

Committee on Priorities and Resources
Meeting Minutes – April 14, 2020

In attendance: Professor Javier Corrales, chair; Professor Andrew Dole; Professor Jill Miller; Professor Monica Ringer; Library Administrative Assistant/Bookkeeper Susan Bradley; Director of Financial Planning Thomas Dwyer, *ex officio*; Provost and Dean of the Faculty Catherine Epstein, *ex officio*; Assistant Director of Athletics Kelly Mannix; Chief Human Resources Officer Maria-Judith Rodriguez, *ex officio*; Chief Financial and Administrative Officer Kevin Weinman, *ex officio*; Brooke Harrington '22, *ex officio*; Sydney Ireland '23; Steven Hegarty, recorder

The meeting came to order at 8:30 am.

Proceedings

CPR met to continue the conversation and maintain a flow of information, given the current circumstance.

Updates:

1. Senior staff is meeting to discuss various fall semester and next academic year scenarios, and using time now to prepare for the range of possibilities. They have created three working groups to examine logistics, remote and hybrid learning, and financial analysis and modelling of the various ideas. The logistics group is considering a range of scenarios including a full return to campus in September, November, or January; as well as partial returns at various times, or no return to campus next academic year. They will discuss the implications around the various dates. The remote and hybrid learning group is addressing various models and refinements for online teaching and learning. The financial group is advising on the impact to the budget of the proposals, as well as maintenance of the college finances, and will include a representative from CPR.
2. The provost is meeting regularly and coordinating with Northeast Deans, NESCAC Deans, and the Five College Deans.
3. Jill asked when are the deadlines for the various timing scenarios. No dates have been set yet. The more time taken, the better the decisions can be. However, enough time needs to be given to students to make informed choices.
4. Javier suggested that a September 8 start date for in-person classes may be too stressful to the institution, to planning committees, and to some households. He asked if it would be more realistic and easier to plan for if we aim for a November 1st opening. The fall semester could begin remotely prior to that, or extend into January and February. The provost responded that, for now, the college wants to hold on to possibility of a regular start date.
5. Kelly asked what is the greatest factor in decision making. Catherine answered that public health needs will dictate when it is safe to be on campus. Available testing, tracking, and sufficient capacity in the health care system. Ultimately, an effective vaccine will make it safe.
6. It is too soon to know when and how faculty and staff will be returning to campus. Campus is closed to non-essential staff per to the governor's advisory. This currently runs through May 4, and that date may be extended.
7. Sydney shared that remote learning and losing on-campus time concerns students. She suggested surveying students on the different start date options to gauge thinking. Communication should lay out the various dates and semester calendars that are under consideration. A further suggestion is

to host a town hall with students, via Zoom and prior to polling, to lay out the options and answer any questions.

8. Javier asked if Facilities has the capacity to clean and disinfect the campus. Going forward, different protocols will be needed in custodial and dining.
9. There are longer term financial decisions that will be needed. CPR, as an existing governance group, can fill the advisory role, or Amherst can create an ad hoc budget committee to work on long term adjustments. (In 2009, CPR made recommendations and worked with an Advisory Budget Committee (ABC).) Kevin said in the near future, perhaps 4-6 weeks, we'll have a clearer idea of what may be needed.

Next week, CPR will continue with updates, and use the opportunity to ask further questions.

Adjourned 9:25 am.

Respectfully submitted,
S Hegarty