc advisory committee of three professors appointed by the Committee will have all further responsibility for approving any possible modifications in the program, administering an appropriate comprehensive examination, reviewing the thesis and making recommendations for the degree with or without Honors. Information on preparation, form, and submission of proposed interdisciplinary programs is available in the Office of Student Affairs.

A part of the major requirement in every department **AND PROGRAM** is an evaluation of the student's comprehension in his or her major field of study. This evaluation may be based on a special written examination or upon any other performance deemed appropriate by each department **AND PROGRAM**. The mode of the evaluation need not be the same for all the majors within a department **OR PROGRAM**, and, indeed, may be designed individually to test the skills each student has developed.

The evaluation should be completed by the seventh week of the second semester of the senior year. Any student whose comprehension is judged to be inadequate will have two opportunities for reevaluation: one not later than the last day of classes of the second semester of the senior year, and the other during the next college year.

Motion B

As recommended by the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee, the Committee of Six proposes the following revisions to the language on teaching and advising in the [*Faculty Handbook IV. B.*](#), effective in the 2018–2019 academic year:

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. On behalf of the faculty, written evaluations will be solicited from students in each course taught by a tenured faculty member. These responses will remain anonymous. Students will not be able to submit a response after they have seen their final grades for the course; faculty members will not be able to see the responses until after final grades have been submitted. An automated system of response solicitation will direct students to an online evaluation form that offers a default template of questions (periodically reviewed by the Committee on Educational Policy) that will be customizable by each member of the faculty. All student comments will remain confidential, will be at the complete disposal of, and will be accessible only by the faculty member for whom the evaluations have been solicited (voted by the faculty, May 2007; amended, November 2014, effective 2015–2016).

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

4. College Advising. The Dean of 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 AND MINOR Advising. All faculty members, except first-year faculty, have the responsibility for advising students majoring in their departments **AND PROGRAMS** about general curricular matters, ~~matters~~ related to the major and senior honors work. **FACULTY MAY ALSO BE INVOLVED IN ADVISING MINORS AT THE DISCRETION OF DEPARTMENTS AND PROGRAMS.**

Conversation turned briefly to the use of clickers at the May 1 faculty meeting. Professor Sitze expressed some concern. The language that established the pilot to use clickers as the default voting mechanism, he noted, does not explicitly state when a faculty member may request that a motion may be voted on by written ballot. In the past, he believes, requests for paper ballots have been made by faculty members after voice votes, in order to numerically verify voice votes that are too close to call by ear alone. He noted that, if a request for a paper ballot is made after a close vote has been taken with clickers, the results of which are shown numerically, a vote by paper ballot would not only verify a clicker vote but also replicate it, as it too would be numerical. In effect, therefore, a request for a paper ballot could be used as a way to request a revote which in turn amounts to a new voting procedure that is not authorized by the *Faculty Handbook*. Raising another issue relating to faculty meetings, the dean said that she intends to work with information technology staff to address some small issues of process that were associated with the first use of clickers for voting. The members next discussed the need to have a “back-up” parliamentarian, who would serve in the role only if the regular parliamentarian cannot attend the meeting. It was agreed that the president should make such an appointment for the next academic year.

The members then discussed drafts of faculty meeting agendas for May 17 (the commencement meeting) and September 3 (the Labor Day meeting) and voted six in favor and zero opposed to forward the agendas to the faculty. It was agreed that the agenda for the May 15 meeting would be approved via email, after the committee voted on a revised version of Motion A and the original version of Motion B. (On Motion A, the Committee of Six later voted two in favor and four opposed on content and six in favor and zero opposed to forward to the faculty. On Motion B, the Committee of Six later voted two in favor and four opposed on content and six in favor and zero opposed to forward to the faculty.) The members then turned to personnel matters.

The committee reviewed the theses and transcripts of students recommended by their departments for a summa cum laude degree and having an overall grade point average in the top 25 percent of the graduating class. The committee also reviewed the theses of students who had received summa cum laude recommendations from their departments and whose overall grade point average was likely to land below the top 25 percent but within the top 40 percent of the class, since these students would qualify for a magna cum laude degree. The members voted unanimously to forward these recommendations to the faculty and offered high praise for the quality of the work done by this accomplished group of students. While agreeing that the theses are outstanding, some members commented on the “narrowness” of some of the students’ transcripts.

The committee next reviewed the nomination from the Department of Physical Education and Athletics for the Edward Hitchcock Fellowship and voted unanimously to support awarding of the fellowship to the nominee and to forward the nomination to the faculty.

The meeting adjourned at 5:50 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty