

## **May 2018 Summary Report from the Committee on Priorities and Resources (CPR)**

The CPR, consisting of faculty, staff, students, and *ex officio* administration officers, is grateful for the opportunity to summarize our main activities from this academic year. Throughout the year the committee worked to address topics relating to the committee's central charge (e.g., budgetary concerns, priorities for major expenditures, and the faculty salary report). We also endorsed revisions of significant benefits programs and participated in the re-accreditation process. This year the voting members approved the following proposals or reports:

### **1. Faculty Salary Report.**

One of the CPR's central charges is to prepare an annual faculty salary report, using data provided by the AAUP that is organized for the CPR by colleagues in Institutional Research. Our approach for the past several years has been a comparison with peer institutions represented by twelve elite liberal arts colleges. The objective is to see that faculty salaries fall within the upper quartile of this peer group, and we assess whether this benchmark is met for full, associate and assistant professor categories. In order to monitor broader long-term patterns, we also review salary data for comparison groups used prior to the current set of liberal arts peer institutions. Amherst College remains near or above this benchmark, but with some indication of declining trends toward the benchmark threshold, which we suggest needs closer attention in the future budgeting cycles. To examine how salaries compare across groups of Amherst College faculty, the report includes a breakdown by discipline and by gender of faculty in each rank, and there are not current indications of problems in these areas.

Details are available in the annual salary report on the CPR web page.

### **2. Benefits and Grant in Aid**

Last year the Benefits Committee completed a comprehensive comparison of the Amherst College benefits relative to peer institutions. The CPR learned that the College is generally competitive except for the *Grant in Aid* benefit, which fell well below most of our peer institutions. This subject carried over into the current year's activities. *Grant in Aid* is important in the hiring, retention, and mid-career recruitment of faculty and staff, particularly as the costs of higher education have increased. In communication with the Benefits Committee, the CPR suggests that Amherst should improve its position compared to the distribution of peer institutions, and that the benefit should be scaled to a proportion of the Amherst College tuition (in order to index the benefit annually and to avoid disadvantaging lower-salary-range employees who may be dealing with lower-cost colleges). The Benefits Committee has created options to advance toward these goals, and the CPR is supportive of them.

We were also approached by the Faculty Housing Committee concerning revision to the Housing Program involving rental properties. The CPR is supportive of adjustments that help ensure equity among faculty renters and concerns over accumulating deferred maintenance.

### **3. Review of FTE Requests**

The spring semester is largely occupied with activities related to non-faculty position requests and final resolution of the College budget. The CPR met with division heads in order to better understand the demands on their current staffing and various objectives to be met by the requested new or modified positions. We maintain, as one of the CPR priorities, the conversion of casual positions to regular benefited positions. We also intend for the combination of faculty, staff, and student voices on the committee to convey a sense of staffing priorities to the administration body that decides on any position requests.

#### **4. NEASC Reaccreditation**

The CPR participates in the NEASC reaccreditation process because of the committee's role in helping to identify priorities during the annual budgeting process, as well as being one of the vehicles for faculty, staff, and student concerns to the administration. We provided input to the College's self-study document and met as the committee with members of the NEASC review team.

Maya Bhandari '20

Solsiree del Moral, Associate Professor of American Studies and Black Studies

Theresa Dufresne, Amherst College Police Sergeant

Michael Hood, Associate Professor of Biology, Chair of the CPR

Justin Kimball, Professor of Art

Tanya Leise, Associate Professor of Mathematics

Denise McGoldrick, Assistant Dean of Students/Director Health Education

Alejandro Nino Quintero '18

*Ex officio/non-voting members*

Thomas Dwyer, Director of Financial Planning & Assistant Treasurer

Catherine Epstein, Dean of the Faculty

Maria-Judith Rodriguez, Chief Human Resources Officer

Jacob Silverman '19

Kevin Weinman, Chief Financial and Administrative Officer