

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, September 14, 2015

Amended September 25, 2015

The first meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2015-2016 was called to order by President Martin in the president's office at 3:30 P.M. on Monday, September 14, 2015. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Benedetto, C. Dole, Douglas, Hart, Katsaros, and Marshall; Dean Epstein; and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

President Martin and Dean Epstein opened the meeting by welcoming new and returning members of the Committee of Six. The dean 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 it is her understanding that 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 committee discussed the circumstances under which it would communicate via email. The members 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 3:00 P.M. on Mondays, though the committee will meet at 3:30 P.M. on September 21. The members then decided that the following dates should be held for possible faculty meetings during the fall semester: October 6, October 20, November 3, December 1, and December 15. The committee then turned to personnel matters.

Dean Epstein informed the members that Janet Tobin, associate dean for academic administration, will continue to serve as the recorder of Committee of Six minutes and that Nancy Ratner, associate dean of admission and researcher for academic projects, will serve as the recorder of the faculty meeting minutes. Professor C. Dole suggested that the Committee of Six minutes might be read more widely if the minutes were more concise. Dean Epstein said that she believes that many members of the faculty read the Committee of Six minutes. Professor Douglas expressed the view that, if an approach were to be taken that would place more emphasis on summary and less on detail, in an effort to achieve greater concision in the minutes, it would be essential that transparency not be sacrificed. The other members of the committee agreed.

Continuing her remarks, Dean Epstein informed the members that Lisa Rutherford, Amherst's chief policy officer and general counsel, will meet with the Committee of Six on September 28 to provide general legal advice related to the processes for reappointment and tenure, as an attorney does on an annual basis. The members then considered a committee

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, September 14, 2015

Amended September 25, 2015

nomination. Dean Epstein asked if Mariana Cruz, interim chief diversity officer, and Hari Stephen Kumar, instructional designer/technologist, may attend faculty meetings as invited guests during this academic year. The members agreed that Ms. Cruz and Mr. Kumar may be invited to attend meetings regularly during the 2015-2016 academic year. The dean then shared with the committee nominations for endowed professorships. The next step will be for the president to recommend these appointments to the Board of Trustees. Pending board approval, the appointments will be retroactive to July 1, 2015, the dean explained. Several members of the committee asked about the criteria that are used to award named professorships. Dean Epstein said that, when making nominations for professorships, she reviews individuals' overall contribution to the college, professional accomplishments, and seniority and makes a recommendation to the president. She explained that many professorships are discipline-specific or have other criteria that must be taken into account. At times, there might be too few qualified individuals who meet the criteria for a particular professorship. If that is the case, professorships are sometimes left unfilled for a time.

Under "Questions from Committee Members," Professor Douglas encouraged the members to attend a lecture that will be given by Janet Halley, the Royall Professor of Law at Harvard Law School, at Amherst on September 17. The lecture is titled "Towards a Legal Realist Analysis of Campus Sexual Misconduct." Professor Douglas noted that timeliness of the topic and the reputation of the speaker, an accomplished legal scholar who writes and speaks critically on the topic of university sexual assault policies. Professor Douglas also encouraged the members to invite their students to the talk.

Professor Douglas asked whether there are unaddressed or unresolved issues that remain from the last academic year that will be placed on the committee's agenda again. Dean Epstein said that the members will be provided with a list of potential agenda items for this fall, and that she anticipates that there will be a discussion of this topic on September 21. She also invited the members to suggest agenda items. Professor Douglas asked about the status of the work of the committee that has been charged with examining the place of athletics at the college and when its report will be complete. President Martin said that the report will likely be ready sometime this spring, and that it will be discussed by the Committee of Six. Turning to another topic, Professor Douglas asked if plans call for the Committee of Six to meet with the Curriculum Committee. Dean Epstein responded that the committee has just begun its work, and that she anticipates that faculty opinion will be solicited in a variety of ways. The dean expressed the view that it might be premature for the Curriculum Committee to meet with the Committee of Six this year, before recommendations have been developed and proposed. The dean said that, if the Committee of Six wishes to meet with the Curriculum Committee, however, she would be happy to arrange such a meeting. In addition, the dean encouraged the members to contact her or Co-chair Professor Sanborn with questions and/or suggestions. Noting that last year's Committee of Six had raised some questions about the breadth of the curricular paths of students who graduate summa cum laude, a topic on this year's Committee of Six agenda, Professor Hart suggested that the Curriculum Committee be asked to consider this issue.

Professor Douglas inquired whether the development of a statement on academic freedom for the college, a topic of discussion last year, would be on the docket. The dean noted that this issue was referred to the College Council. It was agreed that the Committee of Six could certainly have a contemporaneous discussion about academic freedom and the related topic

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, September 14, 2015

Amended September 25, 2015

of trigger warnings, which is also on the agenda of the College Council. President Martin recommended two foundational reports—The University of Chicago’s [*Kalven Committee: Report on the University’s Role in Political and Social Action*](#) (1967) and Yale University’s [*Woodward Report*](#) (1974)—and the dean said that she would provide these documents to the members of the Committee of Six, as well as to the College Council, in addition to appending them to the minutes of the Committee of Six. President Martin noted the emphasis on institutional neutrality in the reports. Professor Katsaros asked about the goals for the committee’s and the faculty’s discussions about academic freedom—is the desired outcome that the current *Faculty Handbook* language would be revised? Professor C. Dole noted that there is negligible language about academic freedom in the *Faculty Handbook*. Professor Douglas commented that last year’s Committee of Six had reviewed references to academic freedom at the college and had been concerned to learn that one department’s statement on its website seems to be inconsistent with the college’s statement. The members agreed that a desired outcome of discussions about academic freedom is to renew the faculty’s commitment to this principle.

Continuing with “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Benedetto asked for information about the guidelines for setting salaries of students who work on campus. He commented that his department has faced challenges when hiring tutors because the level of compensation has remained much the same over the years. Professor Marshall said that it is his understanding that departments are free to set the pay scale for student employees if they are paid with departmental funds. Professor Benedetto suggested that the amount of pay may be fixed at a relatively low rate when tutors are hired through the Moss Quantitative Center, for example. He wondered if students with jobs that require constant attention to the work are compensated at a higher level than those who have jobs, such as staffing a reception desk, that allow for doing one’s homework or quiet leisure activities on the job. Dean Epstein said that she would research this question and report back on her findings.

Professor C. Dole raised the issue of expectations about course enrollments, noting that there seems to be a lack of clarity, and some anxiety, among some tenure-track faculty about whether they should teach classes with small enrollments. Dean Epstein noted that it is her understanding that the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) will soon be writing to the faculty to inform and remind colleagues that to enroll all Amherst College students in four classes each term, taking into account the Five-College consortium exchange, each course at Amherst must, on average, accommodate approximately eighteen students. The dean commented that courses that enroll fewer than eighteen students must be counter-balanced by courses that enroll more than eighteen students. Dean Epstein said that the CEP will encourage all faculty members to be mindful of this number when determining the appropriate class size for their courses. Departments will be asked to take care in balancing their enrollments, and faculty members will be asked to consider slightly higher caps wherever it is possible, unless there are pedagogical reasons for not doing so. Dean Epstein expressed the view that faculty should be developing courses that students wish to take and should not teach in their areas of scholarly specialty only. At a time when the humanities are under fire, it is particularly important for faculty in these disciplines to offer a mix of courses, both introductory and general interest, as well as small seminars in specialized areas or topics. In regard to tenure-track colleagues specifically, the dean commented that departments should be encouraged to ensure that untenured professors have a range of teaching experiences, including courses with enrollments at

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, September 14, 2015

Amended September 25, 2015

different levels, whenever possible. Dean Epstein encouraged the Committee of Six to have a conversation about this issue.

Continuing the discussion, Professor Douglas wondered whether course enrollments are decreasing in the humanities as a whole or whether the changing demographics of Amherst's student body might be contributing to such a trend. He suggested that having a greater number of first-generation and international students, who often major in the sciences or social sciences, might account for a shift in the number of majors among the divisions. He also commented that upper-division courses within a major are, by their nature, going to be specialized and have smaller enrollments. The dean said that she recognizes the need to have courses with small enrollments and their educational benefits, but individual faculty members, in her view, should balance the teaching of courses with small enrollments with those that have larger numbers of students. At present, some faculty members regularly teach large numbers of students, while others teach very few. Continuing, the dean commented that the ways in which majors distribute among the humanities, social sciences, and sciences is less important, in her view, than the overall number of students taking classes across these divisions. Regardless of major, students should be taking a broad range of classes across the divisions.

The dean said that she encourages departments to talk with tenure-track faculty about course design. She noted that she also discusses with candidates for faculty positions the desirability of teaching courses at a variety of levels and for a variety of audiences. Professor Douglas noted that departments should have a culture of mentoring that discourages tenure-track faculty from teaching two seminars each semester, a pattern that the committee has seen in the past. He suggested that it would be helpful for senior faculty to work with their tenure-track colleagues to develop strategies for ensuring a range of course offerings. Professor Katsaros expressed some concern that encouraging faculty to develop courses that will have broad appeal to students could result in lowering academic standards. She stressed the need to ensure that Amherst courses remain intellectually vibrant and rigorous and that faculty members continue to inform their teaching with their research. Concurring, President Martin said that, in her experience, Amherst students want to take challenging courses. She commented that, while the topic of a class might seem narrow at one level, a course on a single author, for example, it may attract many students interested in the transferable abilities they develop in a class that emphasizes underlying skills. Professor Hart commented that, from an advising perspective, it is also important to be conscious of "the numbers." It can be challenging for students when introductory courses are capped at relatively low numbers, and access to the open curriculum can be reduced. Professor Douglas said that, if the expectation is that faculty should teach more students in their courses, perhaps graders should be used. The dean said that she would not support using graders in ways beyond what is permitted now, that is largely in mathematics and the sciences for problem sets, homework, and labs. President Martin agreed.

The members then reviewed proposals for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Summer Stipend and selected two nominees for this year's competition. The committee then reviewed a proposal for a Senior Sabbatical Fellowship and approved it. Finally, the members reviewed proposals for the Whiting Fellowship and selected one nominee.

Discussion turned to [a request made last May by Professor Friedman](#), then-chair of the Committee on Student Fellowships, to have two additional faculty members serve on the committee on an ad hoc basis for a year. He noted that a request to make the change

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, September 14, 2015

Amended September 25, 2015

permanent would follow, if the experiment was a success. The Committee of Six noted that the faculty had voted in 2014-2015 to add a sixth faculty member to the Committee on Student Fellowships, at the request of the committee. Dean Epstein informed the members that she has increased the administrative support available to the committee, raising the number of hours that the fellowships coordinator, Suzanne Fogel Spencer, works during the academic year. Ms. Spencer assists Denise Murphy Gagnon, director of fellowship advising. Professor Benedetto, who has served on the Committee on Student Fellowships and found the workload to be significant, argued in favor of expanding the membership of the committee. The other members wondered if efficiencies might be found that would help with the workload of the Committee on Student Fellowships, suggesting that the committee split into two groups of three when interviewing fellowship candidates, rather than having the entire committee participate in all interviews. After some further conversation, the members (with the exception of Professor Benedetto) felt that it would be best to have the Committee on Student Fellowships retain its current structure. If the committee still feels that its membership should be expanded after its experiences this year, it should make another proposal.

Conversation turned to the schedule for Labor Day. The dean said that some faculty members have expressed the view that faculty should not be asked to participate in college activities on Labor Day. She asked for the committee's thoughts about the possibility of having the first faculty meeting, convocation, or both events on the Tuesday after Labor Day, coinciding with the first day of classes. The members discussed various scheduling possibilities, but in the end, agreed that the order of events of recent years, i.e., having the first faculty meeting at 5:00 P.M. on Labor Day, then having a light supper, and then participating in convocation, seems to work quite well. The committee has found the set of events and schedule on Labor Day to be a particularly congenial way of welcoming new members of the community. The dean said that some concern has also been raised about orientation events for students that involve faculty taking place on Labor Day, including discussions about the book that is read in preparation for the DeMott Lecture. The members agreed that it would be best to have these events on a day other than Labor Day. The dean said that she will contact Suzanne Coffey, chief student affairs officer, to ask that the orientation schedule be changed next year.

Dean Epstein next shared with the committee information about a long-needed renovation of the baseball field and provided the members with schematics to review. President Martin explained that a donor has stepped forward to fund this project with up to \$1 million (the estimated cost) and has indicated that support will be available for this project and no other. If not for this gift, the college would have had to pay for most of the planned work, since the project can no longer be deferred. The renovation has been in the planning stages for a number of years and has been a stated priority of the Department of Athletics, the dean noted. There are currently significant safety issues because maintenance of the field has been deferred for years. Dean Epstein explained that the field and all of the supporting equipment are at or beyond the end of their design life. Dugouts are also part of the project's scope because of safety concerns posed by errant balls, which are a danger to players on the bench. It is now standard practice to provide dugouts, and Amherst is the only school within the New England Small College Athletic Converse (NESCAC) that does not have them. The other enhancements that are planned, such as a press box and scoreboard, are modest improvements that make this project more appealing to the donor and are standard elements at peer institutions, the dean said.

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, September 14, 2015**Amended September 25, 2015**

The members reviewed the plans for the project and raised some questions. Professor Hart wondered whether the warning track would be removable and why plans call for it to be made of a synthetic material. Professor Marshall asked whether the project might have a negative impact on club and intramural sports, questioning whether space would continue to be available for the rugby team to practice on the field in the fall, for example. Professors Hart and Katsaros asked whether the design of the project might raise concerns among neighbors. For example, would trees have to be removed to make the project possible? Dean Epstein said that she would consult with Don Faulstick, director of athletics, and Jim Brassord, chief of campus operations, about these questions and report back to the committee. The committee then turned to a personnel matter.

With the hour growing late, the members agreed to adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 5:36 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, September 21, 2015

Amended October 7, 2015

The second meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2015-2016 was called to order by President Martin in the president's office at 3:30 P.M. on Monday, September 21, 2015. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Benedetto, C. Dole, Douglas, Hart, Katsaros, and Marshall; Dean Epstein; and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with a discussion of a [letter from Professor Bumiller](#). Lisa Rutherford, chief policy officer and general counsel, joined the meeting to provide information and to answer questions about Title IX and the college's implementation of the law. Ms. Rutherford informed the members that Title IX protects people from discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance. The Department of Education (DOE), through the Office for Civil Rights (OCR), is charged with interpreting and enforcing the law. She noted that all public and private elementary and secondary schools, colleges, and universities receiving federal funds must comply with Title IX or risk the DOE revoking the institution's federal funding. To assist schools, the OCR issues guidance documentation about how the department determines whether schools are complying with their legal obligations. In its guidance document of April 2014, the OCR defined a mandatory reporter as a responsible employee who "has the authority to take action to redress sexual violence; who has been given the duty of reporting incidents of sexual violence or any other misconduct by students...; or whom a student could reasonably believe has this authority or duty." All mandatory reporters (at Amherst, all faculty and staff) who witness or receive reports of sexual misconduct are required to make a report to their institution's Title IX coordinator (Laurie Frankl at Amherst). A small number of employees are recognized as confidential resources and are not required to report possible Title IX violations. These individuals include employees of Amherst's Counseling Center, Office of Religious Life, and Health Services.

Continuing, Ms. Rutherford explained that if a mandatory reporter makes a conscious decision not to report upon witnessing or receiving a report of sexual misconduct, the individual would not be indemnified by the college and would be placing him or herself at risk personally and financially. In addition, should there be a complaint, the college could be put at risk in regard to liability, particularly since lack of knowledge of an incident of sexual misconduct could prevent the college from responding quickly and appropriately to a complainant. In short, the college would be out of compliance with Title IX if a mandatory reporter does not report. Professor Douglas asked whether any colleges or universities have concluded that professors are not mandatory reporters. Ms. Rutherford answered that she is not aware of any schools that do not consider faculty mandatory reporters. When asked if Professor Bumiller's proposal, if adopted, would be out of compliance with the law, Ms. Rutherford replied in the affirmative.

Professor C. Dole said that he is sympathetic to some of the concerns raised by Professor Bumiller, arguing that faculty should have greater discretion and leeway about reporting information that they learn, allowing for a "reading" of the circumstances and context. He noted, for example, that several of the scenarios presented during the Title IX training in his department were very ambiguous and that the specific context of the scenario would play an important role in deciding whether or not to contact the Title IX coordinator. Yet, it seems that current policy does not allow for such discretion. Professor C. Dole also expressed some worry that not allowing faculty to make judgments could lead to "overarching." For example, the current interpretation of mandatory reporting would likely generate a large amount of information being

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, September 21, 2015

Amended October 7, 2015

compiled by the institution, and it is unclear how this information might be used in the future. Professor Douglas also expressed concern for the matters raised by Professor C. Dole. The other members agreed that a strict reporting requirement seems best and puts less of a burden on faculty members, noting that the policy is particularly beneficial in relieving the concerns of untenured faculty members. These members noted that the Title IX coordinator, who is trained in Title IX policy and has a good deal of experience with cases of sexual misconduct, is in the best position to determine whether an incident is in violation of Title IX. Ms. Rutherford assured the committee that, if an incident is judged not to be a violation of Title IX, it will not be investigated under Amherst's Title IX procedures.

The committee discussed approaches to sharing the requirements of the role of the mandatory reporter with a student who may ask to speak with a faculty member about an issue of sexual misconduct. It was agreed that it would be best not only to let the student know that any information that is discussed would be passed on to the Title IX coordinator, but also to explain the process that would occur next—that is, that the Title IX coordinator might be in touch to offer information and resources. Professor Katsaros pointed out that Professor Bumiller's letter emphasizes the role of agency in the reporting of sexual misconduct. Ms. Rutherford stressed that, if an incident is a Title IX violation and an individual is contacted by the Title IX coordinator, there is no requirement that the individual launch a complaint. Ms. Rutherford explained that the college would do so only if not doing so would constitute a threat to the community, for example in the case of a serial rapist.

The members agreed that adopting Professor Bumiller's proposal would bring the college out of compliance with Title IX, while noting that her letter raised some important points. The committee decided that bringing Professor Bumiller's proposal to the faculty would be the equivalent of asking the faculty to vote on whether to continue to comply with federal law. For this reason, the members decided not to do so. Noting Professor Bumiller's reference in her letter to the desirability of ongoing training in the area of sexual misconduct and sex discrimination, Ms. Rutherford said that plans are already in place to develop additional training.

Professor C. Dole next asked about current efforts to promote gender equality at the college, another issue raised by Professor Bumiller. The dean commented that the Committee on Priorities and Resources (CPR) has examined one issue in this area. After reviewing salary levels of male and female professors at Amherst, the committee determined that salaries of female professors and males with the same number of years in rank are equivalent. President Martin noted that, on the student front, Mariana Cruz, interim chief diversity officer, oversees the Women's and Gender Center and the Queer Resource Center, through which robust programming is offered.

The conversation concluded with a discussion of the application of the "preponderance-of-the-evidence" standard for determining guilt or innocence in cases of sexual misconduct. It was noted that the burden of proof under the faculty policy [for termination, dismissal for cause, and grievance](#) is "clear and convincing evidence in the record as a whole," which is a higher evidentiary standard than the preponderance of the evidence, according to Ms. Rutherford. She explained that, to be in full compliance with Title IX, the college should use the preponderance-of-the-evidence standard as the burden of proof when adjudicating the cases of faculty members who are accused of sexual misconduct. The members agreed that any changes to the policy [for](#)

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, September 21, 2015

Amended October 7, 2015

[termination, dismissal for cause, and grievance](#) would require a discussion, and possibly a vote, by the faculty. Ms. Rutherford left the meeting at 4:20 P.M.

As a follow-up to the conversation that the members had on September 14, 2015, about the requests from the Committee on Student Fellowships, Dean Epstein informed the members that Professor Rogowski, chair of the Committee on Student Fellowships, has said that his committee is already experimenting with splitting into two groups of three for some of the interviews that the members will conduct. At its first meeting this year, the fellowships committee agreed to try this approach as a means of managing its workload. Continuing with her report about questions raised at the last meeting of the Committee of Six, the dean, who provided [additional information to the committee about the project](#), said that she had forwarded the committee's questions about the proposed renovation of the baseball field to Jim Brassord, chief of campus operations, and to Don Faulstick, director of athletics. The dean informed the members that, in answer to the question about the project's potential impact on the community, she has been told that any impact on the view will be mitigated by the low profile of the dugouts and understated design, and by using dark colors that will blend in. The view may even be improved, the dean understands. In addition, according to Mr. Brassord, the new dugouts, backstop, and press-box will replace the "ragtag" assemblage of current baseball field elements. The dugouts will be attractively integrated components that have a low vertical profile and will, in a way, also help to mitigate the unsightly view of the back side of Amherst Farmers Supply, Mr. Brassord believes. As to whether the project might have a negative impact on club and intramural sports—i.e., would space be available for them during the baseball team's off season—the dean said that Mr. Faulstick has told her that there will be no negative impact on clubs and intramural sports. Rugby teams will continue to use the field in the fall. Mr. Faulstick also informed the dean that it has been decided not to have a synthetic warning track. The funds that would have been used for the warning track will be put toward infield repair.

Under "Questions from Committee Members," Professor Douglas asked why the College Council has been tasked with developing a college statement about academic freedom, rather than assigning this project to the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) or the Committee of Six. The dean noted that, last spring, the College Council had requested that time be allotted for students to vet the proposed statement and to engage in conversation about it. At the time, the Committee of Six had agreed that, if for any reason the College Council did not make a recommendation to bring the statement to the faculty as part of a consideration of the honor code, another entity certainly could. It had been decided that the Committee of Six should await the feedback of the College Council and the CEP before considering this issue in the next academic year. Professor Douglas argued that, while the review of recommendations involving the honor code is clearly within the charge of the College Council, it might be more appropriate for the Committee of Six to draft a statement on academic freedom. Consideration of such a statement should be driven by the faculty and have the imprimatur of the faculty, in his view, and thus the Committee of Six seems to be a natural choice for this work. Of course, any statement would be brought to the full faculty for discussion and a vote. Continuing, Professor Douglas commented that the College Council is primarily concerned with issues of student life, and the membership includes and represents students and administrators, as well as faculty. The honor code, which consists of [the Statement on Respect for Persons](#), [Statement of Intellectual Responsibility](#), [the Statement of Freedom of Expression and Dissent](#) and [the Statement of](#)

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, September 21, 2015

Amended October 7, 2015

[Student Rights](#), is primarily student- and community-centered. For this reason, it seems appropriate that the College Council review the current honor code, but also that the freedom-of-expression-and-dissent piece be pulled out and considered by the Committee of Six. The other members, the president, and the dean agreed.

Professor Douglas noted, for the information of the committee, that Amherst has been ranked in the top five “economically diverse top colleges” in a piece [that appeared in the *New York Times*](#). The members applauded the efforts that led to this recognition. Professor Douglas asked once again about when the Committee of Six would receive the report of the committee that is reviewing the place of athletics at the college; he expressed concern about the pace of the committee’s work. Noting that the committee did not undertake its assignment until the middle of the spring semester last year, and that it has been in the process of gathering data for the most part so far, President Martin said that she would contact the co-chairs to learn more about the committee’s schedule for generating the report.

Continuing with “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Benedetto raised concerns about the availability of classrooms that have the proper set-up for teaching computer science, economics, mathematics and statistics, i.e., a blackboard with chairs and long tables facing the board. He also expressed the view that, given the high enrollments that those departments have experienced over the past five years, and anticipate having in the future, there are insufficient resources to meet the needs of all students. Professor Benedetto suggested that those departments need more such classrooms and more faculty FTEs. Professor Marshall commented that many classrooms that were configured in the past in the way described by Professor Benedetto have now been reconfigured; thus, there are fewer classrooms of this type available for faculty who wish to use them. The dean said that she would check with Associate Dean Cheney and Mr. Brassord to learn more about the availability of these classrooms and would report back to the committee. In regard to allocating FTE lines, Dean Epstein noted that the Department of Mathematics and Statistics has just recently been awarded new FTEs and is conducting searches this year for two tenure-line positions, in addition to now having two lecturers. Professor Benedetto said that, given enrollments, additional FTEs are needed. Dean Epstein cautioned that care must be taken in allocating FTEs as a response to current enrollment patterns and trends, as the duration of such trends is not known. She informed the committee that she has asked Hanna Spinosa, chief of institutional research and planning, to examine the distribution of FTE lines by division and the historical relationship of enrollments to FTE allocations. Dean Epstein said that she would share this information with the committee when she receives it. President Martin wondered whether the number of Amherst’s pre-medical graduates has been increasing in the last five years. Professor C. Dole noted the increasing interest in public health. The dean, who said that she would research whether the number of applications has increased in recent years, commented that sixty-seven current Amherst students or graduates are applying to medical school for matriculation in fall 2016. This year’s figure is thought to be a historic high. Typically, thirty-five to fifty current Amherst students or graduates apply to medical school through the college’s Health Professions Committee for the first time each year.

The dean next reviewed with the committee a list of potential agenda items for the Committee of Six for the fall and asked the members if they would like to propose additional items. It was agreed that major issues for discussion by the committee this fall will be raising

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, September 21, 2015

Amended October 7, 2015

awareness about issues of bias in teaching evaluations and considering what teaching evaluations should measure, as well as standardizing teaching evaluations across departments; mentoring tenure-track faculty; and academic freedom.

The committee then reviewed briefly data that had been prepared by the Office of Institutional Research about the breadth of the curricular paths of students who graduate summa cum laude from the college. Last year's Committee of Six had requested this information after noticing some patterns in the transcripts of students who were nominated for this highest of Latin honors. Based on the data provided, it appears that summa students are more likely to take more courses and a larger percentage of courses within their respective divisions than their non-summa peers. They are also more likely to be double-majors. In addition, humanities majors are less likely to take a broader selection of courses outside of the division than are other majors. Professor Hart commented that these data should be reviewed by the Curriculum Committee, which should explore the question of whether Amherst students are taking advantage of the open curriculum. The dean and the other members agreed. Professor Katsaros noted the role that advisors play in encouraging students to take a broad array of courses. In regard to the data under consideration, Professor Marshall commented that thesis students in his department (some of whom are later nominated for summa), and some other departments, are required to take three additional "courses" in the department. These courses are taken at the expense of courses that they might take outside the sciences. Professor Hart noted that at some of Amherst's peer institutions incentives have been put in place for students who wish to be considered for Latin honors, for example a requirement that such students take courses across the divisions and disciplines.

The dean next discussed with the members possibilities for enlivening faculty meetings. She noted that she had attended a meeting over the summer in which there was a digital "backchannel chat" and had found this to be an engaging and enlivening technique that can increase participation. If used at Amherst faculty meetings, such a system would allow those in attendance to use their electronic devices to make comments and/or to ask questions in "real time," for everyone in the room to see. Under such a system, the dean continued, a Committee of Six member could follow the backchannel discussions and could bring questions that arise and views expressed to the chair for discussion with the body at the meeting. Those who are hesitant to speak at faculty meetings, in particular tenure-track colleagues, might be more willing to participate in backchannel discussions; the effect could be engendering a greater sense of community and increasing participation, Dean Epstein said. At present, the dean commented, the atmosphere at faculty meetings can be stifling and formal. It does not seem to be an environment that is conducive to asking questions, in the view of some. Another option for enhancing participation and enlivening conversation would be the use of clickers to poll the body during discussions, or even to vote.

The committee expressed discomfort with the idea of using a backchannel at faculty meetings, worrying that doing so might be distracting, and that those at faculty meetings might find it difficult to pay attention to the business and parliamentary formalities at hand. President Martin said that some colleagues have spoken with her about the gulf that exists, by seniority and gender, in regard to feeling comfortable about speaking at faculty meetings. A limited number of colleagues speak most of the time, the committee agreed. Some faculty members have said that they are intimidated about speaking because of a lack of civility in the discourse, at times,

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, September 21, 2015

Amended October 7, 2015

President Martin noted. While not advocating for a backchannel, the president said that she supports the dean's desire to find new ways to bridge divides and to encourage more faculty to participate in discussions at faculty meetings. Professor Douglas suggested that a remedy for the current problems might be to encourage faculty to send in questions and/or comments before or after faculty meetings. The dean said that some colleagues do contact her after faculty meetings for this purpose.

The members discussed the use of clickers at faculty meetings, and most members agreed that it would be desirable to experiment with their use under certain circumstances, basically using the clickers as a polling device to see what the range of opinions might be about a particular topic. Professor Benedetto commented that, while clickers may serve a useful pedagogical function, he is not certain that they would be helpful during faculty meetings. The committee was not in favor of using clickers as a tool for voting. Professor C. Dole said that he has found committee-of-whole conversations to be the most interesting and interactive discussions that take place at faculty meetings, advocating for this format. The dean said that she would explore the use of clickers for a future faculty meeting, with the expectation that the devices would not play a role in parliamentary procedures.

Continuing with the conversation about faculty meetings, Dean Epstein proposed that times other than the evening be explored for holding the meetings. The current time appears to be less advantageous for those with young children and/or for those who live far from campus. Some faculty members also do not attend faculty meetings because they prefer not to drive in the darkness of evening, the dean has been told. Dean Epstein said that she does not know of other colleges that have faculty meetings in the evening. The members discussed a number of options—including having the meetings in the afternoon (from 4 P.M. to 6 P.M., for example) and reserving from noon to 2 P.M. on Wednesdays throughout the year as a block for faculty meetings or other purposes (department meetings, for example), and not holding classes then. It was recognized that the latter proposal could pose challenges for the sciences, but that such challenges may not be insurmountable. The committee requested that Ms. Spinosa be asked to develop a survey to learn more about views concerning the time of the meeting. The committee would like to know preferences about different times of day, the rationale for those preferences (e.g., not wanting to meet when it is dark because of a preference not to drive under that condition or wanting to be home in the evenings because of family needs). The dean agreed to share the survey results with the members.

Conversation turned to the construction of the Committee of Six ballot. The dean explained that last year's Committee of Six had decided that, rather than listing the names on the ballot in alphabetical order, the names should appear in a random order. She noted that a member at the time had said that some research has suggested that voters may tend to vote for the names at the top of the ballot list, i.e., those at the beginning of the alphabet, rather than reading through all the names. The members had agreed that the names should be listed in random order and that titles of individuals should be included on the ballot (e.g., assistant professor of biology). Some members had also felt that it would be valuable to have links from faculty members' names to their profile pages. The dean noted that it has been suggested to her that having all the names in random order may make it difficult to find the names of those for whom one wants to vote. Professor Benedetto suggested starting the ballot with those whose last names begins with a particular letter, using a different letter each year. Alternatively, the names

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, September 21, 2015**Amended October 7, 2015**

could be in alphabetical order some years and in reverse alphabetical order in other years. The members agreed that either approach would be acceptable. The committee also agreed that full titles should accompany the names on the ballot, and that there should be a single link on the ballot to an “index page” with the names of all faculty, from which there would be links to their faculty profile pages on the web.

The dean next brought forward the topic of raising awareness about issues of bias in teaching evaluations and the possibility of offering training about reading and interpreting evaluations to Committee of Six members and senior colleagues. Dean Epstein informed the members that she is also interested in exploring with the committee and the faculty the issue of what teaching evaluations should measure. She then posed some questions. Are teaching evaluations currently evaluating the right things? Are teaching evaluations an effective tool for evaluating what students are learning? Related to that topic is the idea of standardizing teaching evaluations across departments. Dean Epstein said that it is her understanding that untenured colleagues are eager to see issues surrounding teaching evaluations addressed. As a first step, it was agreed that the committee would read and discuss literature on this subject and meet with hari stephen kumar, instructional designer/technologist. Dean Epstein expressed the view that it might also be instructive for the members to meet with Mariana Cruz, interim chief diversity officer. The dean said that she would also provide information about best practices at peer institutions. Professor Douglas asked the dean what the goal would be of undertaking this examination of teaching evaluations. Dean Epstein responded that she would like to raise awareness among Committee of Six members and department chairs by providing more information. It was suggested that it might be helpful for the CEP to consult with Mr. kumar, as that committee develops the teaching evaluation form that will be the default for courses taught by tenured faculty. Professor Hart suggested that it will also be important to train students about the issues that the dean had outlined.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, September 28, 2015

Amended October 13, 2015

The third meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2015-2016 was called to order by President Martin in the president's office at 3:00 P.M. on Monday, September 28, 2015. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Benedetto, C. Dole, Douglas, Hart, Katsaros, and Marshall; Dean Epstein; and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

Under "Topics of the Day," President Martin informed the members that, in 2016, for the application cycle for the class of 2021, Amherst will join a diverse group of eighty public and private colleges and universities that will accept the new Coalition Application for Access, Affordability and Success. The president explained that, in 2013, a group of Council on Financing Higher Education (COFHE) institutions began to collaborate on the development of an application that would serve as an alternative to the Common Application, which had recently implemented a new software system that had wreaked havoc on the 2013 application cycle for students, college admission offices, and secondary schools. A core value of the coalition is a commitment to broadening access to and increasing affordability for a higher education. Membership is limited to institutions meeting full financial need for domestic students and maintaining a six-year graduation rate of at least 70 percent. The coalition is developing a platform of online tools that are intended to streamline and increase transparency of the college and financial aid application processes. While this new option is intended to empower all students in the college exploration and application process, one of the coalition's primary ambitions is to encourage development of a college-going mindset among traditionally underserved and first-generation students by providing free, online early college planning tools that can also support community-based organizations and under-resourced secondary schools. Amherst will continue to accept the Common Application, President Martin noted.

Dean Epstein informed the members that the president and she plan to consider mechanisms to enhance the ways in which untenured faculty members may bring issues of concern forward. Following up on the committee's previous conversation about the baseball field renovation project, the dean informed the members that it is now her understanding that the college will pay \$100,000 toward the cost of the project, for which donors have already given a total of \$905,000. It is expected that the renovations will be complete this spring. The committee next discussed [a request from Professor Fong](#), chair of the Committee on International Education, sent on that committee's behalf, that the dean of international students and global engagement (currently Lauren Clarke) be added, ex officio, to the Committee on International Education. The members agreed to bring a motion to the faculty to make this change.

Under "Questions from Committee Members," Professor Katsaros raised the issue of the lack of adequate facilities on campus for foreign language instruction. She noted that the study of a foreign language is one of the priorities defined in the strategic plan for the college. She expressed particular concern about Barrett Hall, which houses several language departments. There have been ongoing issues about outside noise and the configuration of the chairs and desks that have an adverse effect on the classroom experiences in Barrett. She noted that, because of a lack of soundproofing in the classrooms, conversations and lectures are often interrupted. The ventilation system also contributes to the noise problems. Continuing, Professor Katsaros said that having chairs that can be moved easily would allow students to be grouped in clusters for purposes of conversation, which would be ideal. Dean Epstein said that she would have Associate Dean Cheney contact Professor Katsaros to discuss options regarding the classrooms,

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, September 28, 2015

Amended October 13, 2015

while noting that there are constraints at this time that may be alleviated once the new science center is complete and McGuire is renovated. Professor Douglas asked, on behalf of a colleague who had observed a drone on campus, whether the college has a policy about the use of drones. Dean Epstein said that, to her knowledge, the only drones that have been used on campus are owned by the architects of the new residence halls. The drones were used to offer an aerial view of the projects in order to present progress on construction. Dean Epstein said that she would check with Jim Brassord, chief of campus operations, to learn if the college has a policy about drones.

The college's instructional designer/technologist, hari stephen kumar, joined the meeting at 3:20 P.M. He thanked the members for inviting him to discuss new approaches that might be taken to evaluating teaching, the design of teaching evaluations, and possible ways to mitigate implicit bias. Mr. kumar provided the committee with [a bibliography](#) that contains live links to a number of articles on these subjects (most are available online, and all are available by request from Mr. kumar or the dean's office), including Basow, S. A., and Martin, J. L. (2012) "Bias in Student Evaluations," in M. E. Kite (Ed.), *Effective Evaluation of Teaching: A Guide for Faculty and Administrators*, Society for the Teaching of Psychology, and MacNell, L., et. al. (2015) and "What's in a Name: Exposing Gender Bias in Student Ratings of Teaching," *Innovative Higher Education* Vol. 40 (4), pp. 291-303. Mr. kumar offered a short presentation and then answered the members' questions.

Mr. kumar began by noting that end-of-semester evaluations are not the only way, or necessarily the best way, of evaluating teaching. Making use of a mix of approaches—peer review (observations by colleagues), longitudinal evaluations, obtaining student feedback at multiple points (at the outset, during, and after a class), with end-of-semester evaluations being one component, is ideal. Amherst's current system of evaluation makes use of a number of these methods. Mr. kumar said that employing approaches that generate responses from students that go beyond what is essentially a "customer satisfaction" mindset should be the goal of the evaluation process. He recommended that space be provided for formative and summative methods of evaluating teaching. Formative methods are used to garner feedback for the instructor's own information and could include mid-semester evaluations, for example.

Continuing, Mr. kumar explained that summative methods have an evaluative purpose, which is to measure and rate the effectiveness of teaching. He noted that reliance on a single end-of-semester course evaluation alone can be problematic. Whenever they are administered, however, these evaluations need to be very carefully designed and must be properly contextualized to serve as effective tools. The evaluation's questions often can be ineffective because of their vagueness and scope, and there are often problems with methodology, as well as challenges surrounding interpretation. Having students fill out end-of-semester evaluations for all of their classes during a time (the conclusion of the term) that tends to be stressful and demanding often results in "evaluation fatigue," Mr. kumar commented. Other issues with end-of-semester evaluations revolve around how students interpret questions and how readers/evaluators interpret student comments.

Turning to the topic of implicit bias, Mr. kumar noted that bias is difficult to measure and to prove, but that more and more studies of evaluating teaching suggest that bias frequently exists—with the factors involved most often being gender, race, age, and sexual orientation. Bias can be a factor in regard to student expectations, as well as in evaluators' observations of

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, September 28, 2015

Amended October 13, 2015

teaching and in their interpretation of evaluations. Mr. kumar advised that readers and developers of teaching evaluations receive training about implicit bias. Professor Hart asked how students might be educated about implicit bias. It was agreed that avoiding bias when formulating evaluation questions and focusing on training evaluators should be the starting point. Continuing, Mr. kumar explained that some questions can invite bias, for example, those that students perceive to be asking them to comment on the personality and performance of the instructor in class. Students' responses to such questions tend to focus on their perception of the dynamism or enthusiasm of the teacher, often with an emphasis on an instructor's level of confidence, rather than on the learning that has taken place. It would be preferable to try to design questions that will elicit responses that focus on more useful indicators of effective teaching—whether the professor has increased student interest in the subject matter of the course, for example. Performance in the classroom and outcomes should be decoupled, Mr. kumar recommended.

Mr. kumar discussed approaches that could enhance the effectiveness of the evaluation of teaching at Amherst, including the use of basic qualitative analyses of student comments (through a coding system), and the inclusion of multiple methods of evaluation and feedback. He shared with the committee an example of a qualitative analysis that had been done of a single course. The following rating scale was used to “code” student responses: *positive*, *very positive*, *neutral*, *negative*, *very negative*, *constructive* (comments that offered a specific suggestion), or *not constructive* (comments that were viewed as irrelevant to the analysis of teaching). A color was assigned to each rating. Mr. kumar explained that, as is the case in the example he had shared, this exercise often reveals patterns that can provide a context for a nuanced analysis and can also help readers think about a small number of negative or non-constructive comments in context. Professor Benedetto asked how long it takes to code a course in this way, and Mr. kumar responded that it would take about an hour. He commented that this coding approach is a way of working with existing questions that are known to have design problems. It would be preferable, he pointed out, to have clear questions, to assign comments to well-defined categories for evaluating teaching, and to use a qualitative visual matrix to map them. (He provided the members with a relevant article, again available from him and from the dean's office, Lewis, K. (2001) “Making Sense of Student Written Comments,” *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, No. 87, fall 2001, pp. 25-32.) The members agreed that coming to a consensus about the rubrics that should be used to define good teaching would be the biggest challenge when undertaking such an exercise.

While recognizing the efficacy of qualitative approaches, Professor Douglas asked Mr. kumar about the use of quantitative measures in combination with qualitative ones. Mr. kumar agreed that a hybrid approach can be effective, while commenting that good teaching should obviously never be boiled down to a single number, and acknowledging the concern that doing so could be the result of making use of quantitative measures. Mr. kumar stressed that the ways in which questions are written is very important. For example, questions that will generate a simple “yes” or “no” are problematic, as are questions that pack too much in. Professor C. Dole commented that our current system of end-of-semester evaluations combines feedback intended to be used by both the instructor to improve her or his teaching and by the institution to evaluate faculty for tenure. He suggested that a new system of evaluation should seek to separate these two objectives. Professor Marshall commented that, as a Committee of Six member, he has

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, September 28, 2015

Amended October 13, 2015

found it frustrating at times, when reading candidates' teaching evaluations, to weed through student responses to questions that seem to have been designed to provide feedback to instructors, rather than to offer evaluations of a course. The committee agreed that separating the formative and summative modes from one another is important.

Professor Katsaros asked if research has been done on how to improve the student response rate for evaluations. Discussion followed about ways to improve the quantity and quality of the evaluations. Professor Hart noted that some departments do not release student grades until evaluations are complete. Professor Marshall commented that students in his department complete end-of-semester evaluations during the final meetings of their labs, thus in class. Professor Benedetto said that he prefers not to use class time for evaluations because of the need to cover the curriculum and the necessity of using all of the available class time for that purpose. Mr. kumar recommended not requiring that all end-of-semester evaluations be done at the same time and suggested that evaluations be solicited during a period in which students are under less stress. He also suggested allowing students more time to do their evaluations—two weeks, for example. Familiarizing students with the wording and purpose of evaluation questions at the beginning of the course, reminding them of the importance and usefulness of student evaluations during the course, sharing previous constructive student comments, and discussing the ways in which the instructor has been responsive to prior comments can also improve the quality of student responses and boost students' confidence that their evaluations will be taken seriously. The members noted that procedures ([see Faculty Handbook III., E., 4., a., 5](#)) currently require that end-of-semester evaluations be “devised by the instructor in collaboration with the department.” It was agreed that it could be helpful to revise this language in order to create evaluations that can be consistent across departments. Making this change would require a vote of the faculty.

Professor Katsaros commented that, before the course begins, it would be very helpful to include as part of all teaching evaluations a question that asks students to describe the source of their interest in the course. Mr. kumar noted that students could be asked at the beginning of the course, and again at the conclusion, about their interest in the subject matter and their motivations for taking the course. Professor Marshall offered the example of a question that asks students to list what they consider criteria for good teaching. Mr. kumar agreed that such a question provides valuable insights into student expectations, but only in hindsight under the current system. He suggested that the question would be even more useful if asked at the beginning of the course, as doing so would give faculty an idea of what students expect at a time that is early enough in the semester to clarify potential misperceptions and to align expectations. Professor Douglas asked Mr. kumar if he had ever developed a series of common questions for teaching evaluations that would span departments and disciplines and that would include quantitative as well as qualitative measures. Mr. kumar said that he has worked with one Amherst department to create evaluations, with the goal of moving beyond just measuring students' reactions to a course and to try to focus students' attention on what and how they learned during the course. The members asked Mr. kumar what some common questions might be. He suggested the following two questions as examples:

How often was your point of view challenged or changed due to something that you learned in the course?

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, September 28, 2015

Amended October 13, 2015

In what ways did you learn something from a peer in the course?

Dean Epstein asked what steps should be taken next to move forward with enhancing the teaching evaluation system at Amherst. It was agreed that the first step should be for the faculty to identify what the key markers of good teaching at the college should be, and that the second should be to find the best ways to measure good teaching. Professor Marshall noted that, years ago, only retrospective letters were used when evaluating teaching at Amherst. He expressed some concern that using standard questions for all end-of-semester evaluations, across departments, might give the impression that there is only one approved way of teaching at Amherst, and that faculty might begin to “teach to the evaluations.” It was agreed that faculty have different strengths and competencies and that there are many different styles of teaching that can be successful. The goal should not be to be prescriptive.

Professor Hart commented that achieving consensus on the categories of good teaching will be the challenge. Developing questions that measure whether an individual is successful in the areas should not be that difficult, in his view. Commenting on the idea of having students respond to questions at the beginning of the course and at the end, Professor Benedetto expressed concern about students’ time and the logistics of linking the first evaluation to the second to create a combined evaluation for each student. Mr. kumar said that this approach is workable when the number of questions is small and when the questions are designed to be informative and consistent in the different iterations. The members asked Mr. kumar to work with Hanna Spinosa, chief institutional research and planning officer, to develop a framework for teaching evaluations and a series of standard questions for the Committee of Six’s review. Professor Douglas suggested that emphasis be placed on having a mix of qualitative and quantitative. When developing and proposing questions, the members asked that Mr. kumar inform them where wording has been corrected for implicit bias.

President Martin expressed support for thinking about the process of evaluation differently and working to change the culture of evaluation at Amherst—with the goal of moving away from consumerism and toward finding better ways to measure student learning and interest. The members thanked Mr. kumar, and he left the meeting at 4:05 P.M.

At 4:10 P.M., Lisa Rutherford, chief policy officer and general counsel, joined the meeting for the purpose of offering general legal advice related to the tenure process and answering questions posed by the committee.

Conversation turned to the dean’s proposal that the college conduct background checks on all job candidates for faculty positions to whom offers of employment have been made. The background checks would be done to verify educational records, employment history, and social security numbers, the dean explained. Under the proposal, the college would also conduct a criminal records search and sexual offender registry search. Candidates would be asked to complete and sign a release authorizing the college to conduct the background check. All offers of employment would be contingent upon its completion and satisfactory results. Dean Epstein noted that her office had contacted some of Amherst’s peer institutions to ask whether they conduct background checks on candidates for faculty positions. The dean provided the members with those policies to inform the discussion. Most of Amherst’s peer schools do conduct checks and appear to have put their policies in place relatively recently, the committee noted. The

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, September 28, 2015

Amended October 13, 2015

members wondered what has prompted schools to move in this direction. President Martin expressed the view that the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, a federal law passed in 2002, has led boards of trustees to adhere to a higher standard of fiduciary responsibility in their governance role, including taking on greater oversight in areas that may put their institutions at risk.

In answer to questions posed by the committee about the logistics of the process of conducting background checks, Ms. Rutherford discussed approaches that Amherst might take if the college were to do background checks. While the checking of records would likely be outsourced to a company specializing in this area, the college would develop and put its own policies in place to govern the process, and would oversee all aspects of it. Ms. Rutherford noted that some aspects of any policy on background checks would be governed by state law. For example, in Massachusetts, only criminal convictions, rather than arrests, can be considered when making a decision about whether to disqualify a candidate, based on the results of a criminal background check. If Amherst were to adopt a policy, the members asked what the criteria would be for disqualifying a person for a position and who would make such a determination. Ms. Rutherford said that the college would have to build criteria into its policy and decide on who should make decisions/judgments about these matters. At present, background checks are conducted on some Amherst employees with access to residence halls, for example, custodial staff. In addition, some contractors are asked to ensure that checks are performed on their employees and on any subcontractors whom they may hire to work at the college. Consideration is being given as to whether to perform background checks on staff members, as well. Ms. Rutherford said that if it is decided that those who are offered faculty positions must undergo background checks, she imagines that background checks will also be done on those who are offered staff positions at the college. Professor Marshall recommended that, if this policy is put in place for faculty and staff, the dean's office be given oversight over the faculty process, and that Human Resources have oversight over the staff process.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Douglas asked why the college would start doing background checks in the absence of problems suggesting a need for this step. He wondered whether worries about liability exposure might be driving the proposal. He expressed concern about the human costs that could be associated with conducting background checks, including the potential for mishandling information, for ending up with imperfect information, and for stigmatizing people. Professor Douglas said that he is uncomfortable with the idea of possibly perpetuating the wrongs of the criminal justice system, and with the possibility that individuals who had "paid" for their crimes might be further penalized for past behavior. Past criminal behavior is often not predictive of future criminal behavior, Professor Douglas pointed out. Ms. Rutherford stressed that, based on her experience implementing a background check policy at another institution, it is possible to put standards and processes in place that make it unlikely that individuals will be treated unfairly and to ensure that information is kept confidential.

Professor C. Dole, who said that he shares Professor Douglas's concerns, inquired whether the faculty would be asked to discuss and vote on any policy regarding background checks that would govern faculty. Professor Douglas argued that having a faculty vote would be appropriate because the college is not legally bound to do background checks, as it is to enforce Title IX, for example. While acknowledging that there are complexities surrounding the issue of background checks, the college has a commitment to ensuring the safety of its students, President Martin said. In particular, if an individual seeking a position at Amherst has a record of sexual

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, September 28, 2015**Amended October 13, 2015**

misconduct, the college should be aware of it and must make a judgment about whether the individual may pose a danger to the community, particularly to students. The president noted that the decision to adopt background checks is within the purview of the board of trustees. The faculty could vote on whether to endorse and/or recommend that the college do background checks and on any relevant policies, the committee agreed.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Benedetto said that, while he initially had had concerns about background checks that centered around the expansion of bureaucracy at the college and threats to privacy, today's conversation had assuaged his doubts about moving forward with performing background checks. He argued for the need to balance privacy and freedom with possible risks to student safety. Professor Katsaros, after being reassured by Ms. Rutherford that every effort would be made to ensure that the college has accurate information to inform decision-making, and that the rights of candidates would be protected, also expressed support for performing background checks. Professors Hart and Marshall also felt that doing so would be prudent. President Martin was asked if background checks would be done on current employees as well as new ones, if a background check policy is put in place. The president said that she does not anticipate that the college will conduct background checks on current faculty and staff, but that more discussion is needed.

The members discussed briefly what would be done if a background check were to reveal an issue of concern about a faculty candidate. Most members agreed that the dean could discuss the matter with the Committee of Six. Professors Douglas and C. Dole said that they would be uncomfortable playing a role in an evaluative process in this context. The dean said that she is confident that privacy concerns could be addressed and stressed the importance of conducting background checks to ensure the safety of students, in particular. At the conclusion of the conversation, the dean asked Ms. Rutherford to draft a framework for a college policy to govern background checks. The members agreed to review the policy and to offer input.

The meeting concluded with the committee discussing whether the college should have a requirement that search committees examine the social media presence of candidates for positions at the college. While noting that it can make sense for search committees to familiarize themselves with candidates' social media profiles, which are public information, the members felt that the college should not require that this step be taken. Rather, such searches should be left to the discretion of those involved. It was agreed that having as much information as possible to inform decision-making when hiring is desirable.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

Committee of Six Minutes of Thursday, October 8, 2015

Amended October 20, 2015

The fourth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2015-2016 was called to order by President Martin in the president's office at 4:30 P.M. on Thursday, October 8, 2015. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Benedetto, C. Dole, Douglas, Hart, Katsaros, and Marshall; Dean Epstein; and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with Hanna Spinosa, chief institutional research and planning officer, discussing with the members data that she had provided to the committee about FTE allocations in relation to enrollments and divisions. A question posed about this topic by Professor Benedetto earlier prompted the dean to ask Ms. Spinosa to share and review these data with the committee. After responding to questions, Ms. Spinosa left the meeting at 5:00 P.M. The members agreed that the data prepared by Ms. Spinosa should be forwarded to the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) and the Curriculum Committee to inform the work of these committees.

Under "Topics of the Day," President Martin informed the members that she had met with a group of seventy-five to one hundred students and a small number of faculty and staff members on October 6 at the Multicultural Resource Center (MRC). A significant portion of the conversation had focused on students' concerns about academic workload and accompanying feelings of stress. In addition, there had been discussion of options for moving forward with diversity initiatives, as well as plans for searches for a chief diversity officer and director of the Multicultural Resource Center, as both positions are now vacant as a result of the recent resignation of Mariana Cruz. President Martin shared with the members [a list of ideas and actionable items](#) that had emerged from the meeting and said that she anticipates developing rough estimates for implementation. Some requests were for actions that are already planned or under way, while others are steps that the president will consider after further review. In regard to launching a search for a chief diversity officer, which will occur within the next several weeks, President Martin noted that Dean Epstein has indicated her enthusiastic support for making this appointment.

Continuing, the president noted that some requests can be completed sooner, while others will take longer to implement. She plans to keep the community informed as progress is made. President Martin noted that some students emphasized that pressing obligations (jobs, for example, that are needed to provide support for their families) can make managing a heavy academic workload, and achieving academic success, particularly challenging; they feel that faculty members are not aware of these constraints and/or are not taking them into account when assigning work. Some students expressed the view that faculty members do not recognize the amount of time that students need to participate fully in co-curricular activities, including groups that provide them with the support and friendship that allow them to feel included in the Amherst community. Clearly, the assignment of academic work is within the purview of each faculty member, President Martin said, while noting that bringing faculty into conversation with students who have concerns about the academic workload and stress would be informative and helpful. She has asked Dean Epstein to facilitate such discussions, and the dean has agreed to do so. The committee expressed support for moving forward with these plans. As a final note about the meeting at the MRC, President Martin commented that students also raised concerns about a lack of funding for affinity groups at the college. Under current rules, the Association for Amherst Students (AAS) cannot provide funding, since affinity groups are not open to all Amherst

Committee of Six Minutes of Thursday, October 8, 2015**Amended October 20, 2015**

students. This lack of resources presents challenges to the groups' ability to build community, the students commented. The members turned to personnel matters.

The meeting adjourned at 5:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, October 19, 2015

Amended October 28, 2015

The fifth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2015-2016 was called to order by President Martin in the president's office at 3:00 P.M. on Monday, October 19, 2015. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Benedetto, C. Dole, Douglas, Hart, Katsaros, and Marshall; Dean Epstein; and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

Under "Topics of the Day," President Martin said that the meetings of the Board of Trustees, which had been held the previous weekend, had been productive and had gone smoothly. She informed the committee that the board had voted to rescind the honorary degree that Amherst had awarded to Bill Cosby in 1999. The trustees noted that they believe that "the violation of the values for which the degree was awarded is clear and exceptional." The committee then turned to personnel matters.

Dean Epstein asked the members for their views on the possibility of establishing an annual lecture along the lines of the Lazerowitz Lecture, but to be given by an Amherst full professor who had recently been appointed to one of the college's named professorships. An honorarium would be associated with the lecture. The members expressed support for this proposal. The dean noted that, in addition to celebrating one newly named colleague in this way each year, the president would continue her practice of recent years of celebrating all colleagues who have been appointed to named professorships with a special dinner at her home. The members then discussed a committee nomination and agreed to forward the name of the nominee to the faculty.

Under "Questions from Committee Members," Professor Douglas asked the dean if a faculty member is required to seek the dean's permission if he or she wishes to teach a course overload. The dean said that this step is indeed required. Professor Katsaros inquired whether there will be further discussion about conducting background checks on current employees. Dean Epstein said that Lisa Rutherford, chief policy officer and general counsel, will develop a policy proposal that will be shared with the Committee of Six. The dean said that the policy may also be brought to the faculty for discussion for the information of colleagues.

Professor Hart next asked about the status of plans to address student concerns about stress and workload and options for moving forward with diversity initiatives. Both topics had been discussed at the October 6 meeting with the president at the Multicultural Resource Center (MRC). President Martin informed the members that Adrianna Turner '14 has agreed to serve as interim director of the MRC. Ms. Turner, who had been assisting Mariana Cruz, who recently resigned as interim chief diversity officer, will work closely with Angie Tissi-Gassoway, director of the Queer Resource Center and interim director of the Women and Gender Center, and with Alex Vasquez, dean of students, who has responsibility for the oversight of all three centers. President Martin said that, after consulting with the senior staff, the college plans to move forward as soon as possible with a search for a permanent director of the MRC, not waiting necessarily for the position of chief diversity officer to be filled first. President Martin and the senior staff are continuing to consider the contours of the position of chief diversity officer and the optimal timeframe and process for moving forward with filling the position. The president said that she expects that a search for a new chief diversity officer will be launched soon.

Continuing the conversation, President Martin noted that Pete Mackey, chief communications officer, is continuing to develop college web pages that focus on diversity programs and initiatives at Amherst. He had been working with Mariana Cruz on the project

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, October 19, 2015

Amended October 28, 2015

prior to her departure. Included on the site will be a checklist of action items. As steps are taken, checkmarks will appear next to the relevant items. President Martin said that this web checklist will be one way of keeping the community informed about progress in the area of enhancing support for diversity within the Amherst community. Professor Hart noted his own plans to engage in informal conversation with students at the MRC, and the president and the dean encouraged him and other faculty to create opportunities, whenever possible, to learn more about students' concerns. Dropping by the MRC for a chat, for example, as Professor Hart plans to do, would be most welcome. In terms of more formal opportunities for discussion, the dean and the president noted plans for a faculty conversation with the class deans at the November 3 meeting of the faculty. The topic will be student stress and workload concerns. In addition, the dean noted, she plans on organizing a series of meetings with faculty members and students. Professor Katsaros proposed having staff members listen to the students' concerns, as well, and it was agreed that having multiple meetings with the students and the broadest representation possible of engaged members of the community would be best.

Conversation turned to a letter and revised proposal that the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) and the registrar had forwarded to the Committee of Six. As background, it was noted that, at the May 5, 2015, meeting of the faculty, discussion of a CEP motion to create a pilot program to change the college's pre-registration process had taken place. Ultimately, the motion had been postponed until the second meeting of the faculty in fall 2015. (For reference, see the [faculty meeting minutes of May 5, 2015](#).) Since then, the CEP has reviewed the original proposal further, considered the faculty's initial discussion of this topic, and incorporated feedback that was given. The CEP is now bringing a revised proposal forward via the following substitute motion:

The faculty endorses the Committee on Educational Policy's recommendation to pilot a new preregistration process. The changes in procedure are outlined in the committee's [revised proposal](#) and [letter](#). This trial program would be in effect for three years and would commence with pre-registration for courses for the fall semester, 2016.

Dean Epstein commented that the CEP continues to believe that current pre-registration procedures are deeply flawed and disadvantage students. Under the current system, many students are routinely bumped from courses, often late in the add/drop period, according to the CEP. The inability to settle on a final course schedule can result in the need for students to work hard to catch up on coursework that they have missed as a result of not being present during initial class meetings. Advisors often end up dealing with frantic students searching for courses as the add/drop deadline approaches. For faculty, the system means that there are new students in practically every class meeting during add/drop and requests from desperate students who are searching for classes after being dropped from other classes.

The dean noted that the goal of the revised pilot program remains the same as the original, that is to reduce the number of schedule changes that occur during the add/drop period and to guarantee registration for students prior to the add/drop period. The pilot would create a second round of registration after pre-registration, after which students remaining on course rosters would, for the most part (see "opt-out" exception described in the next paragraph), be

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, October 19, 2015

Amended October 28, 2015

guaranteed enrollment as long as they attended the first class during the add/drop period. Students who remain on course rosters after the second round of registration would be guaranteed enrollment in a capped course, as long as they attended the first class. The proposal has been developed to address the problem of faculty members whose courses are overenrolled after pre-registration waiting to cut students until the add/drop period, and has been designed to reduce the chaos that ensues during the add/drop period. This would be done by moving portions of the process to the previous semester, when the potential impact on students' educational experience is less because they would not miss class time while sorting out their schedules, the dean explained.

Dean Epstein noted that the major change being brought forward in the revised proposal is that faculty be permitted to "opt out" of committing places to students in their courses before the add/drop period and to "manage their enrollments directly on a course-by-course basis." As noted in the revised proposal, in such courses, enrollment would be by "instructor permission." Allowing for an "opt-out" option will allow faculty to retain some flexibility and control of enrollment after preregistration. According to the revised proposal, instructors who choose this approach would need to update their course descriptions through the CEP and indicate how enrollments would be prioritized. Dean Epstein said that she continues to support the pilot's goals and noted that it is very problematic for students when faculty members wait until the add/drop period to decide which students will remain in their classes. For students who are cut, it can be a real challenge to find a replacement course or courses. The dean said that she finds it problematic when faculty "cherry pick" the members of their classes, believing that all students who meet prerequisites should have access to the courses that they would most like to take. Another benefit of the proposal, in the dean's view, is that "shopping" would be diminished, as more students would presumably have most of their schedule set earlier, and would be guaranteed places in the courses in which they pre-registered (as long as they attended the first class).

Professor Benedetto wondered whether the CEP might find a faculty member's reasons for opting out of guaranteeing students' spots in his or her class not to be sufficiently compelling to warrant the exception. The dean agreed that this was a possibility. Professor Benedetto expressed concern that the revised proposal, like the original, would place additional advising burdens on faculty at what is already a very busy time. Professor Benedetto wondered whether there could be an additional registration period at a time that is not as busy, for example, in July. The dean responded that a summer period would not allow for advising. Professor Benedetto said that advising could be done via email, and that he makes use of this tool now. He also expressed the view that the proposal will not diminish work during the add/drop period. Professor Benedetto noted that if a colleague is on leave and is not following the pre-registration procedures closely, he or she could end up with a course that is significantly oversubscribed. In addition, he argued that students would find ways to "game" the new system and would have more "levers" than exist under the current system. Professor Douglas agreed, but observed that such questions should be reserved for discussion on the faculty floor.

Professor Marshall said that he also has concerns, as he did the first time that the proposal came before the committee. When the college moved to online registration, advising demands expanded from one week to two weeks, he commented. Under the pilot, he would worry that advising responsibilities would now be extended over four weeks. The revised proposal is an

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, October 19, 2015

Amended October 28, 2015

“Amherstian solution,” in Professor Marshall’s view. If a colleague prefers not to participate in the pilot procedures, he or she does not have to, though the CEP has created some barriers to opting out. This option might make the proposed procedures more palatable to some, however. Professor Marshall expressed the view that the proposal still does not address the concern raised by some members of the previous Committee of Six that the problem is one of offering courses that few students want to take, rather than courses that everyone wants to take. Professor Marshall said that, on a positive note, if the proposal were adopted, it would be helpful to science departments, as there would be finalized class lists at a much earlier point, allowing for the creation of laboratory sections and a better sense of staffing needs.

Professor Douglas asked if, under the current proposal, faculty members with a capped overenrolled course could cut back to well under the cap in order, for example, to set aside slots for first-year students. He could also imagine that some majors might be unaware during the pre-registration process that they might need to take a given required course in the upcoming semester, and so fail to preregister. By the time the next semester began, if all of the slots had been guaranteed, would there be any alternatives to leaving the student out of a required course or forcing the professor to lift the cap? Alternatively, Professor C. Dole wondered what would happen if a faculty member guaranteed all of the allotted spots to students, and then some dropped out during add/drop so that the class was under-enrolled. The committees agreed that the class would have to be “closed” under the latter circumstance and would need to be reopened. Some members suggested that the faculty would then switch the class to instructor permission. It was noted that, if a faculty member cuts students at the cap, some students will inevitably not show up to class, and the cap may not be met. For this reason, in over-enrolled classes currently, some faculty members retain enough students to reach a figure slightly above the cap. Under the proposal, it would be possible to “save space” for students, and cutting to the cap would not be required.

While most members expressed serious concerns about the CEP proposal, it was agreed that it should be brought to the faculty for discussion and vote. The committee then voted two in favor, two opposed, with two abstentions, on the substance of the substitute motion and six in favor and zero opposed to forward the substitute motion to the faculty.

The members then voted six in favor and zero opposed on the substance of the following motion, a recommendation of the Committee on International Education, and six in favor and zero opposed to forward the motion to the faculty:

The Committee of Six proposes the following changes to current language in the *Faculty Handbook*, [section IV, S., 1, m.](#), as indicated in bold caps:

The Committee on International Education. The Committee on International 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 International Experience~~ **DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION ABROAD, DEAN FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT**, and registrar, ex officio. 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. The committee shapes policies and procedures for evaluating

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, October 19, 2015**Amended October 28, 2015**

and approving study-abroad programs for Amherst students. The members maintain and review a list of college-approved study-abroad programs, review student petitions for study-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 International Experience~~ **DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION ABROAD** to aid in advising, and consult with the director to identify new opportunities for international experiences and to facilitate student participation in them.

The committee next reviewed a draft faculty meeting agenda for a November 3 meeting and voted six in favor and zero opposed to forward the agenda to the faculty. The remainder of the meeting was devoted to personnel matters.

The meeting adjourned at 4:40 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

Committee of Six Minutes of Wednesday, October 28, 2015

Amended November 11, 2015

The sixth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2015-2016 was called to order by President Martin in the president's office at 4:30 P.M. on Wednesday, October 28, 2015. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Benedetto, Douglas, Hart, Katsaros, and Marshall; Dean Epstein; and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder. Professor C. Dole was absent.

Under "Topics of the Day," President Martin said that it is expected that the *New York Times* will soon publish an article on the Amherst mascot ([the article appeared on October 31, 2015](#)). The president said that it is her impression that momentum is growing to move away from the use of Lord Jeffery Amherst as the college's unofficial mascot. There is also ongoing discussion among students about developing a process to select an official mascot. The Association of Amherst Students (AAS) recently published [an open letter](#) urging that a new mascot be found and inviting members of the campus community to its meeting on October 26 for an open discussion of the mascot issue. Professor Katsaros commented that she was surprised that the Zumbyes had performed the "Lord Jeffery Amherst" song at the October 24 memorial service for John Pistel '69, who died on October 10, 2015. The members, some of whom were unaware that Mr. Pistel had passed away, expressed great sadness upon hearing this news. The dean said that she had discussed the singing of the song with a member of the Zumbyes, who had told her that the group continues to sing the song on occasion. Alumni often do as well, it was noted. President Martin commented that the college cannot control whether the song is sung. It is her understanding that the college's athletic teams are not using the mascot to any great extent. To her knowledge, only one team (lacrosse) continues to have "Lord Jeffs" appear on its uniforms, and only because it is not yet time to replace the uniforms. There is no longer a Lord Jeff mascot at athletic events, the president noted. President Martin said that consideration will be given to informing the New England Small College Athletic Conference (NESCAC) that Amherst's teams should no longer be referred to as the "Jeffs." It was noted that many athletic teams are still called "the Jeffs" in the *Amherst Student* and during athletic events, a situation that will perhaps change. President Martin said that it is her expectation that the Board of Trustees will consider the question of the mascot in January.

Under "Questions from Committee Members," Professor Douglas said that a student had recently come to him with questions about the level of support that the college is providing to accommodate what is a significant disability. He explained that he had contacted the student's class dean, as well as Alex Vasquez, dean of students, to bring to their attention the concerns that the student had raised. The incident prompted him to ask if the college, at the level of policy, is making further efforts to ensure that all students who need accommodations receive them. The president said that she is confident that the class dean and Dean Vasquez would follow-up with the student, and that they will make every effort to provide the support that is necessary for him or her to be successful. As to the broader question of reviewing the college's policies and responsibilities regarding accommodations for students with documented disabilities, including compliance with the law, President Martin noted that a task force led by Suzanne Coffey, chief student affairs officer, has been charged with this work. That group will begin meeting in January, she understands.

Conversation turned to Professor Benedetto's concern that his department has faced challenges when hiring tutors because the level of compensation has remained much the same

Committee of Six Minutes of Wednesday, October 28, 2015

Amended November 11, 2015

over the years. The dean shared with the members prior to the meeting [the student wage schedule for fall 2015](#), which had been provided by the Office of Financial Aid. She noted that the Moss Quantitative Center pays tutors \$11.50 per hour, and that the Department of Mathematics and Statistics pays tutors \$11.00 per hour. Peer tutors are paid \$10.00 per hour. The dean explained that departments have the ability to pay students through their own budgets. She commented that most departments' pay rates are consistent with the information provided by the Office of Financial Aid. Professor Benedetto thanked the dean for providing these data, which he found somewhat reassuring. He reiterated his view that students with jobs that require constant attention to the work should be compensated at a higher level than those who have jobs, such as staffing a reception desk, that allow for doing one's homework or quiet leisure activities on the job. He said that his department continues to face challenges finding tutors who will work at the pay rate that is offered, noting that the budget is insufficient to cover the tutors that are needed. The dean invited Professor Benedetto to write to her with more specifics about the resources that his department may need in regard to tutors.

Discussion turned to the section of the *Faculty Handbook* (II, B.) that describes the administration of the college. In advance of the meeting, the dean had provided the members with modest revisions to the descriptions of senior staff positions that are included in the *Faculty Handbook* (see below).

2. President's Administrative Team

The positions that represent the leadership of the major areas of college life report directly to the president and, as a collective, support and advise the president in his or her work. The make-up of the administrative team may change, based on the goals and needs of the president.

The Dean of the Faculty

~~The dean of the faculty is the chief academic officer of Amherst College and has primary responsibility for matters of academic policy that affect the faculty and for the educational consequences of the academic budget. The dean oversees faculty hiring and advances and supports faculty development in the areas of research and teaching, as well as the college's liberal arts mission. The dean and his or her staff ensure that procedures governing faculty reappointment, tenure, and promotion are implemented, as voted by the faculty and articulated in the *Faculty Handbook*. The president consults with the dean on all recommendations to the board regarding faculty reappointment, tenure, and promotion. The dean serves as secretary to the Committee of Six and secretary to the faculty and oversees the Robert Frost Library, the Mead Art Museum, the Beneski Museum of Natural History, and the Office of the Registrar. The dean of the faculty also has joint responsibility, with the president, for the Department of Physical Education and Athletics.~~

The Dean of the Faculty

The dean of the faculty is the chief academic officer of Amherst College and has primary responsibility for matters of academic policy and for the academic budget. The dean oversees faculty hiring and advances and supports faculty development in the areas of research and teaching, as well as the college's liberal arts mission. The dean and his or her staff ensure that procedures governing faculty reappointment, tenure, and promotion are implemented, as voted

Committee of Six Minutes of Wednesday, October 28, 2015

Amended November 11, 2015

by the faculty and articulated in the *Faculty Handbook*. The president consults with the dean on all recommendations to the board regarding faculty reappointment, tenure, and promotion.

The dean serves as secretary to the Committee of Six and secretary to the faculty and oversees the Robert Frost Library, the Mead Art Museum, the Beneski Museum of Natural History, the Emily Dickinson Museum, the Office of the Registrar, the Center for Community Engagement, the Center for Humanistic Inquiry, the Amherst Center for Russian Culture, the college's international programs (including study abroad), and the Office of Fellowships. The dean of the faculty has joint responsibility, with the president, for the Department of Physical Education and Athletics. The dean serves as the college's Five College deputy.

The Chief Financial Officer

~~The chief financial officer has primary responsibility for the administration of the financial and business affairs of the college. The chief financial officer is assisted by the controller, who disperses and accounts for college funds; the director of financial budget and analysis, who is responsible for the compilation and oversight of the college's annual operating budget; the director of financial planning and analysis, who is responsible for financial forecasting and long-range planning; and the director of treasury operations and analysis, who is responsible for the college's debt portfolio, capital structure, and cash management. In addition, the chief financial officer, in conjunction with the chief investments officer and the Investment Committee of the Board of Trustees, is responsible for the management of the college's endowment.~~

The Chief Financial and Administrative Officer

The chief financial and administrative officer has primary responsibility for the administration of the financial and business affairs of the college. The chief financial and administrative officer is assisted by the controller, who disperses and accounts for college funds; the director of budget and analysis, who is responsible for the compilation and oversight of the college's annual operating budget; the director of financial planning and analysis, who is responsible for financial reporting and forecasting; and the director of treasury operations and analysis, who is responsible for the college's debt portfolio, capital structure, and cash management. In addition, the chief financial and administrative officer, under the direction of the Investment Committee of the Board of Trustees and in conjunction with the chief investments officer, is responsible for the management of the college's endowment. At the direction of the president, the chief financial and administrative officer provides additional support to, and oversight of, non-academic administrative areas of the college, particularly during times when the president is conducting college business off-campus.

The Chief Advancement Officer

The chief advancement officer has primary responsibility for the following areas: Alumni and Parent Programs, Development (including the Annual Fund, Leadership and Planned Giving, and Foundation and Corporate Relations), the Career Center, Advancement Communications, and Advancement Operations. Working together, these departments engage alumni, parents, friends, foundations, and corporations in meaningful interactions that foster advocacy,

Committee of Six Minutes of Wednesday, October 28, 2015

Amended November 11, 2015

philanthropic support, and engagement with one another as well as with faculty, students, and staff to support the college's mission and financial well-being.

The Chief of Campus Operations

The chief of campus operations has primary responsibility for areas that steward the preservation and enhancement of the college's physical assets and provide operational services to faculty, students, and staff in support of the college's mission. These departments include facilities; campus police; dining services; environmental health and safety; sustainability; and the office of administrative services, mail services, and rental housing management. Core to the charge for each of these departments is ensuring the safety and well-being of the campus community. The chief of campus operations also serves as town/gown liaison with Town Hall and the business community.

The Chief Communications Officer

The chief communications officer is responsible for the college's communications, marketing, and public affairs; communicating Amherst's distinctive attributes across broad and varied platforms; bringing clarity and focus to the college's communications strategy and institutional position; and for building a comprehensive communications program across the college—including the areas of advancement, admission, and student life—that will reach all constituencies. This work encompasses the website, media relations, publications, photography, videography, sports information, crisis communications, the alumni magazine, internal communications, major campus events, and other means of institutional communication.

The Chief Information Officer

The chief information officer has responsibility for strategic direction and management of the technology and systems that are used in teaching, research, and the administrative operations of the college. Departments reporting to the role include Academic Technology Services, which is focused on supporting teaching, learning, and research; IT Support Services, which maintains and supports the desktop and mobile computing environment; Administrative Information Services, which supports the business processes of the college; and other groups in IT that have responsibility for the college's wired and wireless networks, data systems, cable TV, and telecommunications.

~~The chief information officer supports the mission and goals of the college in areas such as the innovative use of technology in teaching and research, and in effective and efficient administrative practices. Academic Technology Services and Multimedia Services are focused on supporting teaching, learning, and research. IT Support Services maintains and supports the desktop and mobile computing environment; Administrative Information Services supports the business processes of the college. Other groups in IT have responsibility for the college's wired and wireless networks, data systems, cable TV, and telecommunications.~~

The Chief Institutional Research and Planning Officer (new)

The chief institutional research and planning officer has primary responsibility for ensuring

Committee of Six Minutes of Wednesday, October 28, 2015

Amended November 11, 2015

effective management of all official institutional data, including related policies, protocols and reporting. The officer leads data collection, analysis, reporting, and disseminating of information used across the campus for decision-making purposes. He/she also acts as the direct liaison to the Council on Financing Higher Education (COFHE) and other consortial partnerships. The officer oversees assessment and accreditation efforts (New England Association of Schools and Colleges, NEASC) and coordinates, evaluates, and supports strategic planning at the college.

The Chief Policy Officer and General Counsel

The chief policy officer and general counsel has primary responsibility for ensuring effective policy development and oversight as well as serving as the chief attorney for the college. The chief policy officer and general counsel is assisted by the associate general counsel, who provides legal advice and counsel on behalf of the college. The chief policy officer and general counsel oversees the Title IX coordinator, who is responsible for coordination and implementation of Title IX compliance and education, and the Office of Human Resources, which is responsible for the recruitment, hiring and retention of a diverse, qualified workforce.

The Chief Student Affairs Officer

The chief student affairs officer has primary responsibility for fostering a social and residential experience at the college that will help all students achieve their full personal and academic potential. To this end, the Office of Student Affairs seeks to help students build and advance a vibrant, supportive, and respectful campus community. Offices, departments, and selected services under the purview of the Office of Student Affairs include the class deans, the Counseling Center, the Health Center, Health Education, Residential Life, Student Activities, Religious Life, Case Management, Accessibility Services, Conduct and Community Standards, and orientation programs for new students.

The Dean of Admission and Financial Aid

The dean of admission and financial aid coordinates the work of the Offices of Admission and Financial Aid and is responsible for development of policy, strategic planning, and policy analysis related to admission and financial aid operations. The dean and the associate and assistant deans of admission have responsibility for the selection of each entering class. The dean of financial aid and associate and assistant deans of financial aid have primary responsibility for administration of all scholarships and loan funds, both those of Amherst College and federal and state funds administered by the college.

The dean explained that these changes will be made to reflect current responsibilities more accurately, including changes in reporting lines—some of which are a result of the decision not to renew the position of provost at the college. In addition, a description of the position of chief institutional research and planning officer has been added to the section. President Martin commented that the title of the chief financial officer has been changed to the chief financial and administrative officer. As noted in the revised description, at the direction of the president, the chief financial and administrative officer will provide additional support to, and oversight of, non-academic administrative areas of the college, particularly during times

Committee of Six Minutes of Wednesday, October 28, 2015

Amended November 11, 2015

when the president is conducting college business off-campus. Professor Hart asked if the “chain of command” has changed as a result of these shifts in responsibility. President Martin said that the “chain” remains the same, with the dean of the faculty remaining the highest ranking administrator below the president. The members were informed that there is a need to change some titles of administrators within committee charges in the *Faculty Handbook* to reflect the current nomenclature. The committee agreed that if a position that is already listed as part of a charge has a change of title, it is not necessary to have the faculty vote to revise the charge. If a position is added or removed, so that the membership of a committee changes, however, the faculty will be asked to vote on the revision.

The members next discussed two proposed motions to remove the position of the provost from the charges to the Committee of Six ([section IV, S., 1, a.](#)) and the Committee on Priorities and Resources ([section IV, S., 1, r.](#)), a step that will ultimately require a vote of the faculty. Professor Douglas raised the issue of whether eligibility/immunity for the major committees should be revisited, particularly in light of the course release that has been extended to those serving on the Committee of Six. For example, under current guidelines, “all members of the faculty are eligible to serve on the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP), with the same exceptions as govern eligibility for the Committee of Six.” Thus, retiring members of the Committee of Six would have immunity from serving on the CEP for four years. Professor Marshall said that he understands that the rationale for eliminating the possibility that retiring Committee of Six members could serve on the CEP soon after their service on the executive committee of the faculty is not so much a matter of worrying about workload, but of being concerned about the concentration of power among a few. Some members wondered whether the demographic shift of the faculty, with the significant number of retirements that have occurred and which will occur in the near future, has reduced significantly the pool of senior faculty who are available to serve on major committees, particularly given the restrictions just discussed in regard to immunity. The committee asked the dean to do some research to gain a sense of the reasons for the restrictions on eligibility that are currently in place, and their implications in regard to the pool of senior faculty available to serve on committees. The dean agreed to explore this issue.

Conversation returned to the issue of whether the committee should draft a statement on academic freedom and, if the committee decides to do so, what the process should be. In advance of the meeting, to inform the discussion, the committee read the following documents: the [“1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure”](#) (with 1970 Interpretive Comments), [The Kalven Committee’s “Report on the University’s Role in Political and Social Action,”](#) [The Woodward Report](#), which was formally titled the Report of the Committee on Freedom of Expression at Yale (1974); a [letter to President Martin from the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education](#) (2015); [The Report of the Committee on Freedom of Expression at the University of Chicago](#) (2014); [Professor Maxey’s note to the president and the dean of April 9, 2015](#); and [current Amherst College statements about academic freedom](#).

Professor Katsaros asked under what circumstances a policy on academic freedom might come into play and what its purpose would be. The dean responded that having a statement would offer important protections for faculty members. For example, the statement would confirm that faculty members have the freedom to invite controversial speakers to campus and/or to assign and discuss materials in class that may make students

Committee of Six Minutes of Wednesday, October 28, 2015

Amended November 11, 2015

uncomfortable. Under these and other circumstances, some students may feel that their safety is not being protected and may request that material not be taught. The dean noted that faculty, while protected, also need to take care that controversial materials and speakers relate to what is being taught and that such topics are raised in judicious ways. The dean suggested that it will be important to educate students about the importance of academic freedom in the course of developing a statement and to include them in conversations.

Professor Hart, agreeing that conversations with students should be cast in educational terms, said that any new statement should be seen as a reaffirmation of the college's commitment to academic freedom as a foundational principle, rather than as a change in direction. For example, it is noted in the *Faculty Handbook* that "Amherst College subscribes fully to the AAUP statements of principles on academic freedom published in 1940, and assumes that faculty members know their rights and their responsibilities as members of the academic profession." While concurring that the exercise of developing a statement on academic freedom could serve as a pedagogical moment for students, the members and the president agreed that students should not participate in the process of developing a statement or vet proposed statements. Dean Epstein said that, since the CEP will review the statement, there will be the opportunity to experience the reaction of that committee's three student-members. Professor Douglas commented that after a statement is adopted by the faculty, it can be discussed with students. In his view, the statement should be framed as expression of what is a long-held belief and practice at Amherst. It should be noted that the desire for a statement emerged in the context of debates about academic freedom over the years and the wish to affirm what is already true at Amherst. The members agreed.

Professor Douglas referred the members to the passage below on page six of the Woodward Report:

For if a university is a place for knowledge, it is also a special kind of small society. Yet it is not primarily a fellowship, a club, a circle of friends, a replica of the civil society outside it. Without sacrificing its central purpose, it cannot make its primary and dominant value the fostering of friendship, solidarity, harmony, civility, or mutual respect. To be sure, these are important values; other institutions may properly assign them the highest, and not merely a subordinate priority; and a good university will seek and may in some significant measure attain these ends. But it will never let these values, important as they are, override its central purpose.

He raised the question of whether the college's important commitment to safety, respect, and community, all of which should properly be at the core of residential life, might be creating an impression that the classroom environment should likewise be a space in which the bonds of friendship and safety are paramount. He wondered whether a perception is being created that is at odds with the college's core purpose. Professor Douglas asked whether, for example, enlisting faculty to serve in roles that support students outside the classroom might be blurring important boundaries. President Martin said that she does not see any evidence that there is a trend in this direction. Professor Benedetto, agreeing with Professor Douglas, said that it is important for students to understand that the central mission of the college is education.

Committee of Six Minutes of Wednesday, October 28, 2015**Amended November 11, 2015**

Professor Marshall stressed the importance of exposing students to new ideas, while noting that students can experience the process as difficult and uncomfortable.

Commenting that the campus environment has changed since the Woodward Report was written more than thirty years ago, President Martin noted that many students at Amherst now come from different backgrounds and have different needs than in earlier eras. She expressed the view that, perhaps, the relationship between social life and academic life might also have changed. The president noted that some argue that, while institutions of higher education claim that it is necessary to preserve the right to include controversial ideas as part of the education that they provide, in actuality many institutions are leaning heavily toward liberal values and do not engage with conservative thought, for example. While the value of discomfort is recognized for students, all of us could stand to be more open to the discomforts that come from differing points of view, she said. The committee, the dean, and the president agreed that, while there are complexities and consequences associated with academic freedom, it is a right that is fundamental to open inquiry and the exchange of ideas. The Committee of Six agreed to draft a statement on academic freedom, with the goal of reaffirming the college's commitment to this foundational principle, and to ask the faculty to vote on the document. The members decided that this statement should be distinct from current language within the honor code, in college handbooks, and on Amherst's website. It was agreed that, as a starting point, the committee would review a draft statement that Professor Douglas had prepared.

The meeting adjourned at 5:55 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, November 9, 2015

Amended November 30, 2015

The seventh meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2015-2016 was called to order by President Martin in the president's office at 3:00 P.M. on Monday, November 9, 2015. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Benedetto, C. Dole, Douglas, Hart, Katsaros, and Marshall; Dean Epstein; and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with the president informing the committee that the college had just been informed of the death of Nasser Hussain, professor of law, jurisprudence and social thought, who had passed away on Sunday evening, November 8, after an extended illness. The members expressed shock and great sadness over this tragic loss.

Under "Topics of the Day," President Martin informed the committee that the membership of the search committee for the position of chief diversity officer has been finalized. The committee will be chaired by Dean Epstein and Alex Vasquez, dean of students, who will be joined by Servet Bayimli '16; Rhonda Cobham-Sander, Emily C. Jordan Folger Professor of Black Studies and English; David Cox, William J. Walker Professor of Mathematics; Allen Hart, James E. Ostendarp Professor of Psychology; Mandy Hart, associate dean of admission/coordinator of diversity outreach; Luis Hernandez, director of IT Support Services; Franklin Odo, John J. McCloy '16 (visiting) Professor of American Institutions and International Diplomacy; Lisa Rutherford, chief policy officer/general counsel; Miu Suzuki '16; Rachel Nghe '16; Angie Tissi-Gassoway, director of the Queer Resource Center; and Kevin Weinman, chief financial and administrative officer.

Continuing with her remarks, President Martin said that she has been in the process for several months of naming an external review panel to advise, and ultimately to review, Amherst on issues of diversity and inclusion. Danielle Allen, former Amherst trustee, director of Harvard's Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics, and a professor of government and American politics at Harvard, will chair the group. Other leaders within the fields of higher education and diversity and inclusion also have agreed to participate, while the president is still awaiting responses from other individuals who have been invited to serve on the panel. President Martin said that she will share the membership of the group with the Committee of Six once the panel is finalized, and that the information will appear in the committee's minutes. Plans call for the panel to have its first meeting in December and for its members to come to Amherst this spring to familiarize themselves with the campus. The plan is to have the group return to the college on a biannual basis to assess progress on articulated goals. Professor Hart asked if the panel will collaborate with the search committee for the chief diversity officer. President Martin said that the panel will not work directly with the search committee, but could be available to help identify candidates for the position. It may be possible for the two committees to meet in the spring, which could be very helpful, it was agreed.

Under "Questions from Committee Members," Professor C. Dole said that some students appeared not to understand the context for the November 17 meeting that the dean has organized about pressures relating to the academic workload. He suggested that the invitation to students should perhaps have included more background about some students' concerns about this issue. Professor Katsaros said that some faculty members with whom she has spoken have expressed support for having a conversation about the workload and for learning more about students' views on the subject. She pointed out that it is difficult to either confirm or disprove assertions that the workload at Amherst has not increased over the years. The committee agreed that it is

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, November 9, 2015

Amended November 30, 2015

difficult to determine whether the workload has increased. Professor Katsaros suggested that it might be possible that tenure-track colleagues feel pressure to increase expectations and demands in their classes. Untenured colleagues may be asking more of their students, as more and more is asked of the untenured colleagues themselves. She also pointed out that professors are unaware of the workload being assigned in their students' other classes and therefore the students' cumulative workload. Dean Epstein said that it will be interesting for faculty to hear students' perspectives on this topic, and she encouraged the members to attend the meeting with the understanding that they would be doing so as individuals, rather than as representatives of the Committee of Six. The dean said that she has invited other members of faculty committees to attend in this capacity as well. Professor Hart commented that it would be helpful if students and professors have conversations about expectations for courses in regard to how much time the faculty members would anticipate students should spend on the work for the course, including work done outside of the class meeting on assignments and preparing for exams.

Continuing with "Questions from Committee Members," Professor Douglas asked if the college plans to enroll more students who are veterans. President Martin replied that consideration is being given to doing so, noting that additional staff time, funding, and space would be needed. It is her hope that the college will be able to provide the necessary resources and that more students who are veterans can be recruited, possibly through the Posse Program. It was noted that some of Amherst's peer institutions currently have a higher number of veterans in their student bodies.

Turning to the topic of closings due to inclement weather, the dean informed the committee that the members of the senior staff have reviewed the current policy and have decided that, beginning this academic year, if the college is closed, all classes will be cancelled. The senior staff recognizes that Amherst has a rigorous academic schedule and that the college should close due to inclement weather only after a rigorous review of weather conditions. The college must also recognize, the senior staff noted, that it has a duty to protect its students, staff, and faculty from the risks of travel under dangerous weather conditions. A number of factors were considered, the dean noted. Most staff members and many faculty members live outside the immediate area of the college—with some living significant distances away. Cancelling the business operations of the college, yet allowing faculty to hold classes, has created confusion among some Amherst students and Five-College students in the past. In addition, the dean noted, if classes are held, some students, in particular those with disabilities, have said that they feel pressure to go out under unsafe weather conditions, though they would prefer not to. Administrative staff may feel pressure to come in to work; and faculty, in particular tenure-track faculty, may feel pressure to hold class regardless of the conditions. Continuing, the dean informed the members that staff members in the facilities department face additional challenges when trying to clear the campus of snow when there are more cars and pedestrian traffic on campus. The dean noted that the college has a strong tradition of rarely closing due to weather conditions. In recent years, however, Amherst has had to close more often (one or two days annually) due to dramatic shifts in New England weather patterns. In 2014-2015, the college closed on two days; in 2013-2014, the college closed on two days and had late opening or early release on two days; in 2012-2013, the college closed on one day and had late openings or early releases on three days; in 2011-2012, the college closed on one day.

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, November 9, 2015

Amended November 30, 2015

The current standard for making a decision to close is the declaration of a State of Emergency (by the governor) that includes western Massachusetts; a driving ban (again declared by the governor) that includes western Massachusetts; a situation in which weather conditions are, or are predicated to be, so severe that travel—pedestrian and vehicle—is dangerous; or when campus facilities are significantly affected, roads cannot be cleared, power is out, etc. Currently, the decision to close the college or to delay its opening is made by the chief of campus operations and the chief policy officer and general counsel (to whom the Department of Human Resources reports), in consultation with the police chief/director of public safety. Under the new policy, the dean of the faculty will also be a part of the decision-making team. Dean Epstein noted that the decision to close the college will continue to be made only after a rigorous evaluation of travel conditions in the town of Amherst, as well as on the highways and in the surrounding—higher elevation—communities where faculty and staff reside. At the conclusion of the dean's remarks, Professor Benedetto commented that the new policy of canceling classes when the college closes seems reasonable. While the policy is not a voting matter, the change should be discussed with the faculty, in his view. The dean agreed that there should be a conversation with the faculty, commenting that colleagues will learn about the change through the committee's minutes as a first step. Professor Katsaros expressed support for the new policy as well, noting that the current policy of allowing classes to be held when the college closes leads to confusion.

On behalf of an untenured colleague who had expressed concern that the faculty meeting on November 3 had gone past 9:30 P.M. without a motion to continue beyond that time, Professor Benedetto asked the dean and the president to be cognizant of the time in the future. President Martin and Dean Epstein agreed to take note the hour in the future and to ask for a motion to continue when circumstances might require extending the meeting beyond 9:30 P.M.

Professor Hart asked whether there are any plans to address the issue of advising. In particular, he noted his frustration with the "keyword matrix." While he finds the matrix to be a very useful advising tool, Professor Hart noted that the system is reliant on the assignment of key words to courses by faculty members. It appears that many faculty members are not categorizing their classes in this way, which can be problematic for those who are trying to use the matrix. Professor Hart suggested that faculty be encouraged to assign key words. If the situation remains the same, perhaps use of the matrix should be discontinued, he noted. Dean Epstein said that she would bring this issue to the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP). She informed Professor Hart that the Curriculum Committee is taking a serious look at advising at the college and expects that there will be some recommendations made as an outgrowth of this work.

President Martin raised the topic of having a day of dialogue in the spring. She asked that the members think about the idea, and it was agreed that this topic would be on the committee's agenda for its next meeting, which is set for November 30. When asked what the focus of the day might be, the president suggested the topic of the tension between freedom of speech and inclusivity on campus. Rather than simply releasing a statement about academic freedom, she suggested engaging in serious discussions with the community as a first step. President Martin noted that some students have expressed the desire to have a day of dialogue, and expressed her support for considering the proposal seriously, particularly in light of ongoing national conversations on other campuses about freedom of speech and diversity and inclusion. The dean said that she supports the idea of having a day of dialogue as a way of engaging with

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, November 9, 2015

Amended November 30, 2015

students in these important conversations. Professor Benedetto expressed concern that days of dialogue may lose their “heft” and power if they occur on a regular basis and come to seem routine. He observed during the last day of dialogue, for example, that some students were not taking the event seriously and left early. President Martin said that, while she feels that the concerns that Professor Benedetto had outlined are legitimate ones, she feels that it is better to be proactive about addressing issues on campus through dialogue, rather than being put in the reactive position. The members agreed to discuss the matter more fully at the committee’s November 30 meeting. The committee turned to personnel matters.

Discussion turned to [a letter from Professor Hall](#) sent on behalf of the CEP to the Committee of Six, regarding [guidelines regarding copyright and fair use](#) that are included on the web site of Amherst’s library and which had been prepared by Bryn Geffert, librarian of the college, and Justin Smith, associate general counsel. The members discussed whether the guidelines should be incorporated into the *Faculty Handbook* or whether it might be best to provide a link from the handbook to this information. A link would allow the guidelines to be kept up-to-date, without having to revise the language of the *Faculty Handbook*, it was noted, as pointed out by the CEP. The CEP also proposed including a link in the *Student Handbook*. The committee agreed that, while the language of the guidelines should not be included in the *Faculty Handbook*, so that revisions can be done easily, it would be prudent not to have a link to the guidelines, as web links often become broken. It would also be best, as much as possible, to preserve the integrity of the *Faculty Handbook* as a stand-alone document, it was agreed. The members decided that the guidelines should reside on the library’s website, and that there should be a link to the web page from the dean’s site, but not from the handbook. In addition, the following language should appear in the *Faculty Handbook* in the [appendix that includes the college’s copyright policy](#).

All members of the faculty should be aware of Amherst’s guidelines regarding copyright and fair use. A link to this information can be found on the website of the dean of the faculty. Questions should be directed to the librarian of the college.

The members did not discuss the matter of the *Student Handbook*.

Conversation turned to the results of the survey about faculty meeting times. In addition to reviewing [a summary of the results of the survey](#), which had been prepared by the Office of Institutional Research, the members drew their conclusions from detailed commentary that had been submitted by those who had responded to the survey. The comments, it was agreed, would not be shared beyond the committee in order to preserve confidentiality. The members concurred that the results do not indicate a clear consensus for any of the options for potential times for faculty meetings. It was noted that 60 percent of tenure-track faculty members who had responded to the survey had indicated a preference for either Tuesday or Wednesday from 4 P.M. to 6 P.M., which seemed like a promising result in regard to having agreement on making a change, until the members read vehement arguments against this time that had been expressed by other untenured and tenured faculty. Some responders noted that this slot would be the worst possible one because attending a meeting at this time would mean that they would not be able to pick up children from childcare or school and would have to make alternative

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, November 9, 2015**Amended November 30, 2015**

arrangements, would have to pay for extra childcare, would have to find someone to prepare dinner for children and to take them to activities, and would keep faculty from spending time with children before bedtime. Some faculty members asked that this slot be avoided at all costs. Some responders said that they would not attend, if faculty meetings were held at this time. Professor Katsaros commented, as did some respondents, that this time slot would conflict with lectures. The dean pointed out that the class schedule could be reimaged so that lectures could take place at other times.

Continuing the discussions, Professor Marshall noted that that some labs run from 2:30 P.M. to 5:30 P.M. or 6 P.M., and that this slot would pose a serious problem. He said that he is open to considering changes that require some imagination, while noting that the CEP has decided that labs on Tuesdays and Thursdays cannot begin at 2:00, so to avoid conflict with 1:00 classes many begin at 2:30 as a result, further limiting available slots. Professor Marshall noted that the number of lab sessions required to meet student demand for introductory chemistry (Chemistry 151, 155, and 161), organic chemistry (Chemistry 221 and 231), and, as he understood it, introductory biology (Biology 191 and 181) and perhaps other courses, in the new science building, under current class schedule parameters (e.g., no evening classes), will require that very nearly all afternoon time slots be utilized in these departments. The number of labs in the new building will dictate that all time slots are used at all available times. The committee noted that more than half (54 percent) of tenured faculty members who responded to the survey expressed a preference for the current timeslot. Professor Hart wondered if, perhaps, some faculty meetings could be held for the purpose of building community, while others focused on business. Preserving a time slot when classes would not be held, which could be used both for faculty meetings and other purposes, for example, bringing in speakers and having campus-wide discussions, could work well. The dean said that she is interested in continuing to do research on whether colleagues may be interested in adopting this approach. Some members expressed the view that faculty meetings are not necessarily the best vehicle for building community. Professor Benedetto said that he could not envision a new time slot that would work from a logistical perspective. The dean said that, in order to have meetings at a different time, the class schedule may have to be changed to enhance flexibility, which could be done. Professor Hart suggested that the 4 P.M. TO 6 P.M. slot on Tuesday or Wednesday might be workable. Some members pointed out that the meetings take place only two or three times a semester, generally, so that it might be possible to experiment with other times without too much inconvenience. The members discussed whether classes might be held in the evening, with a result being that more slots for faculty meetings would be freed up during the day. Conflicts with athletics and arts performances were cited as potential problems with this approach. Professor Douglas argued that, based on the survey results, there is not a clear consensus to change the time of faculty meetings. Therefore, it seems that that the current practice of having the meetings on the first and third Tuesdays of the month at 7:30 P.M. should be continued. Since there was not clear support for any specific time slot, the members agreed that the time for faculty meetings should remain the same for now.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, November 9, 2015

Amended November 30, 2015

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

Committee of Six Minutes of Friday, November 13, 2015

Amended November 30, 2015

The eighth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2015-2016 was called to order by Dean Epstein in her office at 4:00 P.M. on Friday, November 13, 2015. Present, in addition to the dean, were Professors Benedetto, Hart, Katsaros, and Marshall and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder. Professor Douglas participated via speaker phone. President Martin attended a portion of the meeting. Professor C. Dole was absent.

The meeting began with the president and the dean briefing the committee about the student-organized protest against racism and other forms of prejudice and inequality. The protest included a sit-in in Frost Library, which had started on Thursday, November 12, at 1 P.M., and which was ongoing at the time of the meeting of the committee. The president and the dean expressed respect for students' intensive, passionate efforts to raise awareness about important issues, and admiration for the protesters' courage in doing so. President Martin and Dean Epstein said that they are saddened by the pain that so many of the students feel is a part of their experiences as Amherst students, as well as in their lives off campus, and they are determined to do more to address it.

President Martin informed the members that she is working on a response to the eleven demands made by the students. She explained that the response would be in the form of a statement that would be sent to students, faculty, staff, alumni, and families. President Martin noted that she would not address the demands individually. Instead, the statement would address the spirit of the issues raised and acknowledge the need for further changes at the college. The president said that she also will explain that ultimatums and strict deadlines are often not the best ways to effect change, and that a president alone does not have the authority to take the steps that the students had requested. Time would be required to consider these issues, and, moving forward, we will need to use our governance structures when making decisions. The students had also asked the president to issue an apology "to students, alumni and former students, faculty, administration and staff who have been victims of several injustices including but not limited to our institutional legacy of white supremacy, colonialism, anti-black racism, anti-Latinx racism, anti-Native American racism, anti-Native/ indigenous racism, anti-Asian racism, anti-Middle Eastern racism, heterosexism, cis-sexism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, ableism, mental health stigma, and classism." President Martin said that she would point out that it would not be appropriate or honest for her, as an individual college president, and Amherst, as a single institution, to apologize for injustices on this scale. The members praised the president's approach and expressed support for her plans.

After some discussion, the committee agreed that a special meeting for faculty should be held on November 16 to discuss the events of recent days and to share more information about student concerns. It was decided that staff should not be present. The members asked the dean to convey to the faculty that, while the committee, the dean, and the president are aware that faculty may have previously scheduled events, exams, and other obligations at the time of the special meeting, colleagues without such prior commitments should make every effort to attend the meeting. The members also decided that the meeting with students, which had been scheduled previously to discuss the academic workload with faculty, would still be held on November 17. The members expressed hope that as many faculty members as possible would attend that meeting. The committee asked the dean, when communicating to the faculty members about these two events, also to encourage colleagues to allow time in their classes for

Committee of Six Minutes of Friday, November 13, 2015**Amended November 30, 2015**

discussions about student concerns and the protest, if faculty feel comfortable doing so. It should be emphasized that no faculty member should feel any pressure to participate in such conversations, the members said. The members also agreed that it should be made clear that it is understood that some colleagues may not be able to do so. In addition, the committee asked the dean to suggest to faculty that they consider not imposing penalties on students who may have left academic requirements unmet in order to participate in the protest. The final decision, however, should be left entirely up to faculty members. Dean Epstein agreed to convey this information to the faculty via an email on Saturday.

The meeting adjourned at 4:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, November 16, 2015

Amended November 30, 2015

The ninth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2015-2016 was called to order by President Martin in the president's office at 3:00 P.M. on Monday, November 16, 2015. Present, in addition to the dean, were Professors Benedetto, C. Dole, Douglas, Hart, Katsaros, and Marshall and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with the members offering praise for [the statement](#) that President Martin had conveyed in response to the student-protesters' request that the college address their demands. The committee discussed plans for the special meeting of the faculty that would take place in the evening. Since this gathering would not be a formal faculty meeting, it would not be necessary to follow the normal procedures that govern regular faculty meetings, Dean Epstein explained. The president and the dean described the events that led to the formation of the ad hoc group of faculty that had suggested having the meeting.

The president informed the members that, on Thursday of the previous week, following the beginning of the occupation of Frost Library by student-protesters, she had asked one of the faculty members who had offered to meet and talk with her to gather an informal group of concerned faculty to meet with her and Dean Epstein. This ad hoc group had proposed having a special faculty meeting, took responsibility for planning it, and then spent the weekend developing an agenda for the meeting. Plans call for the agenda, which the dean shared with the committee in advance of the committee's meeting, to be distributed at the November 16 meeting. Dean Epstein explained that the ad hoc group would like Professor Courtright to chair the meeting. The dean expressed support for the ad hoc group's plans.

Referring to the agenda that has been proposed for the special meeting, the dean noted that the ad hoc group has suggested a format that combines a series of short presentations by colleagues with time for discussion. Dean Epstein commented that it was unfortunate that prior commitments had prevented any members of the Committee of Six from being a part of the ad hoc group, as having some overlap between the two bodies could have been helpful. She commented that plans for the meeting seem well-formed and well-conceived. The dean informed the members that she would attend the student meeting at the Powerhouse that would follow the faculty's special meeting and the meeting of the Association of Amherst Students (AAS).

Professor C. Dole said that he had spoken with some of the members of the ad hoc group. He expressed support for their plans for the structured conversation that has been proposed. Professor Marshall, while agreeing that the plans for the meeting seem fine, expressed the view that, from a governance perspective, it would be important that the format not only allows the faculty as a whole to participate in the discussion of the issues at hand, but makes it clear that the faculty collectively is engaging with these issues. Some members asked if students should attend the special meeting. The committee agreed that having a faculty-to-faculty conversation at this time would be desirable. Staff would not be present, as well. Professor Benedetto said that he has some concern that the ad hoc group is made up largely of humanists, including only two representatives from STEM fields. Dean Epstein said that the ad hoc group has no permanent standing, and that she does not expect that it will be active in any formalized way following the special meeting; representation would not seem to be an issue for this reason. President Martin said that she anticipates appointing a special committee that will focus on issues of diversity and inclusion at the college. The committee will likely have a make-up that resembles that of the

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, November 16, 2015**Amended November 30, 2015**

Special Oversight Committee on Sexual Misconduct (SMOC), which she had formed in 2012. That committee had been charged with making recommendations to the president regarding improvement in the college's efforts to prevent and address sexual assault on campus, and to advise her about changes that should be made. The committee asked the president if she would begin the special meeting by offering information about the origins of the faculty group and the context for the discussion, and President Martin agreed to do so. The dean asked Associate Dean Tobin to inform the ad hoc group, via Professor Courtright, of these plans.

Professor Katsaros asked about the format for the meeting that would be held with students the next day to discuss pressures surrounding the academic workload. Dean Epstein said that she would serve as the moderator of the meeting, and that she expects that students would express concerns, and that faculty and staff would listen.

The members discussed the campus climate following the student protest. President Martin said that there is continuing tension on campus in the aftermath of the protest and noted that some students are in need of additional support. The president said that she is working with Jackie Alvarez, director of the counseling center, to put resources in place to provide counseling services beyond what the counseling center can normally offer. Human Resources is reaching out to some members of the faculty and staff who may need support as well at this time. President Martin said that she understands that there are now thirteen subcommittees of students that are developing requests around particular issues. She noted that there have been transitions in leadership among the student-protesters, and that the movement is evolving. The groups, the president has been told, will need some time to formulate demands. Dean Epstein noted that some students have contacted David Little, director of the Mead Art Museum, about ways to present art that better reflects the composition of Amherst's student body. As an initial effort to move beyond a Eurocentric focus, Mr. Little has placed fifteen new pieces from the Mead's collections on display. He also plans to form an advisory group of students to think with him about acquisitions and the reinstallation of gallery spaces at the Mead, with the goal of celebrating diversity and broadening the museum's reach.

The members noted that the president's statement in response to the demands of student-protesters reiterates the college's commitment both to further efforts to address issues of racism and prejudice and to build an inclusive community, while at the same time offering the strongest defense of the freedom of inquiry and the exchange of ideas and free speech. The committee agreed to discuss the academic freedom statement at its next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 3:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, November 30, 2015

Amended December 9, 2015

The tenth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2015-2016 was called to order by President Martin in Converse Hall 107 (the president's office was undergoing renovations) at 3:00 P.M. on Monday, November 30, 2015. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Benedetto, C. Dole, Douglas, Hart, Katsaros, and Marshall; Dean Epstein; and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with Dean Epstein informing the members that, during the week of December 6, Amherst will be issuing \$150 million of taxable thirty-year fixed-rate debt in the marketplace. Although it is a long-term and fixed-rate issuance, this issuance is being done to provide temporary financing for the greenway construction projects in advance of anticipated fundraising pledges and receipts, the dean explained. The issuance also takes advantage of the current low-interest-rate climate, before anticipated increases in interest rates as time goes by. When anticipated gift receipts materialize, the dean noted, the college will use those proceeds to pay down other outstanding debt, bringing down overall debt levels close to current levels in a few years. Later this week, the college's two rating agencies will be issuing revised credit ratings for Amherst. The college currently holds the very highest rating, AAA, with one agency, Moody's, and the second highest rating, Aa1, with the other agency, Standard and Poor's (S&P). The dean said that she has been advised that it is impossible to know what the college's new ratings will be, but that Moody's has signaled a one-notch downgrade, due to the large size of the issuance and total debt that will be outstanding relative to the usual ratios for AAA institutions. S&P has signaled no change in its rating, given that the college is already at the second highest level with the agency. The expectation is that Amherst will have the second highest level with each agency, which will keep the college on par with its closest peers, and give Amherst access to nearly the very lowest cost of borrowing of any institution, even those at the AAA rating level. Even after the issuance, the college's balance sheet will remain very strong, and Amherst will remain in extremely strong financial health, the dean informed the members. President Martin noted that, by adjusting how the college administers an earlier debt issuance, this new issuance will not have an impact on Amherst's operating budget. Instead, future debt service costs to the operating budget will decrease once the college receives anticipated greenway project gifts and uses those proceeds to pay down some of its outstanding debt.

The members briefly discussed the *New York Times* piece, titled "With Diversity Comes Intensity in Amherst Free Speech Debate," which appeared on November 28, 2015. President Martin noted the inaccuracies of the piece. For example, it was reported that the administration had agreed to train staff in "cultural competency." That statement was never made, President Martin noted. On the topic of cultural competency, she explained that some students may recommend a program along the lines of cultural competency training and/or bias response protocols. The president noted that any steps that are to be taken in the area of education in the arena of diversity and inclusion will require careful thinking and a sophisticated approach that will avoid abridging individual freedom, while striving to make the campus as respectful as possible. President Martin noted that the college's request that the *New York Times* print a correction of its errors had been denied.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Katsaros asked about progress that has been made on appointing the committee that the president had described that would focus on issues of diversity and inclusion at the college. President Martin responded that she is considering the following three models: a committee that resembles the Special Oversight Committee on Sexual

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, November 30, 2015

Amended December 9, 2015

Misconduct (SMOC), which had been formed in 2012 to make recommendations to the president regarding improvement in the college's efforts to prevent and address sexual assault on campus and which was made up of trustees, faculty, staff, and students; or a president's advisory committee on diversity and inclusion that would become a standing committee that would focus on immediate actions, ongoing work, and long-term goals and which would include faculty, staff, and students, but not trustees; or making use of existing governance structures to address issues surrounding diversity and inclusion and following regular processes. The president noted that the appointment of the SMOC committee came at a time when the college was at a very early stage of reviewing and developing its policies and practices in regard to sexual misconduct. When it comes to examining the issue of diversity and inclusion on campus and committing to its importance, Amherst is at a different stage, having been, for some time, developing and moving forward on some initiatives and recommendations. President Martin noted that a number of the recommendations and initiatives that are a result of the strategic-planning effort overlap with the requests of student-protesters, who are still finalizing their goals. For this reason, the new committee's work will focus on recommending priorities to some degree, but largely on developing an implementation plan. The membership of the diversity and inclusion committee need not be exactly parallel to that of the SMOC, in President Martin's view.

Professor Marshall said that he had been a member of the Title IX Committee, which had been tasked with the nuts and bolts of developing policies and procedures, at the time that the SMOC was doing its work. The committee was made up of faculty, administrators, and students and had worked well. It made recommendations that were implemented by regular governance structures, in most cases. An outgrowth of that Title IX Committee, President Martin explained, is the current Title IX Review Committee. This committee has as its goal the collection and review of data regarding the community's experience with the college's sexual misconduct policies, procedures, and the implementation of those policies and procedures. The committee is composed of faculty, administrators, and students and meets monthly. Professor Marshall expressed the view that it would be helpful to have a diversity and inclusion committee along the lines of the Title IX Review Committee. Professor Benedetto said that he favors using regular governance structures, rather than creating a new diversity and inclusion committee. President Martin noted that, if a special committee is created, it would likely serve as an advisory committee to the chief diversity officer, once that position is filled. Professor C. Dole expressed concern about extending the sorts of institutional structures developed for sexual misconduct to issues surrounding diversity and inclusion. It is his hope nonetheless that the political will to address the issues is comparable.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Douglas asked if the president still envisions the need for a day of dialogue. President Martin said that she continues to think that time should be set aside for campus-wide engagement with issues of diversity and inclusion, but she now wonders whether the format of the day of dialogue is the best way forward. The president said that a student with whom she had met had suggested that visitors facilitate conversations, perhaps making use of readings, as part of classes, and that there could be a campus-wide gathering at the end of the day. Since individuals who work in the field would lead this effort, Amherst faculty would not have to take on additional responsibilities. By engaging with students in classes, the audience would naturally include a good mix of students. Professor C. Dole suggested that making use of advisors and advising groups might also be a good structure

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, November 30, 2015

Amended December 9, 2015

for facilitating conversations. Professor Benedetto worried about what that would mean for colleagues with many advisees. Professor Douglas agreed that the format of the day of dialogue might not be the most effective and suggested that more imaginative responses, of longer duration, would be preferable. Professor Katsaros noted that students with whom she has spoken are not in favor of having another day of dialogue. President Martin said that canceling classes and setting aside time to focus on race and racism was important and will have had an effect. She agreed that it would be helpful to adopt a different format now, most likely one that makes use of small-group conversations across campus, to continue the discussions begun then.

Returning to the topic of “cultural competency” training, Professor Douglas commented that this language represents a controversial rubric. He expressed the view that the “respect for persons” language that is already part of the college’s policies would be preferable. That language conveys that the rights of every member of the community should be respected and that everyone should be treated with courtesy and dignity. “Cultural competency” suggests that particular groups might be singled out when it comes to respect, and that individuals may be taught how not to say the wrong things. President Martin agreed that an alternative to the moniker “cultural competency” could be found. She prefers “education,” she said, while noting that “respect for everyone” is not sufficient. In her view, there should be efforts to develop policies and conversations that focus specifically on diversity and inclusion, as well.

Conversation turned to the need to develop new strategies so that all students thrive at Amherst, if the college is to meet its commitment to educate all students here. Professor Douglas commented that the Amherst curriculum is poorly designed when it comes to helping to bring less well-prepared students up to speed. He wondered whether the college might experiment with approaches such as admitting students early in their high school career and then paying for their attendance at an elite high school. Professor Benedetto noted that less well-prepared students often need more time to take the foundational courses that will prepare them for more advanced work. There are paths through the curriculum for these students, but it might be helpful to offer the option of having an additional year to complete the Amherst degree, for example. At present, some students feel stigmatized when they are advised to take particular courses that are designed to enhance their preparation. The members agreed that the college may need to re-think the four-year residential model to accommodate a student body that has new demographics. Dean Epstein said that the Curriculum Committee will examine this question. Professor Hart commented that multiple points of entry have been created, and the curriculum has been “tweaked” to accommodate some of the needs of a more diverse student body, but noted that these steps are not generally known. A more systematic approach to this problem is needed, in his view.

Continuing the discussion, Professor Katsaros commented that, in regard to steps already taken, the services of the Writing Center have been expanded in recent years, and that writing-intensive courses have been developed for students who need to focus on improving their writing. Professor Douglas agreed that these were important steps but wondered whether they were fully addressing the needs of our students. Professor Hart noted that the chemistry department’s Phoenix Program enables students who receive a grade below a B-minus in Chemistry 151 to take the course again over Interterm and, depending on their performance, to raise their grade to a maximum of B-minus. Professor Hart also noted that for at least one department, students might be allowed to take the same course a second time to ensure mastery.

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, November 30, 2015

Amended December 9, 2015

Professor Benedetto stressed that it is a disservice to students to bring them to Amherst without telling them, at the time of admission, about the challenges that they may face in succeeding in STEM courses. Professor Hart said that the curriculum also poses significant challenges for transfer students, who arrive and are immediately expected to take advanced courses as juniors or seniors. Professor Douglas wondered whether students are being fully advised of these and other resources that are available to support their academic development. Again, it was noted that some students do not take advantage of resources because they feel stigmatized. Professor C. Dole said that, in his experience, students generally appreciate recommendations that they take writing-intensive courses, for example.

In regard to other strategies that might be used to support students who are feeling pressured by the academic workload, the members noted that some interesting suggestions had emerged at the meeting with students about the workload that had been held on November 17. It was agreed that notes taken of the meeting, which included a list of student suggestions, should be shared with department chairs. Dean Epstein said that she had already provided the notes to the Curriculum Committee, which would be considering the ideas. The members suggested that the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) should review the suggestions, in case the faculty might want to consider some of the ideas sooner. It was noted that, while some of the ideas might be viable, others would not be workable. Some examples of those that might be workable include extending the deadline for deciding to take a course pass/fail to late in the semester, dropping courses without penalty, and allowing students to complete their degrees over more than four years. Professor Marshall noted that he has already made an adjustment in response to some student comments that he had heard at the meeting. He explained that the day after the academic workload meeting, he had emailed students who had pre-registered for Chemistry 361 this spring, providing information about the textbook that would be used for the course and different ways of obtaining it. He also explained which chapters he plans to cover in the course. Some students at the meeting had requested that having this sort of information well in advance of the beginning of a course would help them prepare for it.

The members agreed that [the letter sent to the committee from Professor Bumiller](#) on November 1, 2015, about criminal background checks should be appended to these minutes. Since the committee is awaiting further information from Ms. Rutherford, the members decided to discuss the letter at a future meeting. The members discussed nominations for the Memorial Minute Committee for Professor Hussain. Returning briefly to the issue of the college's copyright policy, the members agreed, upon the recommendation of Justin Smith, associate legal counsel, that [the current policy](#) in the *Faculty Handbook* should be revised to read as follows:

All employees of the college are expected to respect the copyright associated with intellectual property which, except under specified circumstances, prohibits the duplication, public display, or performance of such property without permission of the owner of that copyright. Intellectual property includes visual images, software, and other creative expressions, whether fixed electronically or in 'hard copy.'

Copyright law is a particularly important part of the legal framework governing an academic community.

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, November 30, 2015

Amended December 9, 2015

The language that the committee had approved at its last meeting will appear below, and a link called “copyright and fair use” will be added to the dean’s website. The link will take readers to the [library’s page with guidelines regarding copyright and fair use](#).

All members of the faculty should be aware of Amherst’s guidelines regarding copyright and fair use. A link to this information can be found on the website of the dean of the faculty. Questions should be directed to the librarian of the college.

Under “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Douglas expressed dismay over the way in which the (unofficial) straw poll on the question of the college mascot had come up at the special faculty meeting that had been held on November 16, 2015. While noting that the outcome would likely have been the same no matter what the process had been, he felt that it had not been a deliberative moment. (The faculty had voted unanimously to stop using the mascot. The student government later conducted a poll on the issue, and 89 percent of the student body participated, with 83 percent voting to remove Lord Jeffery Amherst as the college’s unofficial mascot.) President Martin noted that the Executive Committee of the Alumni Association is conducting a poll of alumni on the same question. The next step will be for the Board of Trustees to take up the mascot issue at its January meeting.

On behalf of a colleague, who is concerned about the social spaces available for students on campus, Professor Katsaros asked the dean whether there are plans to replace the broken espresso machine in Frost Café. The dean responded that Dining Services is exploring this question and is evaluating a number of different models. She said that she would report back when she learns the results of the department’s inquiries. The members then turned to personnel matters.

The committee discussed a [cover letter](#), [proposal](#), and [application form](#), forwarded by Professor Hall, chair of the CEP. The CEP has proposed changing the requirements for students to participate in commencement exercises. The current policy restricts participation to those students who have satisfied all graduation requirements. The proposal would codify current practice, with participation in the commencement activities requiring completion of all graduation requirements, including votes of approval on degrees by the faculty and the Amherst College Board of Trustees. The second part would create an exception to permit participation in the commencement activities by students who are within four courses of completion of the degree and who would otherwise graduate later than the other members of their cohort. Those in this category who wish to participate in the commencement exercises would need to complete an application that must be approved by the student’s academic advisor(s), class dean, and members of the Committee on Academic Standing, in lieu of votes by the faculty and the board. Once approval is granted, these students would not participate in any other future commencement exercises. The members asked if the registrar has endorsed the proposal. The dean said that the registrar, Ms. Kilventon, had been involved in developing the proposal from the outset and that the registrar supports it. The members found the arguments for the proposal to be compelling and voted six in favor and zero opposed on the substance of the following motion and six in favor and zero opposed to forward it to the faculty.

The faculty endorses the accompanying proposal that establishes formal requirements

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, November 30, 2015**Amended December 9, 2015**

for participation in the commencement exercises, effective immediately.

Conversation turned to a [second letter from Professor Hall](#) that had been sent to the committee on the CEP's behalf. The members discussed the CEP's proposal that professors' access to the transcripts of students enrolled in their courses and to the transcripts of former advisees be restricted. The CEP is recommending that transcripts continue to be made available to academic advisors and to instructors who solicit them through the registrar. The full proposal, and the rationale for it, is described in the letter. Professor C. Dole expressed his strong support for the proposal, noting that the ease of access to this information has long struck him as problematic. Professor Marshall said that he has strong reservations about adopting the proposal. It is helpful to know his students' advisors, who are listed on the transcript, he noted. It is also necessary, in regard to being proactive about academic support and to inform his planning of his courses, to be 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. Knowing which courses his students are taking also allows Professor Marshall to be better informed about stress levels associated with academic workloads. The prerequisite tool would offer him much of the information that he would need, but it is a tool that can be difficult to work with, he said. Dean Epstein asked if, short of having access to the transcripts automatically, there are other ways of obtaining the needed information. Professor Marshall said that he could request that the academic department coordinator obtain all the transcripts. Grades could be checked with the prerequisite tool. Dean Epstein, noted, as did the CEP, that automatic transcript availability is a relatively recent development. Broad access had been extended to all faculty during the transition to the online registration system to provide an easy way to ensure that students met course prerequisites. Now that prerequisites can be checked through the online system, she feels that unrestricted access to transcripts should not be automatic for faculty. There have been situations in the past that have involved the misuse of transcripts, for example, taking into account student grades to determine who will be allowed in to a class. Knowledge of students' past performance can also result in some prejudgment when grading current work, the dean believes. There are also privacy concerns. Agreeing, President Martin noted the importance of avoiding bias within these central educational processes. Professor Katsaros commented that, if transcripts continue to be available with ease, making use of past grades when creating class rosters might be more of a temptation for faculty during the roster management period of the new extended pre-registration process. Professor Katsaros expressed support for the CEP's proposal with the proviso that "gradeless" transcripts be made available to faculty who want to ensure that students enrolled in their classes have met the necessary prerequisites. Professor Douglas said that he favors adopting the CEP's proposal.

Continuing the discussion, and concurring with Professor Marshall, Professor Benedetto said that having easy access to students' transcripts, and the data that they contain, is essential for STEM faculty, who need to advise students on the best placements in courses. Adopting the proposal would mean jumping through extra hoops to get the information that faculty need, he argued. He expressed concern about the additional burdens that would be placed on faculty and staff if the process for gaining access to transcripts becomes more time consuming. President Martin said that she worries about student privacy rights and about students' access to the entire curriculum and their exclusion from courses for which they have passed prerequisite classes.

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, November 30, 2015**Amended December 9, 2015**

Professor Benedetto said that it is essential that students receive the advice they need to thrive academically in STEM courses, and transcripts are an essential tool for faculty when evaluating students' potential for success in particular courses. Students who advance to the next level of the curriculum without the necessary preparation, knowledge, and/or skills are destined not to succeed in a highly structured curriculum, such as mathematics, he said. Dean Epstein offered assurance that faculty would get the information that they need. While the default would be that faculty would not be given access to all current students' transcripts and to those of past students, faculty might be given access to transcripts by request, if they need them, or otherwise provided with the necessary information. The dean agreed to consult with the registrar and to report back to the committee about what options might be viable. The members agreed that changing the transcript policy does not require consultation beyond the recommendation of the CEP and the affirmation of the Committee of Six.

The members next discussed whether to have a faculty meeting on December 15 and possible agenda items. A final decision, it was agreed, would be made at the next meeting of the committee. The members agreed that having a vehicle for the president to communicate with the faculty as a whole before the holiday break would be desirable.

The meeting adjourned at 5:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, December 7, 2015

Amended December 11, 2015

The eleventh meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2015-2016 was called to order by President Martin in the president's office at 3:00 P.M. on Monday, December 7, 2015. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Benedetto, C. Dole, Douglas, Hart, Katsaros, and Marshall; Dean Epstein; and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with Dean Epstein informing the members that the college's two ratings agencies, Moody's and Standard and Poor's (S&P), have now completed their reviews and have reaffirmed their ratings (S&P: AA+, and Moody's: AAA). The dean explained that Moody's did drop its outlook from *Stable* to *Negative* at the AAA level. The drop occurred because the large size of the college's issuance of \$150 million of taxable thirty-year fixed-rate debt in the marketplace dilutes Amherst's ratios toward the weaker end of the AAA category. In addition, the agency is looking to see the college deliver on its expectations by the time of the next rating review in eighteen to twenty-four months. These plans include continuing to keep the projects on time and on budget; achieving anticipated fundraising successes; and beginning to pay down other outstanding debt to reduce Amherst's overall balance. Dean Epstein commented that these are all items that were discussed with the Board of Trustees in October, when the administration reviewed the debt proposal with the board. The dean said that Moody's expectations of Amherst are no different than our expectations of ourselves, and that, all-in-all, the college is thrilled with these ratings outcomes. The ratings will allow Amherst to borrow at a very low cost—at a level that had been anticipated—and signals the college's continued financial strength. That Amherst can issue \$150 million in debt and retain its creditworthiness speaks to the financial health of the institution and to the independent rating agencies and prospective investors' confidence in the college's future prospects, Dean Epstein said.

The committee noted that Professor Couvares had sent [a letter on the topic of background checks](#). The members decided to discuss the letter after receiving a proposal about background checks from Lisa Rutherford, chief policy officer and general counsel.

The members briefly discussed [a poll of alumni that had been conducted by the Alumni Executive Committee](#) about the college's unofficial mascot. The poll had run for ten days and concluded on December 1. Alumni were asked the following question: How do you feel about Lord Jeffery Amherst as the unofficial mascot of Amherst College? There were three possible responses—favorably, unfavorably, or no opinion/not sure. President Martin informed the members that 5,974 alumni had participated out of an alumni body of about 22,000. The president noted that 83 percent of alumni have provided the college with their email addresses. She reported that 52.36 percent of alumni who responded said that they view the mascot unfavorably; 37.58 percent view the mascot favorably; and 10.06 percent have no opinion or are not sure. Professor Douglas asked if there is a demographic trend in the results. President Martin said that demographic data are currently being compiled, while noting that an earlier survey of alumni that had been done with a small sample size revealed that relatively recent graduates held a more negative view of the mascot than those who had graduated longer ago. Professor Benedetto wondered if those who favor keeping the mascot were more likely to respond to the recent poll because of news about the student protest. Professor Katsaros asked about the next steps in the consideration of the mascot question. President Martin said that the Board of Trustees would take up the mascot issue at its January meeting.

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, December 7, 2015

Amended December 11, 2015

Under “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor C. Dole, noting the construction of the two new dorms and the series of recent and ongoing athletics projects, commented that the state of the athletics and residential facilities seems out of balance with the condition of our classrooms. He expressed concern about how this imbalance might be interpreted by someone new to the college. He noted that the condition of classrooms varies a great deal across campus. While some are fine, others are shabby and not equipped properly, in his view. Continuing, he said that it appears that classroom renovations are undertaken in an ad hoc way, with what appears to be a “tinkering-around-the-edges” approach. He wondered whether there is a master plan and/or more unified approach for creating and renovating classrooms at the college. President Martin said that such a plan was created some time ago, and that the college has been incrementally improving classrooms. Professor Katsaros asked if faculty have had opportunities to offer input about planning for classrooms. President Martin responded that a committee made up of faculty, students, and staff has been involved in thinking strategically about campus building options and priorities, including classrooms, as part of the campus framework planning effort. Professor Marshall commented that the Science Faculty Steering Committee, which is composed of science faculty, has played a central role in imagining classrooms, and the overall design, of the new science center. Dean Epstein explained that the new center, which will open in fall 2018, is expected to accommodate all science classes currently taught in McGuire Life Sciences Building and Merrill, in addition to all computer science classes, as well as approximately 10 percent of all non-science classes. Planned renovations to McGuire will provide additional classroom and office space, as departments located there currently will move to the new science center. Most immediately, three new seminar classrooms will be located in the new dorms, which will be completed by this fall. There is also an ongoing program of equipping and renovating classrooms, the dean noted. The dean asked the members if it might be helpful to have Jim Brassord, chief of campus operations, offer an overview of the campus framework plan at an upcoming faculty meeting. The committee agreed that having such a presentation would be helpful.

Professor Douglas next asked President Martin if she feels any anxiety about the college’s continuing reliance on the endowment to support the operating budget of the college. President Martin said that she is confident that the Trustee Investment Committee and the college’s finance team are taking appropriate measures to protect the endowment, and that efforts are being made to keep costs down as much as possible. Gifts to the college, including through the upcoming capital campaign that is now in the planning stage, are an additional source of funding for the college. There are limited steps that can be taken to change the degree to which Amherst relies on its endowment, as long as the college maintains its commitment to its current financial aid policies.

Conversation turned to the question of whether to have a faculty meeting on December 15. The members discussed [a request from a group of faculty members](#) to have a faculty meeting and the colleagues’ proposal for the format and substance of the meeting. The committee expressed appreciation for the group’s support for holding a meeting and their suggestions, and agreed that bringing the faculty together at this moment is important. The members then decided to set the agenda for a faculty meeting on December 15. In determining the agenda, the members considered again the importance of a communication from the president before break, and decided to support a previous request from the president that she offer extended remarks at a

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, December 7, 2015**Amended December 11, 2015**

faculty meeting. It was agreed that President Martin would share her thoughts about issues facing the college; her sense of the national climate in which questions are being raised by members of our community; and her ideas about how to move forward. The dean, it was decided, would present a summary of steps that have already been taken and plans for new initiatives to foster diversity and inclusion in academic life at Amherst. The members noted the expectation that there will be ample opportunity for questions from the floor following the president and dean's remarks, and that the meeting will be a good opportunity to address some of the issues included in the group's proposal. The members asked the dean to convey to the group that the Committee of Six would be happy to consider proposals and to encourage the colleagues to send ideas to the committee. The members would then discuss the suggestions in a conversation for which minutes would be taken. As always, the committee would refer proposals to relevant governance structures and forward proposals to the faculty after full deliberation. The committee turned to personnel matters.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Katsaros asked the president for her sense of how students are doing in the aftermath of the protest. Professor Katsaros said the stress has been palpable at the college for weeks, both among students and among faculty members who are unsure how to move forward. President Martin responded that Cullen Murphy '74, chairman of the Board of Trustees, would be meeting with three student-leaders the next day and that she had also spoken with two student-leaders after they returned from break. Students have asked that they have until December 13 to develop a mechanism for choosing student-members of the advisory committee that she will soon appoint to focus on diversity and inclusion. For the most part, students at this time seem to be focusing on finishing the academic work of the semester, the president noted, and refining their goals. She informed the members that the senior staff and she have been reviewing a list of about one hundred recommendations that emerged both through the strategic-planning effort and the student protest. There is a good deal of overlap, and many of the requests made by students are recommendations of the strategic plan, some of which are already being implemented, with others in the planning stages. As noted earlier, Dean Epstein will provide an update at the faculty meeting of steps that have already been taken through her office and plans for new initiatives to foster diversity and inclusion.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

Committee of Six Minutes of Wednesday, December 9, 2015

Amended January 15, 2015

The twelfth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2015-2016 was called to order by President Martin in the president's office at 4:30 P.M. on Wednesday, December 9, 2015. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Benedetto, C. Dole, Douglas, Hart, Katsaros, and Marshall; Dean Epstein; and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with President Martin reporting that the day's emergency preparedness drill had gone well. Conversation then turned to [a note from Professor Hall](#), who had informed the Committee of Six that the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) had recently added three "keywords" to the advising matrix that is accessible through the ACDATA system. These keywords are *attention to issues of race*, *attention to issues of gender and sexuality*, and *attention to issues of class*. It was agreed that Professor Hall's note should be appended to these minutes.

Under "Questions from Committee Members," Professor Benedetto asked, on behalf of an untenured colleague, how it would become known that a student who had submitted a teaching evaluation for his or her class had been found to have committed an act of academic dishonesty in the class. The dean said that the department should be sure to ask colleagues to let the chair know about cases of academic dishonesty and should keep a record of such offenses. Professor Douglas next asked whether the committee could be informed about the number of writing-intensive courses that are being offered this year, how many slots are available in them, and how many students were identified as needing the courses. He also said that he would like to know the number of students who choose not to take writing-intensive courses after receiving recommendations that they should do so, and about how many faculty members are recommending students for these courses. He had asked the same questions last year and now wants an update, he said. Associate Dean Tobin said that she would contact Mr. Lieber about these questions.

Continuing with "Questions from Committee Members," Professor Douglas next commented on an email that Professor Williamson, co-chair of the Special Committee on the Place of Athletics at Amherst, had sent to the faculty on December 7. He invited faculty to share perspectives about particular issues and information on the relationship between athletics and academics at Amherst that colleagues believe are important for the committee to consider. Professor Williamson also asked interested faculty to share their thoughts with the special committee at a meeting to be held on January 11. Professor Douglas expressed concern that a year into its review of this issue, the committee is just now soliciting faculty input. He would have thought that gathering faculty opinion would have been among the committee's first steps, he said. Professor Katsaros asked about the percentage of students who, during their time at the college, have played on a varsity team. The president responded that 35 percent are on varsity teams, and that it is estimated that another 35 percent play club or intramural sports. President Martin said that she would check with the committee's co-chair, Shirley Tilghman, Amherst trustee and president emerita of Princeton, about the committee's progress. (By the time of the writing of these minutes, President Martin learned from President Tilghman that the special committee has not reached any conclusions. She informed the Committee of Six that the special committee has been examining data and meeting with various constituencies, including some faculty, and had asked for the January 11 meeting because the members of the committee believe

Committee of Six Minutes of Wednesday, December 9, 2015

Amended January 15, 2015

they need to hear from a more representative group of faculty.) The Committee of Six then turned to personnel matters.

The members next discussed a proposal that a committee or other body—for example, an advisory board—be created to serve as a conduit for tenure-track faculty members to share ideas and concerns with each other, senior faculty, and the administration. Some tenure-track faculty members have requested that such a body be formed, Dean Epstein said. She noted that there are now a significant number of untenured colleagues at the college, around fifty, in fact, and that this cohort will make up about one-third of the faculty as of July. While expressing support for enhancing communication among untenured faculty, senior colleagues, and the administration, the Committee of Six raised some concerns about making use of a committee structure as a vehicle for doing so. Professor Marshall wondered what the charge and governance role of such a committee would be. Could it bring forward motions, for example? President Martin and Dean Epstein, who said that they are sympathetic to the request, responded that they could see no reason why such a committee could not bring motions forward, just as any other committee would. The president and dean informed the members that some of the untenured faculty members with whom they have met have expressed a sense of isolation and have shared concerns about a lack of mentoring in their departments, among other issues. Each department has its own culture and way of doing things, with a great deal of variation in how they work with untenured colleagues, the dean noted. Some members of the Committee of Six wondered how the members of such a committee would be chosen. If the member were to be elected, it would be possible that an untenured faculty member might be elected to a committee on which he or she might not wish to serve. Professor C. Dole expressed support for establishing formal avenues for untenured faculty members to communicate their views, but worried that the committee format might end up creating time-consuming work that undermines its potential benefits. Professor Marshall noted that, in the past, the concerns of untenured colleagues have been channeled through existing committees on which untenured faculty sometimes serve. Professor Douglas said that he does not see the need to create a committee and wondered if having periodic meetings between the president and the dean and untenured faculty would be helpful. It seems to him as though issues of concern could be communicated to the administration in that format. He expressed concern that creating a committee for untenured faculty might result in an unwanted trade-union, “us-versus-you” dynamic. Professor Benedetto concurred that creating a committee does not seem like the best approach to achieve the goals as outlined. He recalled that, on a handful of occasions when he was untenured, there had been special meetings of untenured faculty members with the dean or members of the Committee of Six. It was agreed that a good first step would be for the Committee of Six—without the president and the dean present—to meet with tenure-track faculty members this spring. This format, which has been used in the past, has proven to be helpful for providing information, answering questions, and exchanging ideas.

The members spent the remainder of the meeting discussing a draft of a college statement on intellectual freedom, which had been prepared by Professor Douglas at the committee’s request. The members agreed that the college would benefit from having such a statement, and some members suggested some revisions to the draft. Professor Douglas noted that he had drafted the statement with the expectation that it would not apply to staff at the college, with the exception of instructional staff. He explained that creating a working environment at the college

Committee of Six Minutes of Wednesday, December 9, 2015**Amended January 15, 2015**

that fosters respect and norms of civility through policies such as [the Statement on Respect for Persons](#), which applies to all members of the community, is a different matter than the project at hand. As he noted in the draft statement, Professor Douglas said that “the desire to foster bonds of community and a climate of civility should not, however, compromise the college’s unstinting dedication to intellectual and artistic freedom.” The focus of the statement under discussion is on the freedom to “espouse and debate ideas that are unpopular, controversial, vexing, discomfiting—and even seemingly wrongheaded or offensive.” Professor Douglas commented that, in the classroom, intellectual freedom demands the tolerance of viewpoints that many interlocutors might find deeply distressing, discomfiting, or disagreeable. Professor C. Dole commented that it is important to recognize that the institution’s dedication to creating and fostering a hospitable environment and to protecting free speech can seem like competing values. Professor Hart stressed the importance of not conflating the two issues, while noting that the timing of the campus’s discussion of intellectual freedom will be important. Professor Katsaros commented that the goal of the statement should be to strengthen and affirm the college’s current statements and not to contradict them. Professor Douglas noted that the draft statement emphasizes that the freedom of teacher-scholars in regard to their research and in teaching their subjects, with some restrictions and limitations (for example, tendentious, false statements about subjects unrelated to their subject of research or instruction), must be protected. The statement, which focuses on intellectual and artistic freedom and the free exchange of ideas, in this context, is thus not applicable to staff, he noted. In the past, the statement’s relationship to staff has been implicit and assumed. He wondered if this aspect of the statement should be made more explicit.

Concluding the conversation, the committee noted that the statement is being discussed at a particularly sensitive moment for the college and for higher education more generally, when the boundaries of freedom of speech sometimes seem blurred. The members said that they fear that some students may view the statement as an attack, which is not the intention. The members agreed that it is important to note that the committee has been examining this issue and developing a statement for some time, with the goal of reaffirming intellectual freedom and the boundaries of protected speech at Amherst. With the hour growing late, the committee decided to discuss the details of the statement further before sharing it with the College Council, the Committee on Educational Policy, and the full faculty this spring. The members agreed that Professor Douglas should ask some outside experts in the field to vet the draft statement before the committee’s next discussion.

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, December 15, 2015**Amended January 15, 2015**

The thirteenth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2015-2016 was called to order by President Martin in the president's office at 10:15 A.M. on Monday, December 15, 2015. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors C. Dole, Douglas, Hart, Katsaros, and Marshall; Dean Epstein; and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder. Professor Benedetto was absent.

The meeting began with a discussion of a personnel matter. President Martin then asked the members for their thoughts about having a representative from the Committee of Six, the Committee on Educational Policy, and the Committee on Priorities and Resources serve on the President's Advisory Committee on Diversity and Inclusion. President Martin said that her goal is to create a committee that is closely tied to the college's governance processes and administrative offices. The new committee, which will have approximately fourteen members, will be made up of faculty, staff, and students, she explained. The Committee of Six expressed support for the plans that the president had outlined and then discussed the nominees from the committees other than the Committee of Six. The committee then reviewed some revisions to Professor Douglas's draft statement on intellectual freedom and offered further suggestions. The members agreed to return to its consideration of the document next semester.

The meeting adjourned at 10:45 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, January 25, 2016

Amended February 4, 2016

The fourteenth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2015-2016 was called to order by President Martin in the president's office at 3:00 P.M. on Monday, January 25, 2016. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Benedetto, C. Dole, Douglas, Hart, Katsaros, and Marshall; Dean Epstein; and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with the president and dean commenting briefly on the challenging financial situation that the college is facing as a result of downturns in the financial markets and the broader economy—a topic of trustee discussions, in relation to the budget, at the board's meetings the previous Thursday and Friday.

Dean Epstein informed the committee that Michael Ching, assistant professor of mathematics, will deliver this year's Max and Etta Lazerowitz Lecture in April (the date will be announced once the lecture has been scheduled). The Lazerowitz Lecturer, a member of the Amherst faculty below the rank of full professor, is appointed annually. Following up on a colleague's inquiry about whether the broken espresso machine in Frost Library would be replaced, the dean reported that a new machine has been ordered and should be installed and operational by the middle of February.

Continuing with her remarks, Dean Epstein said that, in response to the Committee of Six's request, the Faculty Computing Committee has discussed whether the Department of Information Technology should have drones, and, if so, whether the college should have a formal policy for their use. The committee's conclusion, according to David Hamilton, chief information officer (CIO), is that IT should continue to have drone/s available, as long as the existing arrangements remain in place. There is a policy of "no fly without consultation," he reported. Any request for use of the drone by faculty, staff, or students must be shared with the CIO, who will consult with the college's legal team. According to Mr. Hamilton, the Faculty Computing Committee has concluded that a policy governing drone use is not yet needed because of the unsettled and rapidly changing nature of the regulatory environment governing drone use. He noted that there has not been a request for access to the drone at Amherst in over a year. Also informing the Faculty Computing Committee's discussion was the generally agreed upon sentiment that the college shouldn't remove access to a potentially useful research tool. Instead, Amherst should ensure that the tool is used within whatever legal framework governs its use at the time of the expressed need.

Discussion turned to a response from Mr. Lieber to Professor Douglas's inquiry about enrollments in intensive writing courses and the process for referring students to these courses. Mr. Lieber reported that, for the fall semester of 2015, twenty-three students were identified as needing an intensive writing course, either by virtue of their performance in the writing components of the college's summer humanities and summer science programs, or on the basis of their critical reading and writing SAT scores. Of those twenty-three students, thirteen enrolled in an intensive course in the fall and eight registered for one this spring. So, a total of twenty-one of the twenty-three identified students will have taken an intensive course by the end of this academic year, Mr. Lieber said. In addition, before or after pre-registration in the fall, First-Year Seminar (FYS) instructors or staff of the writing center recommended that thirty-seven students enroll in an intensive course in the spring. Of those thirty-seven (twenty-eight of whom were referred by fourteen of the thirty-three FYS instructors), twenty-four pre-registered for one of the courses, and it's possible, he noted at the time, that a couple more, who weren't recommended

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, January 25, 2016

Amended February 4, 2016

until after pre-registration, might elect one of the courses once the semester started. He reported that, by his count, five sophomores and juniors who had been previously recommended for intensive writing courses hadn't taken one, but will have taken one either this fall or this spring. Finally, eleven of the students who are registered for an intensive writing course this spring have taken a previous one, and either were recommended to take a second one by their instructor or have chosen to do so in order to continue working to improve their writing. This year for the first time there are eight intensive writing courses—three in the fall and five in the spring, Mr. Lieber noted. In addition, in the fall semester, Professor Gentzler and Ms. Sanchez of the writing center taught a writing-intensive FYS course that was designed specifically for transfer students, the bulk of whom have transferred from community colleges. The students in that section are not included in the figures noted above, according to Mr. Lieber.

Professor Douglas said that he appreciates that more intensive writing courses are being offered. At the same time, he feels that the relatively small number of referrals to these courses that came from FYS teachers is troubling. He expressed the view that the fact that so few of those teaching First-Year Seminars identified students who would benefit from extra help with writing, and communicated that those students should take intensive writing courses, represents a failure of the FYS program. A feature of the program is writing-attentive instruction, as voted by the faculty. Dean Epstein, who wondered whether some faculty members may not be aware of the expectation that they refer students to the courses, agreed to write to the chair of the First-Year Seminar Committee to share Professor Douglas's view that it is the responsibility of all FYS instructors to identify students who would benefit from intensive writing courses. She said that she will also encourage the chair to send a reminder to FYS instructors in the fall about this issue. The dean agreed to convey to the colleagues who organize a workshop for First-Year Seminar instructors each May that they should communicate this message to those who attend. Advisors should also be steering students in the direction of these courses when informed of FYS instructors' recommendations, it was noted. Professor Benedetto said that there are structural issues that may be contributing to the number of students who are referred to the courses—the most significant being that not all First-Year Seminars have a significant focus on writing, since the large number of sections necessitates placing any writing concerns secondary to finding enough colleagues to participate. Indeed, when the faculty voted in April of 2009 that writing-attentive instruction would be provided in all First-Year Seminars, there were assurances made that the pedagogical demands for writing would not be so great as to discourage math and science faculty from participating. Professor Douglas commented that the vote of the faculty on the requirements of FYS courses means that those teaching the seminars have agreed to offer a certain kind of pedagogy. He reiterated his view that it is the responsibility of FYS instructors to identify students who need help with writing. The FYS Committee should be vigilant about making sure that instructors are aware of this responsibility, he noted.

The members agreed that the following dates should be held for possible faculty meetings during the spring semester: March 1, April 5, April 19, May 3, and May 19 (commencement meeting, Thursday, 9:00 a.m.). The committee then discussed several committee nominations.

Under "Questions from Committee Members," Professor C. Dole asked the dean about the transitions in the Office of Institutional Research that had been announced earlier in the day. The dean said that, as she had explained in her email to the community, Hanna Spinosa, chief institutional research and planning officer, has decided to resign her position, effective February

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, January 25, 2016

Amended February 4, 2016

1, 2016, to meet the residency requirements of a child custody agreement. While recognizing that her personal circumstances necessitate that Ms. Spinosa leave Amherst, the members agreed that her departure represents a loss to the college. The dean agreed. She expressed confidence that Jesse Barba, who has served as associate director of institutional research and associate registrar at the college for the past five years, will be an effective interim director of institutional research. The Office of Institutional Research, which also includes Tiffany Lee, senior research analyst, will now report to the dean of the faculty. The dean noted that Associate Dean Tobin has agreed to play a central role in the college's preparations for its decennial review by the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (CIHE) of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), which will occur in the spring 2018. In this work, Dean Tobin will collaborate closely with the members of the senior staff, the Office of Institutional research, faculty, and staff members in offices and departments across the college.

Conversation turned to information that the dean had provided to the committee about the participation of untenured faculty members on search committees for open-rank and senior positions, including the policies of peer institutions. The dean noted that policies vary across the schools that responded to her inquiry about this issue; at Amherst, practices vary across departments. Dean Epstein expressed the view that it would be desirable to have a policy that would guide all academic departments at the college, so searches are carried out with a consistent set of procedures. The members agreed that tenure-track colleagues should be given the option of participating in open-rank and senior searches. While the expectation would be that they participate, it should be communicated that they are welcome to recuse themselves if they wish. The members asked the dean to convey to departments that it is the Committee of Six's strong recommendation that this be the policy. She agreed to do so. The committee then turned to a personnel matter.

Dean Epstein next shared a proposal that the registrar has developed to address concerns that some Committee of Six members raised at the committee's November 30 meeting, during their discussion of the Committee on Education Policy (CEP)'s proposal that professors' access to the transcripts of students enrolled in their courses and to the transcripts of former advisees be restricted. Professors Marshall and Benedetto had said that having easy access to students' transcripts, and the data that they contain, is essential for STEM faculty, who need to advise students on the best placements in courses. Ms. Kilventon has now suggested an alternative to the current transcript available to instructors. The new option would allow instructors from a department to view courses that students complete in that department and in other relevant departments and test scores. For example, faculty in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics would see the courses that each student has completed and his or her grades in the courses in the department, as well as SAT scores and Amherst placement test results. This information could be made available only to those departments requiring this information for placement and/or advising purposes. This same information could also be provided for the semester in progress and/or the upcoming semester, with the exception of grades, of course. Professor Benedetto said that he had met with Ms. Kilventon about the proposal and had had a demonstration of how the system would work. He expressed enthusiasm for this approach, commenting that it would meet the needs of his department and even represents an improvement over the old system, which required wading through information that was not useful for the department's placement purposes. Professor Marshall also expressed support for the proposed

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, January 25, 2016**Amended February 4, 2016**

system, agreeing that the necessary information would be provided, without giving access to other information that is not needed. The members expressed the desire to retain the prerequisite checker tool, as they find it very helpful. The committee assumes that this tool would continue to allow faculty to determine whether a student has successfully completed prerequisites for courses. At present, grades are shown.

While agreeing that the registrar's proposal seems like a good compromise, Professor Douglas expressed the view that faculty should be given access to students' record of courses, with grades suppressed, during the pre-registration period. This information, he said, could help a professor make non-arbitrary enrollment decisions in limited enrollment courses; a professor could, for example, choose a student for whom the course would represent a departure from the courses he or she has taken to date. Other members noted that some information that would help ensure a mix of interests is available under the proposed system—for example, students' majors. Professor Douglas commented that he does not see anything that could be construed as prejudicial in making this information available to faculty. The president and the dean expressed support for having a system in which a student's profile of course taking is not used as a tool to decide whether he or she should be admitted to a course. The more information that is made available about a student, the more opportunities there might be for unconscious bias to enter into faculty members' decision-making process, some might argue. Professor Douglas maintained that randomness does not necessarily lead to equity or sound enrollment practices. He asked the dean if she would consult with the CEP and the registrar about making students' records of past classes, with grades suppressed, available to instructors during pre-registration for students on the instructor's class list. Professor Marshall said that he does not see a problem with this idea. Concurring, Professor Hart commented that he can see the benefit of making this information available.

The members reviewed a revised draft of the statement on academic freedom that the committee has been considering. After making further suggestions, the committee asked Professor Douglas to incorporate the members' changes into another draft. The committee agreed that it would seek to finalize the statement at its next meeting and then forward the document to the College Council and the CEP. After receiving feedback from these two committees, the committee agreed to forward the statement to the full faculty for discussion and a vote. The committee turned to personnel matters.

The meeting adjourned at 4:40 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, February 1, 2016

Amended February 10, 2016

The fifteenth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2015-2016 was called to order by President Martin in the president's office at 3:00 P.M. on Monday, February 1, 2016. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Benedetto, C. Dole, Douglas (present for a portion of the meeting), Hart, Katsaros, and Marshall; Dean Epstein; and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

The members reviewed a revised draft of the statement on academic freedom that the committee has been considering. The committee agreed that the statement, which, among other things, will codify the need and criteria for "protected speech," should apply to faculty in their role as teacher-scholars and to members of the staff only if an individual assumes a teaching role and/or is engaged in scholarly work. The members suggested some additional revisions to the statement. After these changes have been incorporated into the document, the members decided that the draft would be complete. The next step, it was agreed, would be to forward the document to the College Council and the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) and to have Dean Epstein, as well as Professor Douglas, perhaps, discuss the document and answer questions. After receiving feedback from these two committees, the members noted that the statement would be forwarded to the full faculty for discussion and a vote.

As a follow-up to a previous conversation with the Committee of Six (see the [minutes of September 28, 2015](#)) about new approaches that could be taken to evaluating the teaching of tenure-track faculty members, hari stephen kumar, the college's instructional designer/technologist, joined the meeting at 3:25 P.M. At the committee's request, he has developed a proposal for an end-of-semester course evaluation form, with the goal of creating a form that can be used across departments. In addition to the creation and adoption of a well-designed form—with "formative" and "summative" elements and which is constructed to mitigate implicit biases—Mr. kumar's proposal calls for a thoughtful process for administering the form; collecting responses, analyzing the data, and interpreting results; and guiding all participants (students, faculty, department chairs, and administrators) in the productive use of the form. He reiterated his view that end-of-semester course evaluation forms have significant limitations and emphasized the importance of not relying on a single form to evaluate courses.

In advance of the meeting, in addition to providing the members with the proposal, Mr. kumar shared an article, titled "[Teaching Students to Evaluate Us Better.](#)" on best practices for teaching students how to write better evaluations. The piece had appeared in *Inside Higher Education* on October 1, 2015. Mr. kumar suggested that a summary of the article's major points might be helpful to distribute to students before they evaluate their teachers. As a general matter, he stressed the importance, particularly for mitigating the effects of implicit bias, of educating students in substantive ways about the evaluation process. Sharing this article would be one example of the type of steps that could be taken to move in the direction of change in the culture of evaluation at the college. Accomplishing change should be an inclusive undertaking that involves students early on, as well as the faculty, Mr. kumar explained. In addition, he had provided the members with a [sample statement from Penn State](#) on how evaluations are used at that university, referring the committee to the last two pages of this document, in particular, under the section "Summary of Research on Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness."

Mr. kumar noted that, since his last meeting with the committee, he has been attending conferences about the evaluation of teaching, has been in touch with leading researchers in the

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, February 1, 2016

Amended February 10, 2016

field of evaluating teaching, and has been consulting with colleagues at peer institutions and with Amherst faculty members about this topic. He noted the excitement surrounding the “tremendous and rare” opportunity to reshape the campus culture around evaluations, with the goal of creating an “ongoing, productive dialogue between learners and teachers.” Mr. kumar expressed hope that Amherst’s approach to evaluation will become a model for other institutions to follow.

Turning to the proposed form, Mr. kumar commented that it has two sections, one geared toward “formative” feedback and another toward “summative” ratings of teaching. In designing the form, his goal for both sections was to have questions that are clearly sequenced, starting with a focus on students’ learning efforts in the course, progressing toward a focus on aspects of the course’s structure and design, and finally focusing on the instructor’s teaching methods (with attention to aspects relevant to teaching, not on personality, style, or popularity). Mr. kumar noted that he has piloted the ratings section of the form in some Amherst courses and said that, with the faculty members’ permission, he would be happy to share the results with the committee. The members expressed interest in reviewing this information.

Professor Marshall thanked Mr. kumar for providing resources that will help the faculty to examine the issue of evaluating teaching. He expressed support for developing a form that would be used by all departments, though with the option of tailoring the form to accommodate some specific departmental needs and practices—for example, the evaluation of multiple instructors and/or staff-taught lab sections. Professor C. Dole, who agreed that maintaining flexibility will be important, also expressed his enthusiasm for Mr. kumar’s efforts. He suggested that Mr. kumar try to blend the open-ended and structured elements, rather than keeping them distinct. Mr. kumar agreed to revise the proposal, with this goal in mind. Professor Katsaros expressed the view that it would be important to create a space for free expression at the end of the evaluation form, so as to allow students to add thoughts and comments not covered by the previous questions. She cautioned against developing an excessively rigid assessment form, and expressed support for a “blended” evaluation, in which any “summative” questions would be complemented by “formative” ones. Professor Hart, who expressed support, commented that the proposal would require that time be carved out during classes for the evaluation process to be successful. Other members agreed.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Benedetto asked how Mr. kumar envisions helping students to recognize that their participation in the evaluation process is meaningful. Mr. kumar responded that it will be important for students and faculty to see the form by itself as only one part of a broader process that spans semesters, rather than as a process that occurs once during the last week of a semester. He described ways in which evaluation could become an ongoing dialogue, offering the example of faculty sharing well-crafted evaluations from prior semesters with students at the beginning of a course. The instructor could then inform students about changes that he or she has made based on student feedback. The professor could also ask students about their learning experience mid-way through the course and make adjustments, for example, in such areas as pacing and workload, if warranted. In this way, students would see that their comments can have an impact. Dean Epstein noted that, in her experience, mid-term evaluations are often affirming. Such evaluations are not part of the formal evaluation of teaching effectiveness for reappointment and tenure, but are for the professor’s own use, she noted.

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, February 1, 2016

Amended February 10, 2016

Professor Marshall noted that in his experience, Amherst students take seriously the task of evaluating teaching and that, although there are sometimes quite obviously unfair evaluations, the majority of student evaluations he has read are balanced and reflect the very same themes he notices in his own observation of teaching. Professor Benedetto suggested that questions should be kept simple, and that there should not be too many. He expressed some concern that there might be a fatigue factor if students are asked to answer numerous open-ended questions that require commentary, as well as being tasked with filling out a rating scale. Professor Benedetto also noted that, in his experience, students evaluate teaching quite accurately when asked only a few questions focusing on the overall assessment, and when given space to provide general comments. Mr. Kumar said that students do well with commenting on and rating the aspects of teaching that they experience and observe. He noted that research has shown that students' cultural biases are more likely to come into play when they are asked to rate a teacher's overall effectiveness, which is why his proposal does not use the word *effective* within any of the parts in which students are asked to comment on the course or the instructor's teaching methods. In regard to the rating scale, Mr. Kumar suggested that it might be best if students fill out ratings for individual factors, while a summation of the meaning of the results is created by a department, for example using guidelines developed in consultation with the teaching and learning center, for the Committee of Six.

President Martin expressed support for developing an evaluation form, as Mr. Kumar has proposed, that is constructed based on research in the field. In addition to offering opportunities for commentary, presenting students with a list of items to rate will help to educate them about the aspects of teaching and learning that they should consider when evaluating teaching, including when responding to open-ended questions. Professor Hart noted that focused, pointed questions will also signal to students what is important. Professor Douglas left the meeting at 3:45 P.M.

At the conclusion of the conversation, it was agreed that Mr. Kumar should consider the committee's feedback and revise his proposal accordingly; share the results of his pilot with the members; and return to meet with the committee on February 15. The members thanked Mr. Kumar for his excellent work, and he left the meeting at 4:08 P.M.

Under "Topics of the day," President Martin informed the members that the Presidential Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion is almost complete and would begin meeting on Friday. The president said that she would chair the committee until a chief diversity officer is hired, at which time that individual would become the chair.

In advance of the meeting, the dean had shared [a letter of January 31, 2016, from Professor Hall](#), in which he suggests that the committee consider appointing more tenure-track faculty members to existing committees, rather than creating a new committee that would be composed of tenure-track faculty, as was discussed earlier (see the [minutes of December 9, 2015](#)). Since the Committee of Six is scheduled to meet with tenure-track faculty members on February 8 and 12, this topic could perhaps be raised then, it was noted. The members asked the dean and the president for their sense of the main purpose of the upcoming meetings. Dean Epstein said that she envisions the meetings as an opportunity to gain some sense of how untenured faculty would most like to have their views heard/represented at the college. At the meetings that President Martin and she had had with some untenured faculty members, many had expressed a desire for a committee that would represent the interests of untenured colleagues. At

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, February 1, 2016

Amended February 10, 2016

the same time, a few untenured faculty members saw potential problems with such a committee, the dean said. Continuing, she noted that some of those who had attended the meetings had expressed frustration with what they see as a lack of college-wide or standard policies and practices, especially around issues related to reappointment and tenure. The issues include teaching evaluation forms, the solicitation of the evaluations (who solicits them—e.g., the chair, the candidate, the academic department coordinator), the frequency with which teaching is observed by senior colleagues, and mentoring. The dean noted that some untenured faculty members had expressed concern about the seeming lack of transparency at the college. They questioned how decisions are made—for example, how committee assignments are done. Untenured faculty members, in response to an invitation to submit topics for the upcoming meeting, had asked to discuss the faculty meeting time (viewing the evening hour as not family-friendly) and whether the college would consider providing support for childcare while faculty are attending conferences.

Under “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Hart asked the president about students’ efforts and plans in the aftermath of the student protests. President Martin said that students are meeting in their subcommittees to consider further actions and recommendations, working at a deliberative, measured pace. Four student-leaders of the protest had met with the Board of Trustees two weeks ago, she noted, and had made presentations, shared ideas, and answered questions. In addition, the president noted, three of the four students who will serve on the Presidential Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion, who were selected by their peers, had participated in the protests and will serve as liaisons to the movement. The other student on the task force is a member of the College Council. There will also be faculty and staff representatives from the other major governance entities—the Committee of Six, the Committee on Educational Policy, the Committee on Priorities and Resources, the Managers Council, and the Employee Council.

Professor Hart next asked if the college knows of any members of the Amherst community who have been affected by the Zika Virus and whether any students who are studying abroad at present may be at risk. The dean and the president responded that they have not been informed of any cases and said that they would research this matter further and report back to the committee. The members next reviewed drafts of the dean’s letters to department chairs and candidates concerning tenure that are sent to department chairs and candidates each spring and approved the documents. Discussion turned to nominees for the Ad Hoc Faculty Advisory Group on Reaccreditation, and the Reaccreditation Steering Committee. The dean said that she would report back on the make-up of these committees after inviting colleagues to serve.

The meeting ended with a discussion of the criteria and procedures for promotion to full professor. In advance of the meeting, the members had reviewed Committee of Six and faculty meeting minutes of previous conversations about this topic that had taken place between 2004 and 2007 (the last time that the process was discussed in depth by a number of governance bodies of the faculty) and other documents from this period, current [Faculty Handbook language](#) (III, G.) about promotion, the [dean’s letters to candidates and chairs about promotion](#), the [report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Promotion \(2006\)](#), and historical data (with names redacted) about promotion decisions by years in rank. At present, the standards for promotion are opaque, the members agreed, and there is little clarity surrounding the level of achievement and progress required for a positive decision. Some aspects of the current procedures also seem less than

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, February 1, 2016

Amended February 10, 2016

optimal, the committee noted. The members decided that it would be helpful, for the sake of candidates, departments, the Committee of Six, and the administration, and to create greater transparency, if the standards could be made clearer. Some refinement of the procedures could improve the process, as well, it was agreed.

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. At the same time, there was no appetite for having a process that might be the equivalent of a mini tenure review, including an evaluation of scholarly work internally and/or via external reviews. Some members suggested that language along the lines of the following might be appropriate: promotion to full professor is based on evidence, since the time of tenure, of significant contributions to a scholarly field(s), growth and innovation in teaching, and continuing service to the college.

In regard to the evidence alluded to above, Professor Katsaros felt that soliciting retrospective letters from students whom the candidate had taught since the time of tenure would provide evidence that would be helpful for considering the teaching record. She noted that the Ad Hoc Committee on Promotion had recommended in 2006 that this procedure be a feature of the promotion review. Some members also agreed that a letter from the candidate that offers his or her own perspective about growth since the time of tenure may also offer informative evidence. This document is not required currently and is often not provided, sometimes as a result of advice provided to candidates by chairs. Professor C. Dole expressed the view that, while writing such a letter offers the candidate an opportunity to reflect at an important moment in his or her career, he also recognizes the value of a system in which a candidate is nominated by his or her department without the expectation of a letter from the candidate. The other members of the committee, the dean, and the president felt that requiring candidates to write letters, which is part of the reappointment and tenure processes, would be desirable. It was noted that the Ad Hoc Committee on Promotion had recommended that candidates be required to write a letter to their promotion committee discussing their accomplishments since tenure, according to the promotion criteria. It had been imagined that the letter would be submitted by October 1 of the academic year in which a promotion recommendation would be anticipated and would become part of the dossier provided to the Committee of Six.

The current timing of the review, normally between six and eight years after the tenure decision, seems appropriate, the committee noted. While some faculty members have been promoted after fewer years in rank, early promotion should be reserved for associate professors with extraordinary records, particularly in the area of scholarly achievement, in the view of the committee, the president, and the dean. Those wishing to be considered for promotion early should consult with their department(s) and the dean.

Turning to procedures for promotion, the committee noted that having promotion originate with the candidate or the department (the current procedure) can lead, as the dean's office has confirmed, to logistical problems, confusion, and, at times, to communication challenges between the department and the candidate. Professor C. Dole noted that there could be good reason to have the current policy. He said that he could imagine many scenarios in which a department might not want to initiate the promotion process for a qualified candidate and that the current procedure allows for candidates in such a situation to initiate the process.

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, February 1, 2016**Amended February 10, 2016**

Professor Benedetto agreed. The other members felt that it would be preferable for the recommendation for promotion to full professor to originate in the department, informed by a conversation with the candidate. In cases when a candidate is in disagreement with a department's assessment of whether he or she should be brought forward for promotion, the dean should be consulted, the members noted.

The members agreed to continue their discussion of promotion procedures and standards at their next meeting. Professor Marshall was charged with drafting changes to the *Faculty Handbook* language about promotion to full professor, based on the committee's conversation, for the members' consideration. Any change in procedure would require a vote of the faculty, it was noted.

The meeting adjourned at 5:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, February 15, 2016

Amended February 23, 2016

The sixteenth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2015-2016 was called to order by President Martin in the president's office at 3:00 P.M. on Monday, February 15, 2016. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Benedetto, C. Dole, Douglas, Hart, Katsaros, and Marshall; Dean Epstein; and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

The dean informed the members that the president will soon appoint a new faculty marshal, as Professor Tawa will be on leave next year and will have served in the role for two three-year terms by the time of her sabbatical. The president, the dean, and the committee expressed appreciation for Professor Tawa's service and discussed a potential nominee for this appointment, which is ceremonial and honorary in nature. The members then turned to personnel matters.

The members next discussed issues that had been raised during the committee's recent meetings (February 8 and February 12) with some tenure-track faculty members. All tenure-track faculty members had been invited to attend these gatherings. The members reported that topics that had been discussed included the pros and cons of creating a committee to represent tenure-track faculty; challenges that tenure-track faculty have experienced during interactions with the Office of Student Affairs and related concerns; issues surrounding faculty personnel processes, including the standardization of teaching evaluation forms, a request that the standards for tenure be made more explicit and that the language in the *Faculty Handbook* be revised to reflect current practice more accurately, and questions about the place of service both in the evaluation process and more generally; advising, particularly a need for more training to prepare new faculty for pre-major advising; the meeting time for faculty meetings, which some faculty felt should be during "business hours"; parental leave for adoptive parents; and departmental mentoring programs that offer too little or impose too much. There was support on all sides for organizing annual meetings of this kind for tenure-track faculty with the Committee of Six. Many of the issues raised focused on problematic communication, the members agreed. The committee reported that, while tenure-track faculty members had expressed appreciation for this and other informal meetings that permit dialogue and the exchange of information, they raised concern about a historic lack of follow-through on the matters that have been brought to the college's attention via this format.

The committee, the president, and the dean discussed ways in which to begin to address topics that had been raised, where action is possible. It was agreed that the dean should ask the registrar to develop a hard-copy list of important academic regulations—a suggestion that had been made at one of the meetings. While there is information available on the college's web site, some faculty members said that it would be most helpful to have a concise information sheet that could serve as quick reference guide. One topic of interest would be rules that would be helpful for advisors (especially new advisors). Topics mentioned as examples included eligibility for Five-College courses and an explanation of the "sophomore drop." Offering more training for pre-major advising, including orientation advising and first-year advising, should be explored, it was agreed. It might be helpful to require such training, Professor Douglas noted, as some new advisors may not be taking advantage of training that is currently being offered. Some tenure-track colleagues in attendance at the meeting noted that the mechanics of advising, in addition to the substance, can prove challenging. Professor Katsaros noted the example of the process for registration for cross-listed courses, which can be confusing. Professor Douglas commented, as

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, February 15, 2016

Amended February 23, 2016

a general matter, on the lack of integration between Moodle and AC Data. The dean noted that IT is exploring this and other issues surrounding long-time systems that may be outliving their usefulness.

Continuing the discussion of the concerns voiced about advising at the meeting, the members noted that some faculty members outside the sciences expressed concern about their effectiveness when advising students who want to take science courses. There was a suggestion that flow charts might prove helpful. While noting that language about tenure standards cannot be overly prescriptive in order to ensure flexibility within the evaluation process, it was agreed that [the Faculty Handbook language about the criteria for tenure](#) should be reviewed to ensure that it reflects current practice in regard to the expected balance of excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service. It was agreed that it would also be helpful to explore ways to address some tenure-track faculty members' concerns about their interactions with the Office of Student Affairs. The committee also recommended that, when issues are being discussed that affect tenure-track faculty members, in particular, it would be beneficial to solicit untenured colleagues' input. Professor Douglas suggested that the Committee of Six write to tenure-track faculty at the beginning of each year, reminding them that the committee represents all faculty, and that they should bring issues of concern forward, when necessary. The members agreed to continue the discussion of action items that should be considered to address issues that had been raised at the meetings with the tenure-track faculty.

At 3:40 P.M., hari stephen kumar, the college's instructional designer/technologist, joined the meeting. A discussion ensued about the revised proposal that he had developed for an end-of-semester course evaluation form, which had been shared with the committee prior to the meeting. This iteration of the form incorporated the members' feedback on a previous version. Prior to the meeting, Mr. kumar had also shared with the committee the ratings section of a form that he had piloted, with student responses redacted to protect confidentiality. The committee expressed enthusiasm for the project of creating a standard form and for Mr. kumar's efforts. The members then offered some additional suggestions, which Mr. kumar agreed to incorporate. At its next meeting, the committee would review the form with these changes included, it was agreed. Once the committee approves the form, the next step will be to share it with the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP), the members decided. It was agreed that the tenure-track faculty should have an early opportunity to review the form, as well. Mr. kumar suggested that, in addition to obtaining this feedback, further testing of the form be done to refine the wording of the questions and the format. The members agreed that this step should be taken. The full faculty ultimately will need to vote on whether to use this or another standard form across all departments. Mr. kumar thanked the committee for the opportunity to work on this project, and he left the meeting at 4:30 P.M.

The dean next shared information that she had learned after following up on some questions that the members had raised at previous meetings. Dean Epstein said that she had consulted with Chief of Campus Police John Carter about whether the Zika Virus poses risks to Amherst students on campus and abroad, and about any plans that the college may have in place to address this emerging health threat. After consultation with administrative colleagues across the campus, including Dr. Warren Morgan, associate dean of students and director of health services, the conclusion is that, at present, the virus poses a very low level of risk to Amherst students on campus. As far as the college knows, students who are studying abroad are at

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, February 15, 2016

Amended February 23, 2016

relatively low risk as well. The college will continue to monitor the situation closely and will take precautions, when it is possible to do so. Continuing her remarks, Dean Epstein offered information related to the committee's request that the First-Year Seminar (FYS) Committee be asked to raise awareness among FYS instructors about the importance of identifying students who could benefit from intensive writing courses, and encouraging these students to register for the courses. The recommendation that a student should take an intensive writing course should also be shared with his or her advisor, it had been agreed.

In response to the dean's query about this issue, Professor Hayashi, chair of the First-Year Seminar Committee, informed Dean Epstein that the committee will do what it can to remind colleagues to identify students who could benefit from intensive writing classes. He said that he agrees that it is very important that students are provided with the support that they need as soon as it is clear that special attention to writing is needed. Professor Hayashi reported that the First-Year Seminar Committee will explore ways, such as those suggested by the Committee of Six, to spread the message to FYS instructors. He expressed the view that all faculty should be encouraged to refer students to intensive writing courses, when needed. Professor Hayashi commented that he hopes that the Committee of Six and others, such as the Curriculum Committee, are considering the challenge of providing writing support to students across the curriculum. He expressed concern that too much of the responsibility of writing instruction is assumed to take place in the FYS. The focus on writing varies across FYS sections, he noted; it cannot be assumed that all students enjoy the benefit of writing pedagogy that is based on extensive personal feedback and revision. Professor Hayashi posed the following questions: How we can better support students as writers during their four years? How can we provide students more opportunities to focus on writing and revision within the open curriculum? He noted that, while the college must focus on students most clearly in need of development, Amherst could serve better the average or even strong student writer, who just wants to know how to improve his or her writing. Such students could benefit from another semester-length course focused on writing or through a clear pathway to improve writing in her or his major. Professor Hayashi noted that the college relies on a few senior faculty members to run the writing intensive courses. He wonders what kind of structure is in place to ensure the current level of support, or an increase of it going forward, if more students who would benefit from these classes are identified. Professor Hayashi informed the dean that he is concerned about writing skills due to what he sees in his students' work, and he noted that concern about students' writing skills is also a topic of discussion in his department.

Dean Epstein next informed the members that the Presidential Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion is now up and running. The members are Kyndall Ashe '18, Isabella (Bella) Berkley '19, Professor Rhonda Cobham-Sander, Chief Student Affairs Officer Suzanne Coffey, Professor Solsi Del Moral (representative from the Committee on Priorities and Resources), Professor Lawrence Douglas (representative from the Committee of Six), Director of Financial Planning and Analysis Katie O'Hara Edwards '87 (representative from the Managers Council), Dean of the Faculty and Professor Catherine Epstein, Professor Kannan Jagannathan, Natasha (Tasha) Kim '18 (representing the College Council), Staff Assistant Danielle Laferriere (representing the Employee Council), Professor Marisa Parham, Professor Sean Redding (representing the CEP), Lerato Teffo '18, and Director of the Multicultural Resource Center Adriana Turner '14. The dean also informed the members that the Ad Hoc Faculty Advisory

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, February 15, 2016

Amended February 23, 2016

Group on Reaccreditation is now set. The members are Professors Amrita Basu (Political Science and Sexuality, Women's and Gender Studies); Catherine Epstein (History), dean of the faculty, ex officio; Nicholas Horton (Mathematics and Statistics); David Schneider (Music); Martha Umphrey (Law, Jurisprudence and Social Thought); Timothy Van Compernelle (Asian Languages and Civilizations); and Janet Tobin, associate dean for academic administration, secretary. Dean Epstein noted that a memorial service for Professor Hussain will be held in Johnson Chapel on Sunday, April 3, at 11:00 A.M. A reception will follow at the Center for Humanistic Inquiry. At the conclusion of the dean's report, the committee turned briefly to a personnel matter.

Under "Questions from Committee Members," Professor Katsaros, on behalf of a colleague, asked the president and the dean if the college requires that national searches be conducted for senior staff positions. The president said that there is no policy that requires national searches. Continuing with questions, Professor Benedetto asked on behalf of a colleague whether there are plans to increase Amherst entering classes by fifteen students. President Martin said that this option has been under discussion because of the decrease in the number of enrolled students on campus in recent years, particularly in the spring, a state of affairs that is a result of the increasing number of students who are studying abroad. The president, noting the financial implications of having higher numbers of students studying abroad and thus not paying Amherst tuition, said that there are no plans at this time to increase the number of students in entering classes. The college is evaluating policies surrounding study abroad, she noted. Many peer institutions, for example, charge their regular tuition, even when the costs of study abroad are much less, and/or charge a fee for studying abroad to cover administrative costs. Amherst's approach, which is to have families pay the true costs of studying abroad and not Amherst tuition, and also not to charge an administration fee, results in net tuition decreasing, President Martin said. Any proposal to increase the size of entering classes would be discussed with appropriate governance bodies, she noted. Professor Benedetto expressed support for charging a fee to cover the college's administrative costs. Dean Epstein noted that a number of ideas are being considered to address this problem, including the possibility of creating incentives to encourage more students to study abroad in the fall instead of the spring, so that enrollments in the fall and spring terms are more balanced.

Professor C. Dole next asked the dean and the president if any appointments as permanent distinguished professors have been made that are not tied to a departmental home. Dean Epstein said that no such appointments have been made. Professor C. Dole thanked the dean for this clarification. Continuing with questions, Professor Hart noted that he had attended a wonderful reception at Newport House earlier in the month as part of the college's celebration of black history month. He explained that F. Dwight Newport had been an athletic trainer and boxing instructor at Amherst; his son, Edward Foster Newport, had attended the college for two years as a member of the class of 1909, later becoming an athletic trainer like his father. He was also a custodian at the Phi Delta Theta (later Phi Delta Sigma) fraternity for many years. Professor Hart explained that, in 1984 Amherst abolished fraternities and named the old houses, now dormitories, in honor of people who had been associated with the college and with that fraternity. Newport House was given its name in honor of Dwight and Edward Newport. They were descendants of Amos Newport, who had been an enslaved man. Amos Newport's direct descendant, Alyssia Bailey, had attended the event at Newport House. Participating in this event

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, February 15, 2016

Amended February 23, 2016

had led Professor Hart to wonder about the process used to name campus buildings. He asked the president and dean if buildings are now named only after donors who give large gifts and/or if there is a process for making a proposal to name a building after an individual or group. President Martin said that she imagines that anyone could make a suggestion for a building name. Ultimately, these decisions are made by the Board of Trustees, she noted. Dean Epstein offered to ask Megan Morey, chief advancement officer, about the process that is used to name campus buildings. The members said that they would be interested in learning more about how individuals are honored in this way. Professor Katsaros next asked about the status of the performance evaluation process for staff. President Martin and Dean Epstein said that the new program, launched last year, has been evaluated by the senior staff. Some changes have been made in response to concerns that had been raised last year, they noted. Senior staff will be reviewing the program with direct reports, as will Human Resources, and supervisors and their staffs will receive training about the program.

The members next reviewed agenda items for a possible faculty meeting on March 1. The dean noted the importance of approving the academic calendar at the meeting, particularly since the faculty has not yet approved a calendar for fall 2016. She noted that the College Council would be sharing a calendar with the CEP on Friday, February, 19, and that the proposal would be shared with the Committee of Six at its next meeting. The members agreed that a meeting should be held, and that it would be informative to have Kevin Weinman, chief financial and administrative officer, give a presentation at the meeting about the college's finances. The committee decided to vote on an agenda at its next meeting. The members then briefly reviewed the draft statement on intellectual freedom. It was agreed that, with revisions suggested at the last meeting now incorporated, the document is ready to be shared with the CEP and the College Council. Dean Epstein and Professor Douglas will make presentations to the committees and answer questions.

The meeting concluded with a conversation about the possibility of changing the threshold for creating ad hoc committees at the time of reappointment and tenure (see relevant *Faculty Handbook* language regarding [reappointment](#) and [tenure](#)). The Committee of Six had discussed this issue last year (see the [minutes of February 23, 2015](#) and [March 2, 2015](#)), and the current members reviewed the minutes of those conversations prior to the meeting. During the discussion that ensued, many of the points raised last year surfaced again. Under the current procedures, an ad hoc committee is appointed "in cases where there are fewer than two tenured faculty in the department of a candidate." The ad hoc committee is described as being composed of "tenured faculty in related departments to supplement or serve in lieu of the departmental committee in making a recommendation to the Committee of Six." The dean said that she continues to have some concern that the current procedure allows for two tenured members in a department to make a tenure recommendation. Noting the importance of the recommendation and potential costs to a candidate if there is a split vote, she feels that it might be preferable to have the minimum number be at least three tenured colleagues. Some members agreed. Professor Douglas asked how many departments have only two tenured members, and he wondered whether it might be best to leave the minimum number at two. The members discussed the fact that, under such circumstances, the third member, who would likely be the least knowledgeable about the case and field, would be put in the awkward position of being the deciding vote. Ultimately, the Committee of Six would be called upon to make sense of the

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, February 15, 2016**Amended February 23, 2016**

situation, it was agreed, and should be capable of doing so. The committee discussed whether it would be most effective to establish the ad hoc committee at the time of hiring, a position favored by some members and tentatively by the president; during some other point before the reappointment review; immediately after reappointment; or at the time of the tenure review. Some members argued that, if an ad hoc committee is formed at the time of reappointment, it should continue as the ad hoc committee for the tenure review. Some members felt that an ad hoc committee formed at the time of reappointment should not necessarily become the tenure committee. The question was raised of what should happen if the number of tenured members in a department should increase during the time after reappointment and before the tenure review. Should the extra-departmental colleague(s) on the ad hoc committee continue to serve? Most members thought that the individual should continue to serve, along with any new tenured members. If the ad hoc committee were to be carried forward from the time of reappointment until the tenure review, some members wondered whether the outside member should take part in annual conversations, observe classes, etc.—basically functioning as a department member. The committee discussed the difference between having an outside colleague serve as a mentor for an untenured member of a department and being an evaluator at the time of reappointment and tenure. Noting the “in lieu of” language, Professor C. Dole said that he could not imagine a scenario in which the dean would want to constitute an ad hoc committee that excluded tenured members of a small department. The other members agreed. With the hour growing late, no conclusions were reached, and the members agreed to continue the discussion of this topic at the committee’s next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 5:20 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, February 22, 2016

Amended February 26, 2016

The seventeenth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2015-2016 was called to order by President Martin in the president's office at 3:00 P.M. on Monday, February 22, 2016. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Benedetto, C. Dole, Douglas, Hart, Katsaros, and Marshall; Dean Epstein; and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with President Martin recommending a *New York Times* article titled ["Who Gets to Graduate?"](#) The piece, written by Paul Tough and published on May 15, 2014, focuses on the challenges faced by college students from low-income, first generation, less well-prepared backgrounds and approaches that the University of Texas at Austin is taking to help ensure students' success. According to research cited in the article, students from these backgrounds are less likely to graduate than their peers, even when they have relatively strong academic records before entering college. President Martin noted the virtues of the strategies described in the piece, expressing support for approaches that make students feel that they belong, rather than stigmatized. She commented that chemistry professor David Laude notes in the article that the typical approach to addressing the needs of less well-prepared students is to place them in special "remedial programs." In his view, doing so often makes them feel like outsiders. He experimented with teaching fifty less well-prepared students in their own small section, but required them to master all of the challenging material covered in his larger section. He offered these students extra support—two hours each week of extra instruction; advisers who kept in close contact and intervened when students were struggling; and one-on-one peer tutoring. In addition, the professor made efforts during and outside of class to convey to the students that they were not "subpar," as they may have felt, but were part of a "community of high-achieving scholars." The students in the smaller section ended up getting the same grades as the students in the larger section and were more likely to graduate than other less well-prepared students.

Continuing with the discussion of the article, President Martin noted that Professor Laude is now the senior vice provost for enrollment and graduation management at the university, charged with helping to improve the school's four-year graduate rate by "scaling" up the ideas and practices that he had used fifteen years ago in his chemistry class—"small classes, peer mentoring, extra tutoring help, engaged faculty advisers, and community-building exercises." Paired with these practices is a program that helps less well-prepared students, the majority of whom come from families with lower incomes, to develop leadership skills. The students receive a \$5,000 annual scholarship for their participation. It is reinforced through all of these efforts that the university is confident that the students will succeed. President Martin commented that the Amherst faculty have the will and ability to motivate students to be successful by conveying high expectations and providing challenge, while also reinforcing the positive message that the students have the ability to be successful at Amherst and belong at the college. The college also has the responsibility to provide resources to support the students, for example through extra tutoring and other programs, she noted. President Martin suggested that the article be attached to the Committee of Six minutes.

Under "Questions from Committee Members," Professor Benedetto asked the dean about the status of the Committee on Education Policy (CEP)'s proposal that professors' access to the transcripts of students enrolled in their courses and to the transcripts of former advisees be restricted. The dean explained that the CEP is considering Professor Douglas's proposal that faculty be given access to students' record of courses, with grades suppressed, during the pre-

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, February 22, 2016

Amended February 26, 2016

registration period. Professor Benedetto noted that a colleague had expressed great concern to him about the CEP's proposal. The dean encouraged Professor Benedetto to ask the colleague to share her or his concerns with the Committee of Six via a letter. Continuing with questions, Professor C. Dole asked the dean about the status of the proposal to perform background checks on candidates for positions at the college. Dean Epstein said that she would check in with Lisa Rutherford, chief policy officer and general counsel, who is considering this matter.

Conversation turned to [a letter to the committee from Professor Reyes](#) in which she comments on an invitation from the dean to host a visitor who could offer diverse viewpoints to which students may have less access, in this case, conservative ones. Professor Reyes viewed the invitation as a violation of academic freedom. The committee did not see the dean's request as a breach of academic freedom. The members noted that, if the invitation had been coercive and/or had implied that there would be repercussions if the department did not accept, perhaps there could be cause for concern. This did not seem to be the case, in the committee's view, as the dean appeared to be offering a visitor as an additional resource as part of an effort to bring voices to Amherst that may not be present, an interest that presents complexities that Dean Epstein and President Martin discussed with the Committee of Six. Professor Marshall commented that, since requests for visitors do not come before the CEP, the dean had not circumvented any governance structures with this request. Dean Epstein noted that she often suggests possible visitors to departments when individuals come to her attention. Departments are free to pursue these appointments, or not, as they see fit. The members agreed that having diverse points of view represented within the curriculum is a worthy goal, particularly as higher education is under attack for a failure to present multiple viewpoints. Professor Katsaros said that the challenge is finding ways to balance departmental needs with the broader needs of the community, in regard to ensuring diverse viewpoints. Ideally, departmental needs and the college's interests would align, but this might not always be the case, the dean noted.

The committee turned to the revised end-of-semester course evaluation form, which had been shared with the committee prior to the meeting. The current version of the form, prepared by hari stephen kumar, the college's instructional designer/technologist, incorporates the members' feedback. The members made some additional suggestions and then discussed next steps. It was agreed that the form should be shared first with the CEP and with tenure-track colleagues. After the members discuss feedback that might emerge, the form should be piloted, the committee agreed. The members decided that asking visitors and tenured colleagues to use the form as an experiment would be ideal. Those who volunteer would be informed that their evaluations would be shared with those who would be evaluating the pilot. The members then turned briefly to personnel matters.

Dean Epstein next informed the members that, over the next two years, the college will be gathering materials in preparation for its decennial reaccreditation review by the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (CIHE) of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), the regional accreditation agency for colleges and universities in New England. She noted that the commission consists of faculty and administrators from affiliated institutions and public members. As part of the review, Amherst will submit a self-study in the fall of 2017, and an external team will visit the college in the spring of 2018, Dean Epstein explained. The dean shared her plans to discuss at an April meeting of department chairs the

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, February 22, 2016

Amended February 26, 2016

report that will be needed from each academic department this June. The reports, which should not be long or particularly onerous, will inform the NEASC self-study.

Discussion turned to the need to approve an academic calendar for fall 2016. The dean noted that, while the faculty had approved a seven-year cycle of spring-semester calendars on December 7, 2010, fall calendars have not been approved. Dean Epstein explained that the College Council had forwarded a calendar proposal (see [narrative](#) and [calendar](#)) to the CEP, which had not endorsed it. This proposal had also been shared with the Committee of Six. The CEP had raised concerns about the proposal to shorten formal instruction to thirteen weeks in the spring, with a three-week Interterm, with three days reserved after the end of classes for make-up classes and other purposes. Under the proposal, if the three-day “cushion period” before exams ended up not being used, the days could be added to the reading period, which could be as long as seven days. The proposal notes that the days could be used as “an extended period of learning outside of formal instruction in the classroom.” The Committee of Six, like the CEP, raised concern about this aspect of the proposal, expressing the view that it would be preferable to have the three days in question scheduled as regular class days and a four-day reading period in most years. In this way, individual professors could decide how they would use this time, including having classes. As noted in [a letter from Professor Hall](#), chair of the CEP, the CEP requested that the Committee of Six delay formal consideration of the College Council’s proposal for the spring semester of 2017 and forward to the faculty the proposed calendar for the fall semester of 2016 only. The CEP requested time to consider the calendar proposal before the Committee of Six does so and to work with the College Council on the development of a proposal for upcoming spring semesters.

Continuing the conversation, the dean noted that some concern has been raised that students might leave campus if it came to pass that there were seven days of unstructured time prior to exams. Colleagues in the Office of Student Affairs are also worried about how students would use this period if they remain on campus. Dean Epstein said that she has also heard concerns that, if the college moves to a thirteen-week semester, it will never be possible to return to a fourteen-week semester. Professor Marshall commented that, under the College Council’s proposal, there could be a very long period between the last lecture in a class and the exam, which could be problematic for some students. Some members agreed that a thirteen-and-a-half week semester would be preferable. Professor Benedetto noted that, rather than offering students unstructured time at the end of the semester before exams, it might be preferable to include one or two long weekends during the spring semester (perhaps one in February and one in April), giving students some relief from academic pressures when they most need it. The other members agreed that this proposal is worth considering. Professor Benedetto also suggested having commencement earlier and cutting back on the time allotted for Senior Week. Professor Douglas commented that having commencement occur in the middle of the week would be challenging for families. It was noted that merchants in town would likely be upset if Amherst’s graduation coincided with other Five-College commencements. Most members expressed support for having a thirteen-and-a-half week semester. Professor Hart commented that the Committee of Six should not rework the calendar proposal, but should ask the College Council and the CEP to work out the details of the calendar and to forward a revised proposal to the Committee of Six. The members agreed and asked Dean Epstein to convey the committee’s views to the CEP and the College Council and to request that the two committees continue to

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, February 22, 2016

Amended February 26, 2016

discuss the academic calendar for the 2017-2018 academic year and beyond. The members voted six in favor and zero opposed to approve the proposed fall calendar for 2016 and to retain the calendar that had been approved earlier for spring. The [resulting calendar for 2016-2017](#) is appended.

The members next reviewed a draft agenda for a faculty meeting on March 1, 2016, and voted six in favor and zero opposed to forward the agenda to the faculty.

Conversation returned to how best to respond to issues that had been raised at the committee's meetings (February 8 and February 12) with some tenure-track faculty members. All tenure-track faculty members had been invited to attend these gatherings. Following up on the members' discussion the previous week, the dean said that she has asked the registrar to develop a hard-copy list of important academic regulations. To respond to another request, the members agreed that the Committee of Six should review [the Faculty Handbook language about the criteria for tenure](#) to ensure that it reflects current practice in regard to the expected balance of excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service. The members also agreed that, going forward, the Committee of Six should have annual meetings with tenure-track faculty members. Untenured faculty members' request for the creation and implementation of a standard teaching evaluation form is already being addressed, it was noted. The committee also stated that some tenure-track faculty members had expressed a preference for having faculty meetings during the day, rather than in the evening. The members discussed the possibility of setting aside time for a community hour and using that time for faculty meetings and for other activities, when the slot would not be used for faculty meetings. Professor Katsaros expressed concern that adopting this solution would reduce the already limited number of timeslots available for scheduling classes. Professor Benedetto noted that there is room for a community hour in the schedule during slots that are not typically used for classes, for example, on Friday afternoons. In general, to reduce class bunching, making fuller use of the timeslots that are available for classes would be helpful, it was agreed. Professor Benedetto noted that Fridays, from 2 P.M. to 4 P.M., could become the slot for a community hour once a month. Dean Epstein commented that some other institutions have faculty meetings at 4 P.M. The committee recalled that the survey about faculty meeting times that had been completed in the fall had revealed that there was not a consensus about the best time for faculty meetings. The members agreed to take another look at the results at the committee's next meeting, in particular the views expressed by rank. The members noted that the discussions with tenure-track faculty members did not reveal a clear sense of whether they favor the creation of a standing committee (a body that would have formal stature and a charge voted by the faculty) or a more informal group of elected representatives to communicate specific issues to the administration. The members decided to survey tenure-track faculty on this question to inform a decision about how to move forward.

The members continued their conversation about the possibility of changing the threshold for creating ad hoc committees at the time of reappointment and tenure (see relevant *Faculty Handbook* language at the time of [reappointment](#) and [tenure](#).) The committee discussed again some of the issues that had been raised at the last meeting. After some reflection, the members agreed that there are so many complexities involved that it seems best to leave the process the way it is. Enhanced mentoring opportunities at the college, as well as the prospect of the new teaching and learning center, offer faculty in small departments more feedback about their teaching and scholarship than in the past, which should be helpful.

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, February 22, 2016**Amended February 26, 2016**

The meeting concluded with President Martin inviting the Committee of Six to meet with the external review panel that will advise, and ultimately review, Amherst on issues of diversity and inclusion. Danielle Allen, former Amherst trustee, director of Harvard's Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics, and a professor of government and American politics at Harvard, is chairing the group, which will be on campus for a preliminary visit on April 22. Plans call for the panel to return to Amherst in the fall or spring of next year. The members agreed to meet with the panel.

The meeting adjourned at 5:10 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, February 29, 2016

Amended March 25, 2016

The eighteenth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2015-2016 was called to order by President Martin in the president's office at 3:00 P.M. on Monday, February 29, 2016. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Benedetto, C. Dole, Douglas, Hart, Katsaros, and Marshall; Dean Epstein; and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with Dean Epstein informing the members that Lisa Rutherford, chief policy officer and general counsel, is developing a policy about background checks and will provide the committee with this information later this spring. Continuing with her remarks, the dean noted that, in response to the committee's inquiry about the college's procedure for naming buildings, Megan Morey, chief advancement officer, has now provided the members with Amherst's Gift Acceptance Policy. The policy states the following:

In recognition of generous support of or devoted service to the college, Amherst has named buildings and other spaces on the campus since its earliest days. The details of naming a building or other space on campus will be determined by the Toponymy Committee, which will consist of the chief advancement officer, the director of advancement operations, the director of facilities planning and management, and the director of leadership giving. The committee will consult with the trustees and president as appropriate. [Click here](#) to see the full policy.

Under "Questions from Committee Members," Professor Katsaros asked about the progress of the work of the Curriculum Committee and whether there are any plans for a meeting with the Committee of Six and/or other governance bodies this year. The dean responded that such meetings would be premature at this point, as the committee is currently at a stage of gathering information. The Curriculum Committee anticipates having meetings with faculty beginning at the end of March or early in April to start sharing ideas and to continue to solicit feedback. Over the summer, plans call for Geoff Sanborn, co-chair of the Curriculum Committee, to begin drafting the committee's recommendations, which will be brought to the faculty for consideration in the fall.

Continuing with questions, Professor Marshall thanked President Martin for sharing the 2014 *New York Times* article titled ["Who Gets to Graduate?"](#) He commented that, about ten years ago, Amherst had drawn on the ideas of Philip Uri Treisman, professor of mathematics and of public affairs at The University of Texas at Austin and founder and executive director of the university's Charles A. Dana Center, to develop the college's intensive sections in mathematics and chemistry. President Martin praised this work, while noting that some Amherst students have reported that tutors are often not provided until there is a danger of imminent failure. Providing these resources earlier should be the goal. Professor Benedetto pointed out that, earlier in the year, he had informed the president and dean that more funding is needed to meet the demand for tutoring.

Professor Douglas next asked about whether it would be helpful to have the Presidential Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion review the Committee of Six's draft statement on intellectual freedom. The members agreed that the task force should take a look at the document.

Turning to the faculty meeting to be held the next day, the dean shared her plans to discuss the \$1.5 million grant that the Mellon Foundation had awarded to Amherst in December

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, February 29, 2016

Amended March 25, 2016

to “reimagine residential liberal arts education for a new population of students.” She noted that Mellon has challenged the college to think about how to incorporate inclusive and high-impact practices across courses within a department or major, and then across the curriculum. At the meeting, she said that she would announce a call for proposals for Amherst academic departments and programs for funding to review and revise courses that they offer to majors, with these goals in mind. The dean asked the members if Lisa Stoffer, director of the grants office and primary author of the grant, could be invited to the faculty meeting as a guest to be available to answer questions. The members agreed that the invitation should be extended to Ms. Stoffer. The committee turned to personnel matters.

The committee began its annual review of senior sabbatical fellowship proposals. The members then turned to a continuation of their consideration of possibilities for an alternative meeting time for faculty meetings. Prior to its meeting, the committee had reviewed once again the results of the survey that had been done in the fall about faculty meeting times. Responses had not revealed a clear consensus to change the time of faculty meetings.

Dean Epstein said that she would like to explore fully the idea of having faculty meetings during the day and setting aside a timeslot for a community hour to do so. While a culture change would be required to make this shift, it is a desirable goal, in her view. In having faculty meetings in the evening, Amherst is an outlier among peer schools, she noted, and some faculty clearly find the time to be problematic. A community hour could be used for faculty meetings and for other activities, the dean noted. Professor Benedetto noted that a slot on Friday between 2:30 P.M. and 4:30 P.M. would be one option. Professor Marshall expressed some concern about the effect of losing time slots that are used for labs, because some courses are currently utilizing all possible meeting times. As the committee had discussed previously, in order to make time in the schedule for faculty meetings during the day, it may be necessary to make changes to the current timeslots that are available for classes and/or to develop new slots. At the members’ request, the dean agreed to ask the registrar, the chief information officer, and the acting director of institutional research to undertake a study of the weekly class schedule. Their task will be to bring forward a proposal for a two-hour block during the day that could be set aside for community scheduling—that is, for faculty meetings, campus-wide meetings, speakers of interest to the entire community, etc.—taking into account constraints (accommodating athletics, the arts, issues around classroom space, and so on). The committee agreed that it would be helpful to learn more about community scheduling at peer institutions, and the dean said she will ask that this research be done as well.

The members returned to their review of the standardized teaching evaluation form developed by hari kumar, instructional designer/technologist. It was agreed that more revisions should be made. Once the committee approves the form, the members agreed that it should be shared with tenure-track faculty members, who should be asked for feedback. The members decided that it would be beneficial to pilot the form and to evaluate it. The committee discussed options for doing so, including having all tenured faculty members use the form, asking some departments to volunteer to use it, and/or offering the form as an option to any faculty member who wishes to use it.

The committee briefly discussed the process for implementing the new system of online course evaluations for tenured faculty, which had unfolded in the fall semester. It was agreed that the launch of this effort had not gone well. Response rates were quite low, and it appears

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, February 29, 2016**Amended March 25, 2016**

that soliciting student feedback via an automated email, rather than through a personal request from the faculty member, might be one cause of the problematic results. The committee asked the dean to check in with David Hamilton, chief information officer, about details such as who appeared as the sender of the email. The members agreed that having students complete evaluations during the final class of the term would yield the best response. The dean noted that the CEP, which had overseen this effort, is in the process of evaluating and revising the process.

The meeting concluded with a discussion of the possibility of encouraging candidates for faculty positions to submit optional statements about their contributions and goals in regard to promoting equity, inclusion, and diversity. In advance of the meeting, the dean had provided the members with information from the University of California, Davis (see http://academicaffairs.ucdavis.edu/diversity/equity_inclusion/), which has adopted this practice, to inform the discussion. Professor Benedetto expressed concern that this procedure could send a message that individuals with conservative viewpoints need not apply. Professor Katsaros commented that, as part of their letters of application, many candidates address their contributions to diversity efforts because of the emphasis placed on the college's commitment to diversity in ads for positions. She wondered whether a separate diversity statement is needed. President Martin commented that adopting the practice of encouraging such statements could be problematic. Professor Douglas agreed, noting that such a practice could be seen as selecting candidates based on a particular viewpoint. The dean thanked the members for their feedback and agreed that asking candidates about optional diversity statements would not become part of the process for recruiting and hiring faculty at this time.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, March 21, 2016

Amended March 30, 2016

The nineteenth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2015-2016 was called to order by President Martin in the president's office at 3:00 P.M. on Monday, March 21, 2016. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Benedetto, C. Dole, Douglas, Hart, Katsaros, and Marshall; Dean Epstein; and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with Dean Epstein asking the members for their thoughts about whether members of the Curriculum Committee should be offered the option of being omitted from the Committee of Six ballot this spring. The dean informed the members of the following precedents for offering such immunity. In 2005, the Committee of Six agreed that the members of the Committee on Academic Priorities (CAP) should be given this option in the spring of 2005 and 2006, in recognition of their service. In addition, the dean commented, the members of the Priorities Planning Committee (PPC), which was active from February 1992 to February 1993, were offered immunity from the Committee of Six ballots of spring 1992 and 1993. The committee agreed that faculty members currently serving on the Curriculum Committee should be given the option of having their names omitted from the Committee of Six ballot this spring.

Continuing her remarks, Dean Epstein informed the members of the College Council's intention to bring forward a calendar proposal for spring 2017 (revised) through spring 2019. It is the Council's hope that the proposal will be discussed at a faculty meeting on April 19.

On behalf of a colleague who preferred not to write a formal letter to the Committee of Six to pose his/her questions, Professor Benedetto inquired about the rationale for using different search models when seeking to fill senior administrative positions at the college. He asked President Martin why national searches are conducted for some positions and not for others. President Martin responded that it depends on context and circumstances. She said that, under her administration, there has been a healthy mix of external and internal searches and the promotion of internal candidates. It is important to have open searches and also to consider the needs of the college at any given time, President Martin commented, and it is the responsibility of the president to hire her or his direct reports. Though not required, she has made it a practice to consult with members of the senior staff, the Committee of Six, faculty members serving on relevant committees, and often other constituencies about hiring for senior positions. President Martin noted that decisions about the dean of the faculty, in her view, require in-depth consultation with the Committee of Six and the faculty as a whole. Her decision to search internally for a new dean of the faculty was made on the basis of faculty sentiment. If there is someone who is doing an excellent job at the college and is ready to be promoted, there may be good reason to forego a national search, in some cases, President Martin commented. Professor Marshall noted that there have been instances when there has been a national search when there is an internal candidate, including when that individual is ultimately hired for the job. President Martin reiterated that she uses the discretion accorded to her to consider each case on its own merits. She noted that she has used internal vetting processes for internal candidates when a national search process is not used.

Professor C. Dole, noting that he had seen a recent job posting for a new curricular designer and assessment specialist at Amherst, asked about the progress of planning for a teaching and learning center at the college. Dean Epstein responded that she expects that the Teaching and Learning Working Group will bring recommendations to her this spring about the center. In conversations that she has already had with the group, it has been agreed that the

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, March 21, 2016

Amended March 30, 2016

approach will be to bring existing resources, including staff members, together, with the goal of achieving better coordination of ideas and services. Creating a physical space for the center is not on the horizon. Dean Epstein explained that the Mellon Foundation's \$1.5 million grant to Amherst will help jump-start the center, including providing the support to hire an additional instructional designer, the position to which Professor Dole had referred. One of the center's central goals will be to build capacities for Amherst faculty to engage in more inclusive pedagogies—teaching practices that have been shown to help all students. The dean noted that Mellon funding will allow the college to offer incentives to faculty to launch some of these pedagogical innovations. She informed the members that hari kumar, instructional designer/technologist, who has been in a grant-funded position for the past year, will become the college's first director of instructional and curricular services on July 1. Mr. kumar and the new instructional designer will play a central role within the teaching and learning center. While Mr. kumar's office, and that of the new designer, will be located in the Center for Humanistic Inquiry (CHI) for the teaching and center's first (pilot) year, it is not expected that the center will be housed in the CHI permanently. Some members expressed worry that housing the teaching and learning center in the CHI could dilute the mission and work of the CHI, including shifting the focus from faculty to students. The dean agreed and noted that, even during the next year when Mr. kumar's team has its offices there, the CHI will continue to be centered on faculty, as will the teaching and learning center.

Continuing with "Questions from Committee Members," Professor Douglas, referencing a March 1 *New York Times* article (["Ivy League Moves to Eliminate Tackling at Football Practices,"](#) by Ken Belson), asked if Amherst and the other New England Small Conference Athletic Conference (NESCAC) schools are considering eliminating tackling during football practices. Dean Epstein said that she would forward the article to Mr. Faulstick, director of athletics, and would report back after discussing the issue with him.

Turning to another matter, Professor Douglas reported that he had met with the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) to answer questions about the statement on intellectual freedom, and that the CEP had embraced the document and had suggested small revisions. He asked the dean about scheduling meetings with the College Council and the President's Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion (of which he is a member) to discuss the draft statement. The dean noted plans for the task force to discuss the statement on Friday. It was agreed that the dean should schedule a meeting with the College Council soon.

Professor Douglas next asked whether the Curriculum Committee is discussing ways to create more common intellectual experiences for students. Dean Epstein responded that the committee is having conversations about this topic, but has not yet formulated recommendations. The Foundational Capacities Working Group, a subgroup of the Curriculum Committee, began a conversation about this issue, she said. Now, the entire Curriculum Committee plans to discuss the topic. Professor Douglas expressed the view that this is an important issue and said that he had worried that it might fall between the cracks of the subgroups. He is pleased to hear, he said, that the creation of more shared intellectual experience has some momentum. Professor Douglas suggested that building more common intellectual experiences should be part of Amherst's rethinking of the curriculum in light of the college's commitment to diversity, among other reasons. Common intellectual experiences, in his view, could be an important means of achieving robust discourse among different communities at the college. President Martin agreed,

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, March 21, 2016

Amended March 30, 2016

commenting that she remains concerned about how to build and enhance community on campus without providing shared intellectual experiences. While residential life is important and will have an increasingly positive effect on bringing students together, having students experience the world of ideas together will always be a more significant means of building community at Amherst. In her view, there is much to be said for students going through a rigorous academic experience together, overcoming challenges and sharing in success. She mentioned that initiatives as small as book projects or shared readings can have an effect. The president emphasized again her concern about a future at Amherst in which a strong sense of community among students is not a part. She sees the stakes as very high in this regard.

Professor Benedetto said that he expects that the faculty who would teach courses that offer the proposed shared intellectual experiences would be drawn from disciplines other than mathematics, sciences, and the arts. President Martin said that she can imagine common intellectual experiences outside the humanities and social sciences, for example those that are designed to build scientific literacy. Professor Douglas asked what the concern would be if the shared experiences were limited to the humanities, for example. Wouldn't that scenario be better than not offering shared experiences at all? Professor Benedetto responded that he worries that fewer FTEs would be available to math and STEM departments, which face increasing enrollments and an insufficient number of faculty, as more faculty would be needed to teach courses designed to foster common experiences. Professor Hart noted that Wesleyan has created common intellectual experiences in the arts as well as the sciences. He is supportive of placing emphasis on such experiences. For years, many students found a sense of community within fraternities, Professor Hart commented. Alternatives need to be offered now that fraternities are not an option, and common intellectual experiences could fill the void, in his view. Professor Katsaros asked if the Curriculum Committee is considering moving away from the open curriculum to create shared intellectual experiences. In her view, the need to create shared intellectual experiences on campus should be balanced by Amherst's longstanding commitment to an open curriculum as a way of fostering broad-ranging intellectual curiosity. Dean Epstein said that the Curriculum Committee has discussed making use of the first-year seminar to create a shared intellectual experience for all students, but that it is hard to imagine that there is content that bridges all of the seminars. The feeling, so far, is that other approaches should be taken. No recommendations in this realm have been developed yet, the dean said.

Conversation returned to the topic of whether to create a representative body for tenure-track faculty that could serve as a conduit for communication with the administration. The committee discussed the results of a survey that had been sent to all tenure-track faculty to solicit their views on the question. The survey, which had a response rate of 90 percent, generated somewhat mixed results, but revealed that 60 percent of tenure-track faculty are in favor of the creation of a representative body (31 percent are neutral, and roughly 9 percent are opposed). The survey revealed that opinion is split about whether this body should be a standing committee or an informal group (51 percent supported a standing committee, while 49 percent favored an informal group or "other"). Professor Benedetto expressed skepticism about forming a body to represent tenure-track faculty, wondering about its efficacy and the time it would take away from other work. Most members, the president, and the dean agreed that, based on the survey results and on feedback that the members had learned in meetings with tenure-track faculty, a group should be formed. Most members agreed that the informality and flexibility of a consultative

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, March 21, 2016

Amended March 30, 2016

group would offer many advantages. Professor Douglas pointed out that, among the comments conveyed through the survey, there were strong arguments against a standing committee. It was noted that the concerns of the tenure-track faculty seem to focus on communication rather than governance, and that any standing committee would not have the authority to act, in any case. If, in the future, tenure-track faculty decide that they would prefer a formal standing committee to a consultative body, an idea supported by a number of tenure-track colleagues, a proposal could be brought forward to the Committee of Six for review and then brought to the full faculty for a vote. The members agreed that it would be best, though, that the consultative body be in place for at least a year before any such proposal is brought forward, assuming, that is, that tenure-track faculty decide that they would prefer a standing committee. Most members of the committee did not think it would be beneficial to excuse those who would serve on such a body from other committee service, as some tenure-track faculty had suggested, while noting that participation in the body could certainly be acknowledged as part of a tenure-track faculty member's record of service.

Concluding the conversation, the committee agreed to ask tenure-track colleagues to consider when they want to form the group, what its charge will be, how it will be constituted, and how it will function. The members expressed support for tenure-track colleagues' desire for communication and the exchange of ideas and decided to propose that the Committee of Six meet with the consultative group once a semester, and that the committee host an open meeting for all tenure-track faculty on the same schedule. The committee also proposed that the president and the dean meet with the consultative group once a year and also host an open meeting with all tenure-track faculty on the same schedule. The president and dean agreed to do so. The members applauded the tenure-track faculty's initiative in bringing this matter forward and decided to communicate their recommendations to all tenure-track faculty via a letter, as well as to the full faculty, through these minutes.

Prompted by a [proposal](#) that the members had received to charge a faculty committee with exploring the feasibility of creating a weekly two-hour block during the day that would be set aside for faculty meetings and community scheduling, the members returned to the issue. Professor Benedetto, who noted that he has spent a good deal of time examining the class schedule with this goal in mind, said that he cannot imagine how a two-hour weekly block could be set aside and feels that any effort to create such a block would be futile, unless Friday afternoons are heavily used. Other members expressed the view that an ad hoc committee should be charged, as requested. The committee then agreed that two full professors and two assistant professors, the registrar, and the director of institutional research should be asked to serve on the Ad Hoc Committee on Alternative Faculty Meeting Hours.

Continuing the conversation, the committee decided to charge 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 community scheduling—for example, campus-wide meetings and talks by speakers of interest. The members agreed that, in developing its recommendations, the ad hoc committee would be asked to consult broadly with those who have the right and responsibility to attend faculty meetings; to gather information about community scheduling (aka “community hours”) at peer institutions; to study Amherst's weekly class schedule and to propose changes, if needed; and to consider the implications for athletics, the arts, and classroom availability of all proposed timeslots. Professor Katsaros suggested that the impact of a daytime

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, March 21, 2016**Amended March 30, 2016**

block on invited lectures should be considered. The members agreed that the ad hoc committee should be asked to submit its findings and recommendations in a report to the Committee of Six in the fall of 2016.

The members turned to personnel matters, including two departments' nominations for the McCloy Professorship. The committee next considered a request from the registrar. Ms. Kilventon noted that, several years ago, she had requested that the faculty have a special vote on the degree of an E-graduate because of an impending deadline that the student faced. At that time, she had also raised concerns about the fact that the faculty often does not vote on the degrees of E-graduates, who complete their coursework in December, until March. Ms. Kilventon informed the committee that a member of the faculty and a former member of the Committee of Six asked her to bring this issue back to the Committee of Six. The registrar wondered whether a regular meeting of the faculty could be held early in February each year for the purpose of voting on candidates for degrees, even if there were no other agenda items. The committee agreed that a faculty meeting should not be held for the sole purpose of voting on E degrees. The members suggested that, in the event that a faculty meeting is not held by February 15 each spring, the faculty be asked to vote on E-degree cases electronically. The remainder of the meeting was devoted to personnel matters.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, March 28, 2016

Amended April 13, 2016

The twentieth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2015-2016 was called to order by President Martin in the president's office at 3:00 P.M. on Monday, March 28, 2016. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Benedetto, C. Dole, Douglas, Hart, Katsaros, and Marshall; Dean Epstein; and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with the dean raising a personnel matter. Dean Epstein next informed the members that the Ad Hoc Committee on Alternative Faculty Meeting Hours is now fully staffed. The members are, Professor George, who has agreed to serve as chair; Professors Móricz, Trapani, and Young; Jesse Barba, director of institutional research; and Kathleen Kilventon, registrar.

Continuing with her remarks, Dean Epstein reported that Director of Athletics Don Faulstick had responded to Professor Douglas's inquiry about whether Amherst and other New England Small Conference Athletic Conference (NESCAC) schools are considering eliminating tackling during football practices, a newly instituted approach of the Ivy League. Mr. Faulstick responded that the NESCAC athletic directors are currently considering this issue. He explained that Amherst has practices with live tackling for only six plays a week during the season. Offenses run about two hundred plays a week in practice, so it is not a stretch to eliminate live tackling during the regular season in NESCAC, he noted. Mr. Faulstick commented that he can comfortably say that Amherst has been a leader in this area for many years. NESCAC has started to talk to with athletic directors and coaches to get their input about creating a policy about tackling. His intuition is that NESCAC will follow the Ivy League.

Discussion turned to Professor Douglas's conversations with the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP), the College Council, and the President's Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion about the draft statement on intellectual freedom. Professor Douglas reported that, after his meeting with the CEP, some members of the CEP had raised concerns unvoiced at that meeting—namely, that, by addressing the protection of both professors and students, the Committee of Six might be trying to do too much. Professor Douglas commented that the other statements that the committee had examined, for example [The Report of the Committee on Freedom of Expression at the University of Chicago](#), were similar in their approach and content. These statements address more than simply the academic freedom of professors.

Continuing with his summary of his meetings with other committees, Professor Douglas said that the CEP had also asked why the draft statement did not address the protection of staff. Professor Douglas noted that staff do not have the same expressive freedoms as faculty, with the exception of staff who serve in an instructional or research role. Curators, for example, at the Mead, and librarians should be covered under the statement, he agreed. The committee decided that the statement should be revised to reflect this view. The CEP had also discussed the draft statement's reference to a restriction on "speech that directly interferes with a core function of the college," with some members of the CEP arguing that the language in the draft should be clearer that this part of the statement would, as Professor Douglas explained, for example, prevent students from organizing a boycott of a professor's class in a way that would disrupt the regular business of the college. Professor Katsaros commented that issues surrounding freedom of speech arose during the student protests earlier in the year. Professor Douglas and Dean Epstein explained that this point had been raised during the conversation with the CEP, and that students on the CEP had seemed satisfied with Professor Douglas's explanation that the

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, March 28, 2016

Amended April 13, 2016

statement supports an overriding commitment to open, robust inquiry as a foundational principle. The dean noted that the CEP plans to send a letter to the Committee of Six outlining the issues that concern the CEP.

Turning to the conversation with the College Council about the statement, Professor Douglas noted that the discussion had gone well, and that students in this venue had also asked good questions. Some members of the President's Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion had raised significant concerns about the draft statement, expressing the view that the statement could have the effect of silencing the most vulnerable groups on campus and exposing students to uncomfortable comments, while leaving them no room for redress. For example, those who seek to resist the speech acts of racists and misogynists, which may be protected as free speech, may be the ones who will be censured under the statement, some feared. Professor Douglas commented that he appreciates the issues raised, but was surprised that language drafted to strongly protect the rights of speakers would be interpreted as a tool of silencing the most vulnerable. Professor C. Dole, as he had done on a previous occasion, expressed concern about the timing of the draft statement. Although he supported the draft statement, he noted that circumstances had nonetheless changed on campus since the committee began discussing intellectual freedom last year. Especially in light of the *Amherst Uprising*, he worried that the statement could be interpreted as working in opposition to demands made by students for some sort of system of accountability on campus with regard to racist speech. Professor C. Dole wondered if it might be useful to consider the draft statement in conjunction with this question of accountability on campus.

The dean, who had been present at the conversations with the CEP and the task force, commented that there is clearly a need to provide the Amherst community with opportunities to discuss the protections that academic freedom provides with students, faculty, and staff. The members discussed the possibility of holding meetings with the Association of Amherst Students (AAS). President Martin suggested an approach that includes sharing the history of academic freedom—including cases, some of them recent—that have cemented the concept and illustrate the importance of academic freedom and of not placing limits on it. Professor Katsaros expressed the view that the topic of academic freedom should become a prominent part of the orientation program for new students. At the conclusion of the conversation, Professor Douglas said that he plans to make some revisions to the draft statement for discussion at the committee's next meeting.

President Martin noted that Suzanne Coffey, chief student affairs officer, and the College Council have begun to develop a system for reporting incidents of bias, which could help provide support to those who feel they have experienced an incidence on campus. It is her understanding that the system will not be a mechanism for adjudication and will not constrain freedom of expression and inquiry. The committee asked Dean Epstein to learn more about the progress of plans for the system. She agreed to write to Ms. Coffey to inquire.

Professor Douglas next raised the topic once again of the process for identifying, making recommendations for, and tracking students who would benefit from intensive writing courses. He believes that, because there are no clear protocols in place at present, students may be falling through the cracks. He described the situation as distressingly informal. The members noted that, under the current procedure, Mr. Lieber asks first-year seminar instructors to recommend students for these courses. The committee advised that Mr. Lieber inform both the advisor and

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, March 28, 2016**Amended April 13, 2016**

the class dean (the dean of new students, in the case of first-year seminar students) when recommendations are made. The committee wondered whether a mechanism for keeping records of the recommendations and of which students ultimately take the courses could be developed, with sensitivity that the student is not stigmatized in any way. Some members felt strongly that any system would need to be discreet and should avoid language that would describe the student as being deficient, for example. Professor Katsaros recommended that the request to identify students who might benefit from intensive writing courses not be limited to first-year seminar instructors. She feels that it would also be useful to identify such students later in their careers, if need be, and stressed the importance of sharing with a new advisor the information that a student either has been recommended for, or has taken, an intensive writing course.

Discussion returned to several nominees for McCloy Professorships. The members next approved a final draft of a teaching evaluation form and agreed that could potentially be used by all Amherst departments in the future. It was decided that hari kumar, instructional designer/technologist, should share the form with tenure-track faculty at a meeting this semester and solicit feedback. The members decided that the form could be piloted as early as this spring by interested departments and/or individuals. The remainder of the meeting was devoted to personnel matters.

The meeting adjourned at 5:20 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, April 11, 2016

Amended April 15, 2016

The twenty-first meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2015-2016 was called to order by President Martin in the president's office at 3:00 P.M. on Monday, April 11, 2016. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Benedetto, C. Dole, Douglas, Hart, Katsaros, and Marshall; Dean Epstein; and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

President Martin informed the members that the spring (April 1-2) meetings of the Board of Trustees had gone very well, commenting that the trustees enjoyed meeting with the members of faculty committees and dining with individual faculty as part of the annual "Instruction Weekend." In addition, four students had presented their work to the board. Continuing, the president reported that board discussions had also focused on communication strategies and publications to support the comprehensive campaign. The goal is to move forward with this work with dispatch. Discussion then turned briefly to a personnel matter.

Dean Epstein informed the members that the college had received the sad news that Corey Manack, who was a visiting faculty member in the Department of Mathematics between 2011 and 2014, has died. The committee expressed its condolences.

Following up on some previous questions that the committee had raised, the dean reported that Suzanne Coffey, chief student affairs officer, has informed her that "the bias reporting system tool" has been developed. Plans call for discussion and approval of this tool at several levels, including by the senior staff and College Council. Ms. Coffey noted that the issue had first arisen last fall when the *Student Handbook* was being examined for inconsistencies and solutions were being imagined. The College Council has not returned to this topic since initial conversations took place, Ms. Coffey said. The dean said that Professor Courtright, chair of the College Council, has informed her that students from the council are creating a draft about the bias reporting system that the College Council might approve, after which it may be brought forward to the President's Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion. Professor Courtright believes that the Association of Amherst Students (AAS) has also been discussing this topic.

Conversation turned to Professor Douglas's request that tracking of students who are identified as benefiting from intensive writing classes become better coordinated and consistent. The dean reported that Mr. Lieber, who already informs students' first-year advisor via email about recommendations that students take intensive writing courses, has agreed to copy Rick Lopez, dean of new students, in the future. In addition, the registrar and staff in IT plan to discuss the development of a system that will help the college track which students are recommended for intensive writing courses and which students take these courses. Mr. Lieber will "own" the list.

Continuing, Dean Epstein shared further information from Mr. Faulstick, director of athletics, about the possibility of Amherst and other New England Small College Athletic Conference (NESCAC) schools eliminating tackling during football practices, a newly instituted approach of the Ivy League. Mr. Faulstick has informed the dean that Amherst's football team has not had "live tackling" during the season for the past two years. He noted that, during a conversation with the other NESCAC athletic directors at the beginning of April, he had made it clear that Amherst will "support and lead the charge" if the presidents wish to eliminate live tackling. Most of the athletic directors mentioned that their football teams have been "tackle free" during the season for the past few years as well. Mr. Faulstick reported that, since most teams no longer have live tackling, some of the athletic directors had questioned whether there is

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, April 11, 2016

Amended April 15, 2016

a need for a policy. Professor Douglas asked President Martin if she would be willing to raise with the other NESAC presidents the issue of establishing a policy banning live-tackling at all of the NESAC schools. The president said that she would raise the issue with the other presidents when next they meet and would recommend that the policy be adopted.

Under “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor C. Dole noted that, based on the election results for the Committee of Six, it is clear that, for the third year in a row, there will be five men and one woman on the committee. The members found this to be a troubling result. Professor Benedetto theorized that random variation may have been a factor in the result, and he asked the dean to check the gender breakdown of the colleagues eligible in the election. Other members argued that other forces are potentially at play. Some members felt that it would be interesting to examine demographic information—for example, the make-up of the faculty by rank and gender—as well as regulations that affect eligibility for the ballot, to determine if there are factors that might be contributing to this phenomenon. Professor Hart commented that the new layout of the ballot makes it more difficult to track the names when voting. The dean noted that the change of format is a result of adding rank and department next to each name, which was a request made by the committee. She imagines that changing the space between the lines of names (the leading) would help, however, and said that she would inquire about making this change.

Continuing with questions, Professor Katsaros asked about plans to gather feedback about the new pre-registration process, which is currently in its first iteration. The dean responded that, since the process is being piloted for three years, it seems prudent to implement the new rules for a semester or two to see if there is a need for adjustments. After the second year of testing the process, an ad hoc committee will be formed to evaluate it.

Professor Hart next asked if data could be provided to the committee about the breakdown of African Caribbean and other groups among those that the college categorizes as African American students within the student body. He noted that he has received questions about this topic and doesn’t have information to inform his answers. Further, it might be interesting to know, the members agreed, what percentage of Latino students have parents from Mexico, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, etc., and the same information for Korean-American vs. Chinese-American, and so on. Professor Douglas said that it would also be interesting to learn more about the breakdown of the student body by religion. Dean Epstein said that she would request that these data be provided.

Professor Douglas, noting that he had provided the members with a draft report from the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) titled [“The History, Uses, and Abuses of Title IX”](#), asked if a discussion of the report could be put on the committee’s agenda. The dean agreed to include this item on an upcoming agenda. Professor Douglas then raised the subject of the open meetings that the Curriculum Committee had just held for faculty and students. He said that he had heard that the meetings had raised concerns about the progress of the Curriculum Committee’s work to date and the type of proposals that the committee is developing. The dean said that one of the meetings with faculty seemed to go better than the other, with the same pattern being true for the meeting with students. She noted that, at the Curriculum Committee’s most recent meeting with students, some students offered strong arguments for more structure within the curriculum.

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, April 11, 2016

Amended April 15, 2016

Continuing, Professor Douglas commented that some faculty reported that the Curriculum Committee appears to be “nibbling at the edges,” and is perhaps not being sufficiently ambitious in reexamining Amherst’s curriculum in light of the college’s commitment to diversity. Dean Epstein said that the Curriculum Committee is still formulating its recommendations. She explained that the committee is likely to recommend that the “bones” of the open curriculum be maintained and, it appears, is not in favor of the adoption of distribution requirements or a core curriculum. Instead, the Curriculum Committee is considering ways in which students may be encouraged and supported to navigate the open curriculum—with the goal of taking full advantage of the liberal arts, including moving outside their academic comfort zones and taking educational risks. The committee is focusing on advising as a key to success in this effort. Another approach being taken is identifying “transferable skills” or “fundamental capabilities” across the curriculum and across departments. The goal is to pinpoint skills that Amherst wants all students to acquire by the time they graduate.

Professor Douglas suggested that the Committee of Six meet with the Curriculum Committee this spring. Professor Benedetto asked what the purpose of such a meeting would be. Professor Douglas said that he would like to hear from the Curriculum Committee about what the committee has been doing so far. He wonders, for example, how the committee has been making use of institutional research. The dean responded that the committee has been reviewing a great deal of data that have been provided by the Office of Institutional Research. Professor Douglas asked whether data have been requested about the views of alumni about the open curriculum five and ten years after they graduate. He wondered whether their views change over time. The dean said that she would see if there might be survey information about this point.

President Martin said the alumni with whom she has spoken about the work of the Curriculum Committee believe that a bold approach will be taken because the creation of the committee was a recommendation of the strategic plan. If the approach that is being taken is less assertive, it would be helpful for her to know. Dean Epstein said that the committee is thinking in innovative ways about ways in which Amherst can ensure that students have common experiences that define their first year, sophomore year, junior year, and senior year. The committee is also thinking creatively about advising. For example, the committee has heard that less well-prepared students often do not feel equipped to put together a curriculum. One proposal is to create templates for navigating the curriculum to ensure breadth and depth and to offer a number of different models for achieving this goal. The templates would be used to aid advising. Professor Marshall commented that the Health Professions Committee has created such templates. They are intended for use by students and by advisors in advising students about paths to completing pre-medical requirements. Professor Benedetto commented that his department makes use of templates as well.

Professor Dole asked about the envisioned timeline for the Curriculum Committee’s work. The dean responded that, after “seeding” its ideas through open meetings with faculty and students this spring, the hope is that the Curriculum Committee will consider the concepts over the summer and develop a comfort level with them by fall. It is her hope that a subgroup of the Curriculum Committee will firm up the recommendations by the end of August and that the faculty will engage in conversation about those recommendations in fall 2016. If all goes well, the faculty would be asked to vote on the recommendations by the conclusion of the fall 2016

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, April 11, 2016

Amended April 15, 2016

semester. Professor Benedetto suggested that the Curriculum Committee should be allowed to do its work and that it would be preferable for the Committee of Six to meet with the committee in the fall. Professor Katsaros agreed, noting that the work of the committee is complex and that its members need time to gather data and formulate their recommendations. Professor Douglas noted that the Curriculum Committee is seeking feedback this spring and that it makes sense for the committee to touch base with the Committee of Six this spring. After further conversation, the Committee of Six asked the dean to schedule a meeting with the Curriculum Committee, and she agreed to do so.

Turning briefly to a new topic, Dean Epstein noted plans for two upcoming meetings with tenure-track faculty. Instructional Designer hari kumar and Associate Dean Cheney will lead a conversation about the course evaluation process, including a review of the newly designed form. At the request of some tenure-track faculty, the dean said that she would meet with them to offer advice about the creation of a consultative body.

The Committee next discussed revisions that Professor Douglas has made to the draft of the Statement on Intellectual Freedom, which now has the new title of “The Amherst College Statement of Academic and Expressive Freedom.” On behalf of the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP), Professor Hall, chair of the committee, had sent [a letter to the Committee of Six](#) (March 31, 2016) outlining some concerns about the earlier draft of the document, and providing [some suggested edits](#). Some members of the President’s Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion had also offered feedback, as had members of the College Council. Professor Douglas noted that he had made a number of revisions to the statement in response to points and concerns raised. He explained that making use of the term *expressive freedom* should mitigate concerns raised about the limitations of protections offered by academic freedom. *Academic freedom*, he noted, technically extends only to faculty. *Expressive freedom* is meant to cover students, too. Academic freedom, he noted, protects staff who are in instructional roles, as well as librarians and curators. In addition, he tried to address feedback that suggested that there should be greater clarity about the circumstances under which the college would restrict free speech, for example when there is threat of violence. After making revisions, Professor Douglas had vetted the current version of the statement with colleagues at the University of Chicago and Princeton, who found no problems with the document. Professor Douglas said that neither the Princeton nor Chicago statement focuses only on academic freedom. By incorporating *expressive freedom*, he hoped also to address the concerns of the CEP and the task force about guaranteeing the same freedoms to those within the broader academic community. The committee suggested some small revisions and then discussed the process for considering the statement. It was agreed that there should be a committee-of-the-whole discussion at the faculty meeting on April 19 to get a sense of the faculty’s views about the statement, with a possible vote on the statement at a May meeting.

At 4:00 P.M., the committee was joined by members of the College Council (Professor Courtright, chair; Professors Polk and Singh; Chief Student Affairs Officer Suzanne Coffey; Dean of Students Alex Vasquez; Associate Dean of Students/Director of Student Life Demetrius Brown; Natasha Kim ’18; Samuel Rosenblum ’16; and Silvia Sotolongo ’19); and Kathleen Kilventon, registrar, to discuss proposals for the academic calendar for the spring of 2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019. In advance of the meeting, the Committee of Six had received from the College Council [a document, dated April 9, 2016, that offered a discussion of the options for](#)

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, April 11, 2016

Amended April 15, 2016

[the spring academic calendar and vote on a proposal for a thirteen-week calendar \(A\)](#). In addition, the committee had received [a letter, dated April 9, 2016, from Professor Hall, chair of the Committee on Educational Policy \(CEP\)](#), and [an excerpt from the CEP Minutes of April 8, 2016, a letter from Professor Móricz, and a letter from Professor Sanderson](#). The committee was later provided with [a proposed calendar for 2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019](#), which had been prepared by the registrar. Professor Hall noted in his letter that the CEP is “sharply divided on the question of the spring calendar framework as presented in the draft proposal we received from the College Council earlier this week.” The CEP had agreed that the proposal should come before the faculty for consideration. In its document, the College Council notes that, while it had voted to support a calendar with a thirteen-week spring semester, it was also offering an alternate proposal, based on views articulated by the CEP, for a 13.5-week spring semester. The College Council recommended that the faculty vote on both proposals on April 19.

Professor Courtright began the conversation by noting some background for the current proposal. She explained that the Science Faculty Steering Committee had petitioned the Committee of Six in fall 2014 to reconsider the shape of the calendar in order to lengthen the January term period to a full three weeks, as had been the structure prior to 2010-2011. Professor Courtright noted that the original reason for making the change after 2010-2011 was the need to have alignment with the Five Colleges, but that that goal ultimately was not met. The science faculty later concluded that the shortened January term was having a negative impact on student and faculty research.

Continuing, Professor Courtright noted that the charge of this year’s College Council—to propose a new calendar—is a continuation of a 2014-2015 charge to the Council. The council’s proposal that spring, for a thirteen-week calendar, was returned to the council after discussion by the faculty. Arguments were made at the time that the College Council had not consulted sufficiently with key constituencies, most notably with the arts departments. The CEP also expressed a desire to be consulted. Professor Courtright noted that, at the time, many science departments were in favor of shortening the semester to thirteen weeks, if all thirteen weeks began on a Monday and were unbroken for the sake of lab sequencing, if there was a three-week January term, if there was a four-day reading period, and if there was a five-day exam period. At the time, the College Council had noted other benefits to shortening instruction time to thirteen weeks—an extra period of three days before the reading period that could be used to make up days lost due to snow closings or because days of dialogue had been scheduled. If the days were not used for this purpose, they could be used to extend the reading period and/or for learning that did not include formal instruction.

Professor Courtright commented that, the College Council had noted in 2015, that if the semester continued to run for fourteen weeks, the desire to lengthen January term, coupled with the requirement that commencement be scheduled at its traditional time, would mean that the reading period would be shortened to two or three days. The College Council felt then, and continues to feel now, that this period would be too brief to serve students well. Professor Courtright noted that the council could not recommend adding days to the reading period by shortening the exam period to fewer than four days because there were too many potential overlaps for students, and because there would potentially be too many exams for each student on the same day. She commented that students had argued, and still do, that going too quickly from the end of classes, when new material is still being taught, to taking exams—without time

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, April 11, 2016

Amended April 15, 2016

to review and reflect on what they had learned over the course of the semester—is deeply problematic. The changing demographic of the student body offered an even stronger argument for offering more time, Professor Courtright noted, as students from a variety of backgrounds and levels of preparation raised serious concerns.

In its work this year, Professor Courtright noted that the College Council had consulted broadly with faculty, including with colleagues in the Departments of Music and Theater and Dance, as well as with the CEP. The council sought the opinions of the chairs of the science, math, and computer science departments. After discussing various options, the College Council came to the conclusion that the period of instruction in the spring should be shortened to thirteen weeks. Other features of its proposal include a three-week Interterm, with classes beginning on the Monday after Martin Luther King Day; a longer reading period (a make-up period of three days, during which there could be performances and a four-day reading period with enhanced offerings/programming); and a possible seven-day reading period, if no make-up days are needed. After discussions with the CEP, the council also agreed to put forward as a compromise a 13.5 week calendar with four reading days, though the College Council had serious concerns about that proposal.

In the course of the conversation, Professor Courtright noted that this College Council had consulted broadly. She commented that, based on her conversations with the Science Faculty Steering Committee, she has concluded that the Departments of Psychology, Neuroscience, Geology, Chemistry, and faculty in Astronomy, are in favor of a thirteen-week calendar, as long as there is a prolonged January term, all thirteen weeks begin on Monday, and there is an unbroken semester. Half of the Department of Biology support this structure, while the other half are neutral, and none are against. The Biochemistry and Biophysics Program is in favor. The Department of Computer science is not in favor. The physics faculty from the Department of Physics and Astronomy are divided on the question. The Department of Mathematics and Statistics does not have concerns about a thirteen-week semester per se, but are concerned about a long gap between the end of classes and exams. The Departments of Music and Theater and Dance do not favor a thirteen-week semester. Professor Courtright noted that the College Council had also discussed the proposal for a thirteen-week semester with students, including the AAS, which supports the proposal for a thirteen-week semester.

Professor Marshall expressed regret, upon learning from reading the excerpt of the minutes of the CEP meeting of April 8, that the needs of the sciences were seen as determinative in arriving at the College Council proposal, and that these were being set in opposition to those of the performing arts. As Professor Courtright had noted, the original request to revisit the spring calendar had come from the Science Faculty Steering Committee as a desire to return to a three-week Interterm because the originally intended goal of better calendar alignment among the Five Colleges had not been achieved in the change that had led to the earlier start of the spring semester. Although there is not unanimity among the science faculty, most would, to his recollection, prefer a full three-week Interterm and a fourteen-week semester. However, given the other pressing issues surrounding the calendar, many, but not all, science departments see restoration of full third week to Interterm as the more important goal. In the subsequent communication to the College Council, the Science Faculty Steering Committee had noted both the divisions among the sciences on this matter, but also that, if a thirteen-week semester is necessary to achieve a sufficiently long reading period, an adequate number of exam days, and

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, April 11, 2016

Amended April 15, 2016

the addition of make-up days, then some of the negative impact would be ameliorated if the semester included only full weeks of classes, each starting on a Monday and ending on a Friday. He said that he has concerns about the disjunctive approach to the reading period under the proposal, commenting that he has trouble imagining how students in chemistry classes would make use of the longer time between the end of classes and the beginning of exams, as there are no papers to write, for example. Instead of helping students, the extra time might result in hindering them, as material learned would not be as fresh when they took exams, due to the lag time. Professor Benedetto agreed.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Courtright said that she is baffled by the idea that students would do less well if they have more time to study. Professor Benedetto said that it is clear to him, based on experience, that students don't necessarily learn more if there is more time to learn. While they should spend time reviewing for all four classes, they tend to work on only one at a time. The more time between the last class and their last exam—which could be as much as twelve days under the proposal—the more that students will forget. Professor Douglas expressed the view that, if students have a finite amount of time, the amount of time that they spend studying should expand with it. Professor Courtright noted that a mathematics student who spoke at the discussion with the AAS expressed concern that students are not receiving the kind of review that they want, since, in office hours, the Department of Mathematics and Statistics offers group review sessions—that is, for multiple classes—and consequently supported a thirteen-week semester. Under the proposal, there would be more time so that review sessions could be offered for individual classes instead, Professor Courtright proposed. Professor Benedetto did not find this argument to be compelling, and he noted that the students who are in need of the most help tend not to come to office hours at all.

Professor Marshall expressed some frustration that many students want one-on-one tutorials during the reading period, rather than sharing office hours. He does not have time to meet every student's needs on an individual basis, and in shared office hours, as latecomers arrive, he faces the dilemma of answering a question considered earlier in the session, while other students in attendance would like to move on. Professor Courtright remarked that reviews for individual classes in the extended reading period, as proposed, would address this problem. Professor C. Dole said that he likes the idea of a longer reading period. He said that he has heard that the Campus Police and the Office of Student Affairs have concerns that, if there were a longer reading period, there might be problematic behavior, such as partying on campus, or that students might leave campus. Ms. Coffey and Mr. Vasquez said that they do not have any issues with a longer reading period in this regard. Due to the academic demands under which students are placed in the period leading up to exams, Ms. Coffey and Mr. Vasquez believe that most students would not party or leave campus.

Conversation turned to the proposal for the 13.5-week semester and the impact on class time, depending on the day of the week a class is held. Professor Courtright noted that one way the 13.5-week semester might work is turning Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday into Monday, Wednesday, Friday during the fourteenth week, because many classes are taken on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, and Monday and Wednesday, or just Monday or Wednesday or Friday. In fact, the registrar has confirmed that 48.8 percent follow one of these patterns. If there are no snow days, many classes could provide an entire fourteenth week of in-class instruction. Tuesday/Thursday classes would be thirteen weeks only in that case. If there are snow days,

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, April 11, 2016

Amended April 15, 2016

however, then there is no make-up period, and classes would be curtailed. With the 13.5-week plan, as well, it is unlikely that there would be a day of dialogue because there is no make-up option; a day of dialogue would cut out a day of classes, and many faculty would object, Professor Courtright commented.

Professor Katsaros asked about the negative impact that a thirteen-week semester could have on the performing arts. Mr. Rosenblum, who plays in the orchestra, noted that performances could continue on the Saturday and Sunday after classes end. He does not feel that students' commitment to participating would be affected under such a system. This schedule has even been done in the past, he commented. Performances of smaller ensembles could take place during the reading period. Professor Courtright said that she has again spoken with three members of the music faculty and that they fear that, even if a concert is scheduled the day after the last day of classes, students might leave campus and would not be as committed. If classes were being held to make up for snow days, they expressed the view that some students would participate in concerts and some wouldn't. The music faculty prefer the idea of having performances during class time and thereby ensuring that students stay on campus. They are not in favor of having performances continue during the reading period or during the extra time that would be provided under a thirteen-week calendar, Professor Courtright said.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Katsaros asked whether the College Council feels that, under the thirteen-week model, students would take advantage of extra office hours, guest lectures, etc., or would tend to focus on finishing papers and other projects at the end of the semester. Professor Singh commented that he does not think that policy should be formulated based on the assumption that students are irrational and/or that they don't think about their education. Under the current schedule, students do not have sufficient time to review, and he is very sympathetic to their argument that they should have more time. So much is squeezed into the compressed time period under the current system that many students experience exam anxiety and are stressed to an unhealthy degree. Mr. Rosenblum commented that one of the problems of the time allotted to the reading period currently is that students are preparing for class and completing work up until the last day of class. Time for recursive learning is needed to reflect and to think about what has been learned. The compressed schedule does not allow for this period of deep thinking, as students move from class to preparing for exams.

Professor Benedetto noted that a major problem for faculty and students at the end of the semester is exhaustion. Instead of shortening instruction time, he proposed that there be two three-day weekends, one in April and one in February, to give students more time pause to do the kind of thinking to which Mr. Rosenblum referred and to have some relief from the pressures noted by Professor Singh. Such weekends could also be used to catch up and feel refreshed. Some wondered whether faculty would continue to assign work over a three-day weekend, which would defeat the purpose. Professor Courtright noted that the current proposal respects the science faculty's need for sequential labs. Eliminating two Fridays of lab in order to have three-day weekends would seem to be problematic. Professor Marshall did not see this scenario as a problem. Labs, he noted, could simply not be scheduled on Friday afternoon. Professor Hart wondered if anyone has considered lengthening spring break, noting that some schools run on this schedule. Professor Courtright and Ms. Kim responded that that the need to align with the Five-College schedule and the constraint of when commencement must be held makes lengthening spring break unfeasible.

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, April 11, 2016**Amended April 15, 2016**

Continuing the conversation, Professor Hart asked the registrar if it is her sense that the practice of faculty having a final exam during the last week of class, rather than during exam period, has increased over the years. Ms. Kilventon said that she does not see a trend in that direction. He wondered if many courses actually end on the last day of class, rather than continuing through exam period. Ms. Kilventon said that some faculty do not have exams and end classes by the end of classes. Some assign papers. She has noticed a trend toward more self-scheduled exams. Professor Polk commented that faculty are exhausted by the end of the semester, just as students are. He noted that the enrollment cap has risen on writing-attentive courses, so that there is more work to grade at the end of the semester, with no additional time. Having more time at the end of the semester would have a positive impact on faculty as well as students, he noted. Faculty in the social sciences and humanities, in particular, would have more time to give substantive feedback to students on papers and would be fresh during a time when students are going through recursive learning and may need the faculty's feedback to do their best work.

Ms. Kim urged the faculty to consider the changing demographics of the student body and to recognize that students with different backgrounds learn in different ways. Many students need more time to review and to think deeply, and some cannot turn out work as efficiently as others, which creates stress. Some students require more time and attention than in the past, she emphasized. The committee thanked the College Council, and the members left the meeting at 4:45 P.M.

Conversation turned to how the committee should bring a calendar proposal to the faculty. Professor C. Dole noted that, from a governance perspective, it would be easier to bring one proposal to the faculty rather than two. He said that he favors bringing forward the thirteen-week calendar. If a colleague wants to move a substitute motion, he or she certainly could. Professor Benedetto said that he continues to have concerns about the thirteen-week calendar, noting the disagreement among the members of the CEP and that the Department of Computer Science is opposed to it. In addition, he feels that the concerns of the music department should be considered. It was noted that the theater and dance department does not seem to share the views of the music department, as theater and dance performances would not be shortened under the proposal, as they extend into the reading period.

The members then voted on the council's proposal for a thirteen-week calendar, with four in favor and two opposed on content and five in favor and zero opposed, with one abstention, on forwarding the motion to the faculty. The committee then discussed a draft faculty meeting agenda for a possible April 19 meeting. The members agreed that a meeting should be held and voted six in favor and zero opposed to forward the agenda to the faculty. The remainder of the meeting was devoted to personnel matters.

The meeting adjourned at 5:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, April 25, 2016

Amended April 29, 2016

The twenty-second meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2015-2016 was called to order by President Martin in the president's office at 3:00 P.M. on Monday, April 18, 2016. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Benedetto, C. Dole, Douglas, Hart, Katsaros, and Marshall; Dean Epstein; and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with Dean Epstein sharing proposed revisions to language in the "Requirements" section of the *Amherst College Catalog* (page 71, 2.) that describes Amherst's system of awarding credit for courses. The dean noted that the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) had recently approved these changes, which are indicated in all caps and strike-outs below:

...Standard full courses are equal to four semester credits each. Half courses are equal to two semester credits. Our course system considers all standard full courses to have equal weight toward completing the degree requirements. Courses typically meet for ~~at least~~ three hours a week, with the expectation that ~~AN additional time may be spent~~ **NINE HOURS OF ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT BE SPENT** in **CLASS**, lab, discussion, studio, film viewing, and/or preparatory work.

The new language codifies current college practice and demonstrates that Amherst is meeting the federal definition of the credit hour. The members took note of the changes, which will be incorporated into the next edition of catalog.

Continuing with her remarks, the dean informed the committee that she has received a request from the Association of Amherst Students (AAS) that the recipient of the AAS distinguished teaching award be announced at a faculty meeting this spring. The committee asked the dean to seek more information about the award, and the process for selecting the recipient, before the matter is considered further. Dean Epstein agreed to request this information and to report back.

The dean informed the members that, as they had requested, she had extended an invitation to the Curriculum Committee to meet with the Committee of Six. The Curriculum Committee had expressed the view that a meeting at this stage of its deliberations would be premature. The dean said that, if the Committee of Six feels strongly that a meeting should take place this spring, she would go back to the Curriculum Committee to see if a delegation would agree to meet. Professors Douglas and Hart expressed interest in meeting, and most of the other members agreed that the conversation should take place, if possible.

The members next reviewed data that Dean Epstein had provided in response to Professor Hart's question about the breakdown of African Caribbean and other groups among those that the college categorizes as African American students within the student body. Professor Hart suggested that it might be helpful to switch from the current category of *African American* to *Black/African American*. He hoped that a more nuanced set of categories will allow individuals to self-identify in ways that they cannot at present, and which would allow the college to learn more about the make-up of the student body. Information was also provided in response to Professor Douglas's question about [the breakdown of the student body by religion](#). The committee reviewed results from [the survey of alumni](#) that was completed in 2013. The members noted some trends in the representation of religions within the student body. Professor

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, April 25, 2016

Amended April 29, 2016

Douglas observed that the survey suggests a noticeable decline in the percentage of Jewish students at Amherst. Professor Hart suggested that college examine ways of tracking this information more effectively, as religion is a dimension of diversity. Professor Douglas noted that, across all cohorts (from those who graduated between 1938 and 1949 to those who graduated between 2003 and 2008), respondents indicated a desire to reduce the emphasis that the college places on intercollegiate athletics. He wondered if these results have been shared with the ad hoc committee that is currently exploring the place of athletics at the college. The dean said that the ad hoc committee has been provided with this information.

Under “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Hart asked if the new dormitories have been named. President Martin responded that it is the college’s hope to name the new dorms in the future. For now, they are known as “the greenway dorms.” Professor Hart next asked if the college is aware of members of the community who have been affected by recent flooding in Houston, Texas, and the earthquake that had occurred in Ecuador. President Martin and Dean Epstein said that they have not been informed that any members of the Amherst community have been affected. They said that they would inquire.

Continuing with questions, Professor Hart said that he and other faculty with whom he has spoken have concerns about the usability and external focus of the recently revamped college website. Professor Douglas said that he has also heard concerns about the presentation of content on the homepage. Professor Marshall commented that, while he recognizes the advantages of taking a more external approach to the site, he thinks that it may now be tipped too far in that direction. Professor Benedetto noted that the font size and the space between lines of information is too great and results in the need to scroll excessively to gain access to information. The members also noted that department faculty and staff pages are more difficult to access, with only those who have pictures being visible on department homepages.

Conversation turned to the draft of the [*Statement of Academic and Expressive Freedom*](#), which would be discussed at the faculty meeting the next day. President Martin, who had recently discussed the topic of academic freedom with students over dinner at her home, noted that some students had asked that the faculty be reminded of the substance of the [*Statement on Respect for Persons*](#), which stresses the expectation of respect and civility within the Amherst community, when the *Statement on Academic and Expressive Freedom* is discussed. The members agreed that hard copies of the *Statement on Respect for Persons* should be made available at the faculty meeting. President Martin noted that the students with whom she had spoken had understood and appreciated the importance of academic freedom. They had raised good and interesting questions, in her view. The committee asked the dean to reach out to the newly elected president of the AAS to make her aware of the faculty’s discussion of this issue and the possibility that the faculty would adopt the new statement this semester. Dean Epstein agreed to do so.

The members discussed the introduction that Professor Douglas would offer at the meeting. It was agreed that his remarks should include an outline of how and why the committee had developed the statement. It was noted that, over a year ago, Professor Maxey had asked the committee to consider drafting a statement, and the committee had agreed to do so. The members’ decision had been informed by the climate within higher education at the time; a number of colleges and universities—Purdue, the University of Chicago, and Princeton—were emphasizing the importance of academic and expressive freedom through their own statements.

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, April 25, 2016

Amended April 29, 2016

The members agreed that it would be important for Professor Douglas to explain that the committee's decision to develop a statement arose from concern about threats to academic freedom that are transpiring across the country and a desire to defend this principle against outside forces.

These threats, it was noted, come from donors whose gifts have constraints attached; from politicians and journalists who use social media to discredit scholars; from administrators who, in an effort to comply with federal law, might stray in the direction of over-regulation; and from those who might confuse a college's guaranty of safety with a commitment to shield members of its community from uncomfortable ideas. The committee agreed that Professor Douglas should stress that the members had felt that Amherst, which had never framed a general, robust statement of academic and expressive freedom before, should do so. In addition, it was noted that the college's current statements, which appear in the [Faculty Handbook \(pre-introduction, B.\)](#) and in the college's [honor code for students, in the Statement of Freedom of Expression and Dissent](#), seem insufficient. The members agreed that, notwithstanding the value of these two statements, they fail to offer the kind of principled commitment to academic and expressive freedom that Amherst deserves. The goal of the statement that the committee is bringing forward is to affirm the centrality of these freedoms to the college's mission. The members agree that a strong articulation of academic and expressive freedom is also the best means of facilitating the kind of vigorous exchange of outlooks critical to the success of Amherst's commitment to diversity.

The members agreed that Professor Douglas should be sure to note that the committee had reached the decision to draft a college statement last year, well before protests at the University of Missouri, Yale, Amherst, and on many other campuses. The members said that it will be important to convey that, while the committee's discussion had been informed, in part, by student protests at Amherst, the protests did not affect the members' conclusions about the purpose of and need to have a statement of academic and expressive freedom.

Professor Douglas said that he would stress that academic freedom is not an absolute, and that to treat academic freedom as an absolute is to turn principle into dogma. In his introduction at the faculty meeting, he said that he would make clear that the statement is meant to convey that, while academic freedom necessarily involves the weighing of competing values, Amherst believes that the scales should continue to tilt well in the direction of freedom. When it comes to creating regulations—to policing what can be said—it is essential to err in the direction of a robust protection of inquiry and expression, he would reiterate. Otherwise there is a risk of chilling speech. Professor Douglas said that he would emphasize that the college should never be a place in which controversial views only are voiced in the relative privacy of like thinkers, where such views go uncontested, and arguably grow less charitable and more vehement.

Continuing the conversation about what should be conveyed at the faculty meeting, the members agreed that it should be emphasized that the statement reaffirms the existing rights and protections articulated in the *Faculty Handbook* and honor code, including the current default position in favor of freedom of inquiry and expression, but is meant to do so in an emphatic, principled manner that is specific to Amherst. The members decided that it would be important to remind the faculty that, as noted in earlier Committee of Six minutes, drafts of the statement had been shared with the CEP and the Presidential Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion. The concerns and suggestions voiced by members of these groups had guided and informed the

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, April 25, 2016

Amended April 29, 2016

process of revising and finalizing the statement. A question that had been raised involved the statement's relationship to the college's staff. It was noted that it would be important to explain at the meeting that current statements in the *Faculty Handbook* and student honor code speak exclusively about members of the faculty and students. There is no mention of librarians at Frost or curators at the Mead, or of artists or writers or researchers who come to the college as Copeland Fellows or as fellows at the Center for Humanistic Inquiry. The members noted that some members of the staff now perform instructional roles, teaching, for example, first-year seminars. When drafting the statement, it was agreed that it would be important to extend protections to staff who are directly involved in instruction and research and to include "curating" as protected expression. It was agreed that Professor Douglas should stress that inclusion of the term "members of the academic community" in the final statement is meant to remedy the lack of inclusiveness that is a feature of the current statements.

The members discussed where the statement should be placed, if it is approved by the faculty. The committee recommended inserting the statement within the pre-introduction of the *Faculty Handbook*, immediately before the current language that conveys that Amherst subscribes fully to the AAUP statements on academic freedom. After some discussion about whether the statement should be added to the honor code as well, it was agreed that the honor code already expresses all that it needs to express, and that the new statement would function in tandem with it. The committee then turned to personnel matters.

The committee next reviewed a booklet of policies and procedures that had been prepared by the registrar in response to a request made by tenure-line faculty for such a document. The review of the piece stimulated some policy questions around half-credit courses. Professor Hart commented that there is a reference in the Course Catalog, pages 71-72, under "Course Requirements," that "half courses are not normally included in the thirty-two-course requirement for graduation." He suggested that, before changing or deleting language, the issue should be brought to the attention of the CEP and the faculty, even though the new language does reflect current policy/practice. Professor Katsaros pointed out that there is no language in the booklet about honors and senior theses. It would be helpful to advisors and faculty members to clarify the different steps in the process. Professor Benedetto asked for clarification about the policy on the [assignment of work after the conclusion of classes](#) (*Faculty Handbook* IV, G.), noting that practice varies from the written statement. The members asked the dean to bring these issues to the CEP for consideration. She agreed to do so. It was agreed that the following two references in the booklet should also be examined:

Two Half Courses: Students must match half courses to use as one full course. (Music lessons: Violin would need to be matched with another music lesson: Piano). Students may take a semester with 3 and two half courses so long as they have a preceding semester with four full courses and one half-course which matches one of the half-courses in the semester with two halves. The two halves could match in one semester.

Overload: Students may enroll in 4 and 1/2 half courses without special permission. Students who wish to take more than 4 1/2 courses must have a strong academic record and obtain permission of the advisor and class dean.

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, April 25, 2016**Amended April 29, 2016**

Discussion turned to the results of the recent Committee of Six election and the outcome of having five men and one woman on the committee. This gender imbalance has been a feature of the committee this year and last, it was noted. The committee reviewed data about the make-up of the ballot, faculty demographics, and eligibility requirements, but could not draw any conclusions as to causation.

The meeting ended with an initial discussion of some proposed changes to the charges of standing faculty committees that the dean had brought to the committee. She asked that the members consider the proposals, noting that she is offering suggestions with the goal of ensuring effective faculty governance, clarifying or streamlining existing language, and attempting to address the effects of the changing demographics of the faculty. In addition, Dean Epstein said, some changes in practice, such as a course release for members of the Committee of Six, should, perhaps, prompt a re-examination of some committee charges. The members discussed the possibility of reducing the grace period for serving on the Committee of Six from four years to three, eliminating the option to opt off the Committee of Six ballot for life after serving on the committee three times, and other exemptions that result in exclusions from the Committee of Six ballot for particular periods. The members expressed a range of opinions. Any changes to committee charges would require a vote of the faculty, it was noted. The members agreed to return to this subject at their next meeting and to discuss each proposal, after which they would decide whether to forward any or all to the faculty.

The meeting ended at 5:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, April 25, 2016

Amended April 29, 2016

The twenty-third meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2015-2016 was called to order by President Martin in the president's office at 3:00 P.M. on Monday, April 25, 2016. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Benedetto, C. Dole, Douglas, Hart, Katsaros, and Marshall; Dean Epstein; and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with Dean Epstein informing the committee that she has developed a proposal to support department chairs in their work and to recognize their efforts through several possible mechanisms of compensation. The dean said that she has discussed her ideas with small groups of faculty and at a recent meeting of department chairs. At the next meeting of the committee, she will ask for the members' advice about a process for considering the proposal.

Following up on the committee's request that she gather more information about the Association of Amherst Students (AAS) Distinguished Teaching Award and about the process for selecting the recipient, the dean informed the members that the winner is determined by a special committee that consists of nine senators and a chair. Continuing, Dean Epstein noted that nominations had been solicited two weeks ago and that students had been asked to submit the name of a professor and a brief statement about him or her. After a review of the nominations, the AAS committee will make a recommendation to the full AAS. Once the AAS has approved the recommendation, the winner will be announced to the student body. The AAS hopes that the winner will also be announced at a faculty meeting. The award consists of a framed paper certificate. In addition, the professor's name and department are engraved onto a plaque that is located in Keefe Campus Center.

Dean Epstein next shared a request from Instructional Designer hari kumar for the committee's approval to allow a small number of tenure-track faculty members, who have volunteered to take part in a pilot, to use the new course evaluation form this semester. The members agreed that this approach would be fine, as long as the untenured colleagues, in all cases, receive approval from their chairs to use the new form.

Associate Dean Tobin informed the committee that she had spoken with members of the Office of Communications about the committee's concerns about the new website. She was told of the office's plans to conduct usability studies and to consider revisions to the site, as needed. Photos will soon be added to department faculty and staff pages. Photos will also be added to the faculty profile index page, but that process will take some time to complete, she was informed.

President Martin shared with the members a confidential summary of the preliminary views of the External Advisory Committee on Diversity, Inclusion, and Excellence, which was on campus on April 22. Prior to the visit, the committee had been provided with a great deal of data about the college, President Martin said. The group will return in one year, and then two years afterward, she explained. As part of this review process, the college will prepare a self-study in the fall of the coming year, with the goal of completion in the spring of 2017. Former trustee Danielle Allen, director of the Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics and professor of government and American politics at Harvard, is chairing the advisory committee, which includes seven other leaders in the area of diversity and inclusion within higher education. President Martin said that she expects that the external committee will provide its first report in the middle of May. She found the group's preliminary views to be sobering and feels that a summary of them should be shared with the faculty as soon as possible. Many of the

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, April 25, 2016

Amended April 29, 2016

observations, President Martin commented, echo her own. The members agreed that it would be informative for the president to offer a summary, in confidence, of the preliminary views of the external committee, and to share her thoughts with the faculty in a committee-of-the-whole discussion at a faculty meeting on May 3. Students will be asked to leave the meeting during the conversation. The members turned to a personnel matter.

The committee next reviewed, as the members do annually, drafts of the letters that are sent each year to candidates and chairs regarding procedures for reappointment and promotion to full professor.

Under “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Douglas asked about the development of the bias reporting system. Dean Epstein said that Chief Student Affairs Officer Suzanne Coffey and the College Council, who have a model in mind, are still considering this issue. Professor Katsaros asked about the issue of background checks. Dean Epstein said that she would check in with Lisa Rutherford, chief policy officer and general counsel, about scheduling a conversation about this topic. Professor Douglas asked about the status of the task force that has been charged with reviewing the college’s policies and responsibilities regarding accommodations for students with documented disabilities, including compliance with the law. The dean responded that it is her understanding that the task force is close to being formed and charged. It will conduct its work during the next academic year.

Conversation turned to the *Amherst College Statement of Academic and Expressive Freedom*. It was agreed that, if approved by the faculty, the Board of Trustees should be asked to vote on endorsing the statement. The members discussed the issue of whether the reference to staff should become more specific, to make it clear that the protections described extend only to staff in research, curatorial, and instructional roles. Professor Douglas argued for retaining the current language. After some conversation, it was noted that the change indicated below should be made.

Amherst College Statement of Academic and Expressive Freedom

Institutions of higher learning dedicate themselves to a range of goals: the pursuit of truth and knowledge, the refinement and transmission of intellectual skills, the articulation of values, the creation of works of artistic merit, and the critical examination of received wisdom. The promotion of these goals requires unstinting dedication to academic and expressive freedom. Such freedom protects the right of members of the academic community to speak, write, curate, and create without obstruction, disruption, or the fear of institutional censure, censorship, or retaliation.

This strong commitment to the freedom of inquiry lies at the heart of Amherst College’s mission to create a home in which the liberal arts may flourish. As a small residential liberal arts college that prides itself on the ability, curiosity, and diversity of its students, Amherst seeks to create a respectful environment in which members of its community feel emboldened to pursue their intellectual and creative passions. At times, the desire to foster a climate of mutual respect may test the College’s duty to protect and promote the unfettered exchange of ideas. On such occasions, the College’s obligations

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, April 25, 2016**Amended April 29, 2016**

remain clear. The liberal arts cannot thrive absent the freedom to espouse and debate ideas that are unpopular, controversial, discomfiting—and even seemingly wrongheaded or offensive. Members of ~~the~~ **AN ACADEMIC** community may and, indeed, should challenge and oppose ideas they find offensive and loathsome. Yet the response to disagreeable and even insulting ideas must not contravene the commitment to expressive freedom that enables the College to thrive as a space of liberal inquiry.

Even the most vigorous defense of intellectual and creative freedom knows limits. The College may properly restrict speech that, for example, is defamatory, harassing, invades a protected right to privacy or confidentiality, constitutes incitement to imminent violence, or otherwise violates the law. It may place reasonable limitations on the time, place, and manner of expression, and may restrict speech that directly interferes with core instructional and administrative functions of the College. But these restrictions and limitations must be understood as narrow exceptions to the College's overriding commitment to robust open inquiry.

It was noted that Professor Douglas has agreed to meet with the AAS on May 2 to discuss the statement and to answer students' questions.

The committee then voted six in favor and zero opposed on the substance of the motion that the faculty adopt the statement (with the revision incorporated) and include it in the *Faculty Handbook* ([pre-introduction, B.](#)) and six in favor and zero opposed to forward the motion to the faculty. The members then voted six in favor and zero opposed to forward the faculty meeting agenda for a meeting on May 3, 2016, to the faculty. The meeting concluded with a discussion of committee assignments.

The meeting ended at 5:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, May 2, 2016

Amended May 13, 2016

The twenty-fourth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2015-2016 was called to order by President Martin in the president's office at 3:00 P.M. on Monday, May 2, 2016. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Benedetto, C. Dole, Douglas, Hart, Katsaros, and Marshall; Dean Epstein; and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with the dean informing the members that Lisa Rutherford, chief policy officer and general counsel, has a scheduling conflict and cannot meet with the committee to discuss the topic of background checks before the conclusion of the academic year. Dean Epstein said that next year's Committee of Six will be asked to address this issue in the fall. Continuing with her remarks, the dean asked if Servet Bayimli '16 should be invited to attend the May 3 faculty meeting as a guest to present the Association of Amherst Students (AAS) Distinguished Teaching Award. The members agreed that Mr. Bayimli could attend the meeting for this purpose.

Turning to [recommendations](#) brought forward by the Ad Hoc Group to Consider the Moss Quantitative Center, which had been shared with the members prior to the meeting, Dean Epstein informed the committee that she plans to create the half-time, rotating position of faculty director of the Moss Quantitative Center. She will soon invite nominations from the faculty. The dean said that she intends to professionalize the center further, establishing a model that will resemble that of the writing center. The dean informed the members that Professor Barale has requested to step down as co-director of the writing center as of July 1, 2016. In future, there will be only one (rotating) faculty director of the writing center, the dean noted. Professor Gentzler, currently a co-director of the writing center, will become director for a specified term. Professor Douglas asked if moving to a model of a single director will reduce the resources of the writing center. The dean responded that writing associates will work additional hours and that additional administrative support will be provided to the center as well. The members turned to a personnel matter.

In preparation for the upcoming faculty meeting, the members discussed an issue raised by Professor Sarat at the April 19 faculty meeting. He had said that he finds it curious that students had requested that the faculty be given a copy of the *Statement on Respect for Persons* ([Faculty Handbook, IV., A.](#)) in advance of the conversation about the *Amherst College Statement of Academic and Expressive Freedom*, especially given the relationship between the last paragraph of the academic freedom statement and the first paragraph of the respect for persons statement. Professor Sarat had expressed the view that these paragraphs could be read as contradictory. In his view, the *Statement on Respect for Persons* imposes limits on the final paragraph of the *Statement of Academic and Expressive Freedom*. The committee disagreed that the *Statement of Respect for Persons* imposes limits on the final paragraph of the *Statement of Academic and Expressive Freedom*. Professor Douglas commented that the tension between those two paragraphs raises the same questions that occur now (when there is no Amherst College statement, but there is only a statement that the college subscribes to the AAUP statement on academic freedom). The two statements, in his view, harmonize with each other and are not contradictory, as the *Statement on Respect for Persons* speaks of actions that are disrespectful and damaging. The members agreed that the new statement offers foundational protection of freedom of expression, including freedom against limits that might be imposed by the administration or the trustees. The *Statement on Respect for Persons* sets norms for behavior within the community. The *Statement of Academic and Expressive Freedom* should generally

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, May 2, 2016**Amended May 13, 2016**

trump the *Statement on Respect for Persons* because it is important for the college to provide the strongest possible protections for academic freedom. Professor Katsaros commented that the new statement is not a license to harass or to advocate for violence, for example, and is consistent with the respect for persons statement, placing emphasis on dignity and respect.

Under “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Hart raised the topic of retention of faculty of color at Amherst. President Martin commented that Amherst has gone from being in the middle of its peer group in regard to the percentage of faculty of color at the college to near the bottom of the cohort. She stressed the importance of trying new and varied recruitment strategies. As an example, the president commented that a small number of liberal arts colleges, Williams among them, are participating in the [Creating Connections \(C3\) Consortium](#), a partnership with research universities that connects undergraduate students at liberal arts colleges, particularly those who are underrepresented, with graduate opportunities at major research universities; graduate students at research universities, particularly those who are underrepresented, with teaching and scholarly opportunities at liberal arts colleges; faculty and staff seeking to build inclusive campus communities with innovative strategies; and liberal arts colleges undertaking efforts to build a diverse faculty with research universities seeking to recruit diverse graduate students and to place them in post-doctoral positions, among other initiatives. Amherst was not accepted into the group this year, the president said, but may be accepted in the future, it is hoped. The dean commented that all searching departments will now be provided with the demographics of the field and of the department itself. She commented on the significant number of faculty members of color in visiting positions at the college, while noting that emphasis will continue to be placed on recruiting faculty of color for tenure-line positions, including at the senior ranks. Professor Benedetto asked if there are plans beyond recruiting faculty at the senior level. President Martin said that hiring efforts will be focused at the rank of assistant professor, as well. Professor Douglas stressed the importance of hiring faculty of color across departments and fields.

Continuing with questions, Professor Hart asked if the college tracks disciplinary cases according to race. The dean said that she would ask Ms. Coffey, chief student affairs officer, about this inquiry and report back. Professor Katsaros then asked if the External Advisory Committee on Diversity, Inclusion, and Excellence had noted any issues relating to athletics as a source of non-inclusion. President Martin said that this topic had come up indirectly during a discussion of the segmentation of athletes and non-athletes. She noted that, since the issues of faculty diversity and gaps in students’ academic achievement had been the most prominent focus, not much time had been spent in conversation about athletics. Professor Douglas commented that the issue had been raised during the meeting that the Presidential Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion had had with the advisory committee. Professor Katsaros noted that she had learned recently that some dorms are occupied primarily by members of athletic teams. President Martin said that efforts are being made to change this residential culture, even in the face of some students expressing concern that the college is undertaking social engineering. Continuing with questions, Professor Katsaros asked if the new chief diversity officer will assist academic departments with faculty searches. The dean responded that this will be an important function of the position.

Conversation turned to Dean Epstein’s proposal to support department chairs in their work and to recognize their efforts through several possible mechanisms of compensation,

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, May 2, 2016

Amended May 13, 2016

including an additional semester of sabbatic leave at the conclusion of the period of chairing, stipends, and/or course release. The dean said that she has discussed her ideas with small groups of faculty and at a recent meeting of department chairs. She commented that she feels that it is important to find ways of relieving chairs of some of their workload (e.g., supervision of staff). Options may include providing more staffing and offering course release. With compensation, she noted, it will become the responsibility of chairs to attend monthly meetings. During such meetings, there will be training opportunities that focus on mentoring and personnel issues, in particular. Continuing the discussion about the proposal, Dean Epstein said that she would like to see the period of chairing regularized across departments, preferably for three years, though she recognizes that a three-year time frame might not be workable for all departments. The dean noted that chairs who had attended the recent department chairs meeting had stressed the need for more administrative assistance. Many chairs had expressed the view that all senior faculty members should receive training in mentoring, since all senior colleagues work with untenured faculty. The dean noted that, if this training is provided to all chairs, all colleagues will receive the instruction during the period when they serve as chair. Over time, all faculty will be trained.

Conversation turned to the process for considering the proposal, and the dean asked whether there would be a preference for having an ad hoc committee consider these ideas or whether it would be best for the Committee of Six to do so. President Martin expressed support for compensating chairs and for creating a system in which there would be more continuity in this role, as well as support to make the responsibilities less burdensome. Professor Katsaros expressed concern about a model that would result in having chairs serve for three years. She noted that associate professors often serve as chairs soon after being tenured, and she worries that their scholarship may suffer, which could delay their ability to come up for promotion to full professor on the regular schedule. The dean noted that, under the proposal, chairs would be eligible for a full year of leave after their period of chairing concludes. The longer leave would allow colleagues to dedicate time to their scholarship. Professor Benedetto expressed support for having chairs serve for three years and for compensating chairs, noting that it would be important that department chairs not be chairs of committees or serve on the Committee of Six. Professor Marshall noted that, one of the main points offered during the meeting of department chairs was that chairs feel overwhelmed by the recent increase in administrative requirements and minutiae, and that the time required to attend to those is most often at the expense of scholarly activity and has a negative impact on work/life balance, likening the position to “death by a thousand cuts.” Professor Douglas expressed the view that a one-size-fits-all approach would be difficult to implement and argued for a system that would allow for flexibility. Dean Epstein agreed and noted that the proposal takes into account the responsibilities associated with chairing large and small departments, adjusting compensation accordingly. After weighing the possible mechanisms for considering the proposal, the members agreed that the dean’s plan should be forwarded to next year’s Committee of Six in the fall. Professors Marshall and Benedetto suggested that the dean consult further with current and past department chairs and identify tasks that are particularly burdensome, in order to develop the best solutions.

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

At 4:00 P.M., the Committee of Six was joined by the following members of the Curriculum Committee: Professors Basu, Honig, Miller, Sanborn, and Wolfson; Natasha Kim ’18; hari stephen kumar, instructional designer; Nancy Ratner, associate dean of admission and

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, May 2, 2016

Amended May 13, 2016

researcher for academic projects (ex officio, non-voting); and Missy Roser, head of research and instruction at Frost Library. Professor Douglas began the conversation by asking the members of the Curriculum Committee if they would bring the Committee of Six up to date on their discussions, explain what has been accomplished, and review plans for going forward. Professor Sanborn, the committee's co-chair, said that the committee has had a long year of discussions. Conversations have focused on such major topics as the virtues of the open curriculum vs. requirements, including distribution requirements. The committee is still in a state of ferment, however, and there are a lot of issues that must still be worked through, he noted. In the aftermath of *Amherst Uprising*, the Curriculum Committee has spent a good deal of time considering issues around diversity and inclusion, Professor Sanborn said, including ways in which the college might strengthen advising and enhance and expand capstone experiences. Interest in considering requirements grew on the heels of the student-protests. Professor Honig commented that the committee had made a good deal of progress, developing concrete suggestions, after breaking into three subcommittees (Fundamental Capacities, Breadth of Understanding, and Equality of Opportunity). When the committee reconvened as a whole, however, it had become clear that there are significant differences of opinion among the members. Many of these differences in views are mirrored within the faculty as a whole. Professor Basu commented that the committee has a large and complex agenda that, appropriately, elicits a diversity of opinion. She expressed the view that it will not be easy to figure out how the committee should move forward, while commenting that some headway has been made in the last few weeks. She noted that, during that time, the committee has been examining different models for addressing issues surrounding diversity and inclusion and has been spending its time reviewing a great deal of relevant data about Amherst and other institutions. At its scheduled retreat on May 10, it is hoped that the committee will gain some level of consensus.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Katsaros asked whether the committee has consulted with alumni. Dean Epstein explained that the Curriculum Committee had met with Howard Bloch '65, Sterling Professor of French at Yale, and had heard from other alumni who had experienced the "new" curriculum (in place between 1947 and 1966, noted the dean), which had featured core requirements. The Curriculum Committee had also met with Bryan Garsten, a professor of political science and humanities at Yale, who chaired the committee overseeing the development of a common curriculum in the liberal arts for Yale-NUS College in Singapore, which is organized around a core curriculum. Professor Wolfson noted that the committee had also received letters from alumni. Professor Miller added that the committee had met with the Board of Trustees.

Like Professor Basu, Professor Douglas commented on the large size and ambitious charge of the committee. He asked the members of the Curriculum Committee if they have a sense, from a structural perspective, of how the committee will tackle the issue of the open curriculum. For example, is there an organizational model that will work to generate ideas? Professor Sanborn said that he does not see the committee as a consensus committee. He takes the view that reasonable people can agree to disagree. Professor Sanborn, noting that the committee is scheduled to bring its recommendations to the faculty in the fall, feels that it will be more important for the committee to do its work well than to do it quickly. Professor Miller commented that the committee could present its views on the basis of the sub groups, but noted

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, May 2, 2016**Amended May 13, 2016**

that the members are not yet ready to decide whether the proposals should be one set or several sets of recommendations. It was noted that, following recent committee conversations, Professors Basu and Miller drafted a proposal for discussion, focusing on the arc of the four years at Amherst, including the extension of the first experience to a two-semester program. Under discussion still is the content of each semester, as well as which skills would be addressed. During the sophomore year, there could be a sophomore experience—new clusters of courses, many of them interdisciplinary, addressing diversity and inclusion issues. Discussion about the junior year is ongoing, including consideration of linking a curricular program to study abroad and experiential learning. Finally, in the fourth year, there could be a focus on capstone experiences.

Professor Marshall asked what the most eye-opening discovery had been for the committee thus far. Professor Sanborn said that the committee members would likely disagree on this point. He was struck by the fact that the average class size is thirty students. Professor Miller was concerned by the fact that 25 percent of Amherst students who major in the humanities graduate without taking a course in either science or math, and that almost 70 percent of their coursework was restricted to the humanities. Continuing, Professor Miller commented that the demographic distribution of majors may not always mirror the demographic distribution of the college, and she suggested that these patterns require further discussion. Most surprising is the degree to which the college doesn't track these data. Professor Miller commented that there may be less of a need to worry about students taking writing courses, as the college places emphasis on this skill already, but that there may be a need to ensure that all students take quantitative courses and gain skills in information and quantitative literacy.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Basu noted that the committee's research has revealed that science students are more likely to distribute themselves across the curriculum than students in other fields. There are also significant differences when it comes to which students pursue Latin honors, including differences by race and level of preparation. An important question is how to encourage all students to write theses and/or take advantage of Mellon tutorials, and thus to create a shared experience of conducting research and completing a capstone project. Professor C. Dole asked how differences in distribution might be addressed. Professor Miller expressed the view that requirements could be introduced, for example. Another idea is to incentivize students by linking distribution/breadth to Latin honors. The question is what a minimum requirement would look like. Considering this question requires more faculty voices, the committee agrees. Mr. Kumar said that there is a need to think about the structure, process, rationale, and overall vision and how these elements map to different requirements. He suggested that, rather than speaking about requirements, pathways and/or thematic approaches could be developed to guide students in their navigation of the curriculum. Professor Honig noted that there is unanimous support within the committee for creating minors as a way to develop more room for distributing courses.

President Martin asked whether it would be helpful to rearticulate what problems the committee is trying to solve and what principles underlie the issues—breadth, achievement gaps, the open curriculum? Are there patterns that are observed every year? Are students receiving a liberal arts education? In her view, the question of whether to retain an open curriculum may be a second-order question. Responding, Professor Sanborn noted that risk avoidance is a central problem that the committee wants to solve. This issue has motivated the committee to develop a

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, May 2, 2016

Amended May 13, 2016

number of more flexible policies (for example, around the number of courses that can be taken pass/fail and the date by which students must decide whether to drop a course) that would encourage more risk-taking. Some members of the committee favor efforts that would encourage intrinsic motivation, while others support those that would further extrinsic motivation. Other members have taken different positions. Some members differ in their view of the basic vision of the college. Professor Miller's perspective is that the liberal studies curriculum, voted by the faculty in 2012 and included in the *Amherst College Catalog*, is the principle that underlies the responsibility that students and advisors have in their advising relationship. The liberal studies curriculum serves as a guide to students' course of study. Professor Basu said that the liberal studies curriculum should be thought about further.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Douglas noted that the Curriculum Committee seems to be focusing a great deal on the risk-taking of individual students. He asked if the committee has been thinking about the creation of common intellectual experiences. Mr. Kumar said that this is an important goal, and that there have been differences of opinion within the committee about it. He commented that there is no overall articulation of purpose in the liberal studies curriculum. It reveals a focus on breadth and skills, but does not offer an integrated, holistic view that provides guidance on the integration of knowledge and skills. In his view, an articulation of what students can tackle together, in ways that they cannot individually, is what is missing from the language of the liberal studies curriculum. Professor Basu commented that the committee has spent a lot of time talking about what the liberal studies curriculum should look like. After some time, it was felt that this topic was too abstract, so the committee began to focus on smaller issues. At this point, the committee is returning to the larger issues at a higher level. Professor Marshall commented that he has tried to focus on the liberal studies curriculum in his advising, but finds that some students, particularly those who aspire to attend medical school, feel that the curriculum is not consistent with preparing students for graduate school, medical school, etc. He personally does not share this view. He suspects, though, that this view may have an impact on some students' willingness to take risks, noting that students want to make sure that they will succeed.

Ms. Kim agreed with Professor Marshall that the liberal studies curriculum doesn't restrict what students can do. She feels that the problem is communicating this view to students. Advisors are not consistently pushing students to achieve breadth in their courses of study, she said. Building a more intensive advising system that fosters an advising relationship that is less transactional and more substantive should be the goal. Professor Honig, responding to Professor Douglas, commented that the committee had considered the idea of a common intellectual experience for all students and noted that there is much value in this approach. The problem would be convincing thirty faculty members to agree to teach common subjects. He noted that, at present, it is challenging enough to find volunteers to teach first-year seminars. Professor Douglas commented that it appears that, in focusing on issues such as minors, the committee might be merely "nibbling on the edges," rather than confronting big questions. He asked if the committee has examined the curricula of other schools and has found anything impressive happening at other institutions.

Professor Wolfson said that the committee has reviewed what other schools are doing in the curricular realm and that the process had been useful. He, for one, is impressed with the Yale-NUS core curriculum report, but noted that the committee keeps returning to the question of how to introduce a curriculum that faculty will actually teach. The committee does not want

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, May 2, 2016**Amended May 13, 2016**

to provoke resentment among faculty members by compelling them to teach courses about which they are not enthusiastic, and it appears that there is not a will in the current Amherst faculty to embrace a core curriculum, Professor Wolfson said. Historical precedent, he noted, shows that successful core curricula have been introduced when the faculty was hired specifically to bring them about (as at the University of Chicago in the 1930s or with Yale-NUS a few years ago) or else underwent a radical turnover (as at Amherst after 1945); as the generation of the faculty who introduce those core curricula leave the institutions, enthusiasm for teaching those models disappears. Professor Douglas pointed out that the college is in fact going through a major turnover in the faculty right now. Professor Wolfson expressed the view that a shift of only one-third of the faculty, with most of the new arrivals untenured, is very different from the kind of change the college experienced after World War II. Professor Basu said that she is a strong believer in the value of common intellectual experiences. She feels that the turnover in student body and faculty in recent years makes it possible to consider new ideas, including skill-based, thematic, and other types of distribution models. Placing more of a substantive focus on issues of diversity and inclusion, in the first-year seminar, for example, is also an important concept to consider, Professor Basu said.

Following up on Professor Wolfson's comments, Professor Douglas asked if the committee has tried to sound out the faculty on this question. He also wondered if perhaps the faculty would be prepared to implement more requirements if Amherst's commitment to diversity makes it necessary to do so. Professor Sanborn said that the committee would not want to introduce just one proposal. He noted that the committee had looked at other curricula with requirements, but as yet cannot answer the question of what a sufficient number of courses would be in each area. In his view, although imposing requirements might sound like progress, he feels that there is huge strength in capitalizing on the open curriculum—as an opening for having students acquire different ways of knowing and being open to others with different views and backgrounds, for example. Professor Sanborn noted that studies completed by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) suggest that capstone experiences make the greatest difference for students, especially those that give students a sense of completion and allow them to integrate what they have learned over time. He commented that there is an unwillingness to address the major as part of most curriculum reviews, according to Derek's Bok's *Our Underachieving Colleges*. The committee is thinking about whether capstone experiences should be implemented through the major and whether requirements imposed through the major might be a way of ensuring breadth. Mr. Kumar expressed the view that common intellectual experiences can be designed in ways that connect both the curriculum and the co-curriculum, in order to foster connections among faculty, staff, and students across campus. Professor Douglas expressed the view that, if the Curriculum Committee aims for a shared co-curricular experience, rather than an intellectual one, it would be a wasted opportunity of a serious order.

Concluding the discussion, Professor Hart asked if the committee has considered the feasibility of models that would allow students to take more than four years to complete the Amherst degree. Dean Epstein noted that the committee had considered allowing students to take courses with Amherst faculty over the summer for credit. Professor Katsaros asked if everyone on the committee supports majors and minors, expressing concern about the negative impact that such a structure could have on smaller departments. Professor Miller said that it is

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, May 2, 2016

Amended May 13, 2016

not the committee's intention to relegate small departments to being minor departments. Under the committee's proposal, departments would decide whether they want to offer a minor, and the CEP would be asked to vet proposals for minors. Dean Epstein noted that students would be limited to one major, one major and one minor, or two majors under the proposal. Professor Honig said that is unclear which direction the "minor effect" would take. More flexibility with minors would allow students to pursue more courses outside their department. Professor Basu said that she is concerned about the time frame under which the Curriculum Committee is operating and whether the committee will be ready to present its recommendations to the faculty in the fall. Professor Miller said that she is unsure whether the committee should provide the faculty with one proposal to discuss or present multiple paths. President Martin said that she is saddened to think so much of the Curriculum Committee's deliberations thus far have focused on what is possible, given possible resistance, rather than what might be desirable. In the president's view, systemic problems cannot be solved on the basis of good will alone. While she can understand the fear that proposals will be dismissed by the faculty and that the committee's report might end up on a shelf, she encouraged the committee to develop the best ideas possible to address the problems facing the college, and to take a more ambitious approach to its work. Work to rally the faculty around proposals could follow, some members of the Committee of Six noted.

The Committee of Six thanked the members of the Curriculum Committee, who left the meeting at 4:50 P.M. Some members of the Committee of Six expressed concern that the Curriculum Committee seems to be operating from a position in which feasibility is the starting point, and under the assumption that nothing can get done. Professor Douglas commented that change could be justified if it were made clear that the proposed change was a necessary or welcome means of creating community amidst diversity. Some members of the Committee of Six worried about the level of intellectual substance of the Curriculum Committee's proposals thus far. Professor Benedetto commented on the pressure on the Curriculum Committee and expressed the view that that the committee should feel safe to fail, if need be. It was agreed that the stakes, right now, must seem very high. On some level, the curriculum is being asked to solve a lot of problems, and too much may be hanging on that idea, the members agreed. Dean Epstein emphasized that the committee might have appeared tentative because, at this stage, its members are rethinking many issues in light of the preliminary views of the External Advisory Committee on Diversity, Inclusion, and Excellence. She expressed confidence that even initiatives that appear small—for example, the pass-fail policy and allowing more time to decide on whether to drop a course—could have a significant impact. The members suggested that it might be helpful for the Curriculum Committee to make use of a facilitator at its retreat. As a closing comment, most members agreed that the overall goal toward which the college should strive is for all students to be able to take advantage of the curriculum offered at Amherst.

Discussion turned to two proposals that the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) had forwarded with a [letter to the Committee of Six](#), one addressing deadlines for end-of-the-semester work and the other making explicit how half courses may be combined to make full courses for the purposes for meeting degree requirements. (The motions shown here are the final versions of the proposed language, which include minor revisions from the Committee of Six. The CEP chair later approved these changes.)

The first proposal is as follows:

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, May 2, 2016

Amended May 13, 2016

The Committee on Educational Policy recommends that the faculty approve the following motion, effective in the 2016-2017 academic year, to revise the *Amherst College Catalog*, “Degree Requirements,” pages 71 and 72. New language is shown in bold red caps.

REQUIREMENTS

Each student is responsible for meeting all degree requirements and for ensuring that the Registrar’s Office has received all credentials.

The Bachelor of Arts degree is awarded to students who:

1. Complete 32 full semester courses and four years (eight semesters) of residence,* except that a student who has dropped a course without penalty during the first year, or who has failed a course during the first or second year, shall be allowed to graduate, provided he or she has been four years in residence at the College and has satisfactorily completed 31 full courses.

Transfer students must complete 32 full semester courses or their equivalent, at least 16 of them at Amherst, and at least two years of residence at Amherst, except that a transfer student who has dropped a course without penalty during his or her first semester at Amherst shall be allowed to graduate with one less full course.

2. Complete the requirements for a major in a department or a group of departments, including a satisfactory performance in the comprehensive evaluation. Standard full courses are equal to four semester credits each. Half courses are equal to two semester credits. Our course system considers all standard full courses to have equal weight toward completing the degree requirements. Courses typically meet for at least three hours a week, with the expectation that additional time may be spent in lab, discussion, studio, film viewing, or preparatory work.

3. Attain a general average of 6 in the courses completed at Amherst and a grade of at least C in every course completed at another institution for transfer credit to Amherst.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

All students except Independent Scholars are 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 his or her 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**

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, May 2, 2016

Amended May 13, 2016

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.

The second proposal is as follows:

The Committee on Educational Policy recommends that the faculty approve the following motion, effective in the 2016-2017 academic year, to revise the *Faculty Handbook*, section [IV., F. Final Examinations](#), and section [IV., G. Completion of Work: Policy on Extensions](#). New language is shown in bold red caps.

IV.F. FINAL EXAMINATIONS END-OF-SEMESTER WORK

1. At the end of the semester there will be scheduled a five day examination period (including Sunday). An instructor may choose to:
 - a. hold no final examination;
 - b. provide the student with a copy of the final examination before the beginning of the examination period, to be taken at any time during the examination period according to the procedure outlined by the instructor (“take-home examination”);
 - c. provide in the envelope supplied, an examination of two or three hours in length which will be made available at a designated examination center, the selection of the particular time period being left to the discretion of the individual student (“student self-scheduled examination”);
 - d. hold an examination during a specific, scheduled session. Examinations to be given in this manner will be scheduled by the Registrar as to room and time (single-session examination).
2. Examinations in all courses must be completed by 5 p.m. on the last day of the examination period. Each student shall be responsible for completing his or her examinations and returning them in the manner prescribed within the designated time periods.
3. Members of the faculty will inform the Registrar, upon ~~his~~ request, of the manner in which they intend to conduct their final examinations. The Registrar will then designate examination centers for each course holding examinations under option 1 (c) and schedule those being held under option 1 (d). ~~He or she~~ **THE REGISTRAR** will provide students and instructors

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, May 2, 2016

Amended May 13, 2016

with a list showing for each course the manner in which the examination is to be conducted, the date by which examinations must be completed, the days and times for examination sessions, and when pertinent, the examination center in which the examination will be conducted.

4. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF PREVIOUSLY SCHEDULED PERFORMANCES AND EXHIBITIONS, NO FINAL COURSE WORK MAY BE ASSIGNED OR DUE DURING THE READING PERIOD, WHICH EXTENDS BETWEEN 5:00 P.M. ON THE LAST DAY OF CLASSES THROUGH 9:00 A.M. OF THE FIRST DAY OF THE EXAMINATION PERIOD.

4. ~~5.~~ Faculty members will submit their grades to the registrar by the agreed date. (Any extensions are to follow the procedures designated by faculty vote.)

~~5.~~ ~~6.~~ Prior to each examination period the student members of the Committee on Educational Policy and of the Judicial Board will arrange to remind each student that examinations are covered by the Statement of Intellectual Responsibility and will explain the manner in which it applies to these examination procedures.

~~6.~~ ~~7.~~ A student who is prevented by illness from completing a final examination within the examination period may be granted the privilege of a special examination by the Dean of Students, who will arrange the date of the examination with the teacher.

~~7.~~ ~~8.~~ A student who without an excuse from the Dean of Students fails to take a final examination shall receive a grade of "F" on the examination.

IV.G. COMPLETION OF WORK; POLICY ON EXTENSIONS

~~In conformity with the practice established for the first semester of 1971-72, and as a general practice of this and subsequent semesters, the Faculty rules that all~~ **ALL REGULAR** course work in a given semester must be submitted by the last day of classes at 5:00 P.M.

Extensions beyond this time will be given only for extraordinary reasons, and only when the student has obtained the signatures of the instructor in the course and the Class Dean. Work not submitted by the date set in the extension will not be accepted for credit. **ALL FINAL COURSE PROJECTS, PAPERS, AND EXAMINATIONS IN A GIVEN SEMESTER MUST BE SUBMITTED BY THE END OF THE FINAL EXAMINATION PERIOD.**

Only for medical reasons or those of grave personal emergency will extensions be granted beyond the second day after the examination period.

The members discussed the proposal about half courses. Professor Hart commented that he had raised the issue about half courses because practice does not seem to be consistent with

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, May 2, 2016**Amended May 13, 2016**

policy. He expressed the view that, rather than just making the proposed change, it might be prudent to learn more about the rationale for the current policy that half courses are not normally included in the 32-course requirement for graduation. Professor Marshall said he imagines the desire had been to open up the possibility in the performing arts of taking half courses, as it might be difficult to have a performance course that is a full course. It would make sense, for example, for a music major to want to take a half course. Professor Katsaros asked if two half courses being combined for credit may be taken in different departments. The other members said that doing so is not permitted. Professor Dole wondered why the CEP had chosen to propose that the number of half courses that can be combined for credit toward the degree should be limited to four. It was noted that, in its letter, the CEP had commented that the Curriculum Committee is thinking about this issue and that this number might change. Professor Douglas wondered what the grade distribution is for half courses. The committee suspected that grades in these courses tend to be high. Professor Benedetto commented that students could choose to take more than four half courses, and or half courses that would not “match,” though they would not earn credit for doing so. It was noted that the residency requirement would prevent students from taking half courses as a means of graduating in fewer than eight semesters. The members commented that the CEP had suggested that it would perhaps be sensible to “grandfather” current juniors (and maybe sophomores and intermediate Es) who have taken more than four half courses with the intent to use them toward fulfilling the degree requirements. This might best be left to the discretion of the dean of students, according to the CEP. The members then voted five in favor and 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.

Conversation turned the proposal regarding end-of-semester work. Professor Douglas expressed the view that the proposal might create an incentive for faculty to give students less time to complete assigned work at the end of the semester. Professor Benedetto also was not in favor of the proposed change, commenting that the proposed changes to the *Faculty Handbook*, if passed, would make it more difficult to educate his students, given the newly lengthened spring reading period. In his view, some students will not organize themselves well and will end up trying to do all of their work at the end of the reading period, rather than spreading it out. The other members expressed support for the CEP’s proposal. The committee voted four in favor and two opposed on the substance of the motion and six in favor and zero opposed to forward the motion to the faculty.

The meeting ended at 5:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

Committee of Six Minutes of Tuesday, May 3, 2016**Amended May 13, 2016**

The twenty-fifth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2015-2016 was called to order by Dean Epstein in her office at 7:00 P.M. on Tuesday, May 3, 2016. Present were Professors Benedetto, C. Dole, Douglas, Hart, Katsaros, and Marshall; and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder. President Martin was not present.

The dean called this brief impromptu meeting immediately prior to the faculty meeting to discuss the unexpected response of the Association of Amherst Students (AAS) to the *Amherst College Statement of Academic and Expressive Freedom*. As the committee had agreed, Professor Douglas and Dean Epstein had shared the statement with the student government the previous evening—for informational purposes and as a courtesy. The dean explained that, after that presentation, the senators had asked her and Professor Douglas to leave the meeting. The students had then voted six in favor of the statement and eleven in favor of amending the statement.

The dean had been informed that some students had expressed the view that the college's role should be clearly defined in the second and third paragraphs of the statement. They had noted that the current language is unclear as to whether “college” refers to the administration or to the community as a whole. Some students had felt that the statement does not go far enough in protecting free speech. Others had argued that the statement offers too much protection, fearing that micro aggressions are permitted, for example. Further, the students had expressed the desire to work with the administration and faculty in defining what actions or language would constitute a violation of the statement.

The dean informed the committee that it is her understanding that the president and the vice-president of the AAS have made plans to attend the faculty meeting and to present the AAS's views. The students' intentions beyond this step are not entirely clear, the dean explained. Professor Douglas and Dean Epstein noted that they had made their presentation to the AAS to inform the students and not to solicit input. Professor Douglas said that he is sensitive to the students' concerns and commented that the statement, as an articulation of principles of what a vibrant academic community should be, errs in the direction of tolerance and encouraging free speech. The statement is also meant to be as inclusive as possible in regard to extending protections to the academic community, he noted. At the same time, Professor Douglas explained, he feels strongly that the concerns raised by the students had already been thoroughly considered and properly addressed in the committee's discussions with the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP), College Council, Presidential Task Force, and the faculty as a whole. The other members concurred and agreed that the committee should share this perspective, if need be, at the meeting. Dean Epstein thanked the members for gathering on short notice, and the meeting ended at 7:20 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, May 9, 2016

Amended May 16, 2016

The twenty-sixth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2015-2016 was called to order by President Martin in the president's office at 3:30 P.M. on Monday, May 9, 2016. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Benedetto, C. Dole, Douglas, Hart, Katsaros, and Marshall; Dean Epstein; and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with the dean informing the members of the passing of Hugh D. Hawkins, Anson D. Moore Professor of History and American Studies, Emeritus. Professor Hawkins died on May 6, 2016. (See <https://www.amherst.edu/news/memorial> for more information.) The members expressed great sadness over this loss. Continuing with her remarks, Dean Epstein noted that Professors Boucher, Jeong, Nelson, and Robinson have agreed to serve on the Tenure-Track Faculty Consultative Group.

Conversation turned to a [letter from Professor Hall](#), chair of the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP). This letter follows earlier ones on the topic of Amherst professors' access to the transcripts of students enrolled in their courses and advisors' access to the transcripts of former advisees. The CEP continues to favor restricting such access. Professors Benedetto and Marshall noted that the new letter does not articulate that, under the proposal, it would be permissible for faculty members to obtain information from the registrar that allows them to determine whether students have met prerequisites, and to see grades for purposes of determining placement and academic support that may be needed. Professor Hall had written a separate note to the dean about this topic, in which he explained that the CEP is in favor of allowing access to transcripts for these purposes. He had commented that, perhaps, he should have communicated this view in his letter, and he had noted that it is possible that this information will be made available through ACDATA. According to Professor Hall, the CEP does not wish to prohibit that procedure. The Committee of Six requested that the dean ask Professor Hall to revise his letter to convey that, under the CEP's proposal, professors would still receive prerequisite information, as needed.

Continuing with the discussion of the CEP's proposal, Dean Epstein reiterated that automatic transcript availability is a relatively recent development. Broad access had been extended to all faculty during the transition to the online registration system to provide an easy way to ensure that students meet course prerequisites. Since prerequisites could be checked by asking the registrar for information, she agrees with the CEP that unrestricted access to transcripts should not be automatic for faculty. There have been situations in the past that have involved the misuse of transcripts, for example, taking into account student grades to determine who will be allowed in to a class, the dean explained. Knowledge of students' past performance can also result in some prejudgment when grading current work, the CEP has noted. Professor Douglas said that he objects to the premise that faculty members are "cherry picking" and doing something wrong when relying on criteria other than random choice to reduce the number of students in over-enrolled classes. He continued to express support for having "gradeless transcripts" made available to all faculty members during the pre-registration period. Faculty could use the information to ensure that students have met necessary prerequisites and to learn more about students' areas of interest. Seeing the distribution of students' courses would help faculty build a roster of students with a diversity of interests and backgrounds, in his view. Professor Hart commented that ensuring diversity, in its myriad forms, should be the default whenever possible when building class rosters. Faculty should be asked to explain if they are not

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, May 9, 2016**Amended May 16, 2016**

considering this criterion. Professor Douglas expressed the view that providing less information to the faculty will result in more arbitrary, less thoughtful selection criteria being employed when choosing which students will remain in a limited-enrollment class that is over-enrolled. He commented that the CEP's proposal suggests that the only "right" way to admit student to a limited-enrollment class is by a process of random selection.

Most other members agreed. Dean Epstein noted that the criteria that will be used to select students in over-enrolled classes should be made clear in the course description. Students have expressed concern that the current process, which is not transparent to them, may be biased. They want to understand how faculty members are making their selections. Professor Hart asked if there are any data that would suggest that faculty members are selecting students for their classes based on grades, for example. The dean said that she is not aware that this issue has been studied, though it could be, she imagines. Dean Epstein noted that the CEP has stressed that all students should have equal access to all portions of the curriculum and have a fair chance to get into the classes that they want to take.

Dean Epstein reiterated that, while the default under the proposal would be that faculty would not be given access to all current students' transcripts and to those of past students, faculty would be given access to transcripts by request, if they need them, or otherwise provided with the necessary information. Professor C. Dole noted that, under the new registration system, this would mean that faculty would need to submit a request to the registrar during one of the busiest weeks of each semester in order to get even a "gradeless transcript." Professor Douglas stressed that the proposal, if approved, would result in faculty having to jump through extra hoops to get the information that they need for educational purposes and to build their class rosters. He commented that faculty who are teaching classes that, for whatever reason, attract students would be penalized under the proposed system. Noting concerns that have been expressed about student privacy, President Martin wondered why a process is being imagined that would be guided by the principle that faculty should not have access to student transcripts with grades and should not be choosing which students are in their classes, but would then allow access to student transcripts with grades if faculty ask for the information. It seems to her that the policy should be either to make the transcripts available, or not to make them available except in limited circumstances that are made transparent. Professor Douglas noted that he would prefer that transcripts, with grades suppressed, be made available to instructors during the pre-registration period only, for the reasons that he had described. The other members agreed and asked Dean Epstein to convey their view to the CEP.

Conversation turned to another topic addressed in the CEP's proposal, the desire to eliminate the feature of ACDATA that currently permits students to pre-register for classes for which they have not received approval from their advisors. The members agreed with the CEP's proposal that ACDATA be changed to make it impossible for students to pre-register for courses without first receiving the approval of their advisors. Professor Marshall commented that the CEP notes in its proposal that advisors can currently approve multiple lab and discussion sections to permit student choices where appropriate. He agrees that allowing this flexibility should be the desired outcome. He also suggested that it would be helpful to develop a mechanism that would enable advisors to approve all of the options for lab and discussion sections associated with a course, without having to locate each one individually in a very long drop-down list or manually type each one into a text box, which is time-consuming. Dean

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, May 9, 2016

Amended May 16, 2016

Epstein said that she would speak with David Hamilton, chief information officer, about this issue. Professor Benedetto expressed the opinion that, if it turns out that the change cannot be made in the way that Professor Marshall had requested, then no change should be made at all on this point.

Under “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Douglas noted that, during last week’s discussion, the Committee of Six may not have made it clear that delaying the submission of the Curriculum Committee’s report is a possibility. The Committee of Six agreed that the Curriculum Committee should be given the flexibility it needs in this regard. Continuing with questions, Professor Douglas commented that, after talking with some international students about their plans over commencement, he had become aware that some students would not have family members present to celebrate with them. He suggested that the college consider creating a program that would match faculty and staff with students who find themselves in this position. As is done for Thanksgiving, host families could invite students to join them for dinner and could celebrate this important milestone with them in other ways, as well. Dean Epstein said that she would reach out to the Office of Student Affairs about the possibility of creating such a program.

Professor Marshall next commented on the success of the undergraduate award ceremony, Senior Assembly, and the Senior Dinner this year, noting that the decorations used at the Cage had been wonderful and had served to create an excellent atmosphere in this new venue. Continuing with questions, Professor Katsaros asked if the preliminary report of the External Advisory Committee on Diversity, Inclusion, and Excellence would be shared with the faculty. President Martin said that she would take her cue from the external committee. The Board of Trustees will discuss the external committee’s observations at its May meeting. She will report back. Professor Katsaros next commented that, while statistics that had been presented at the May 3 faculty meeting about students’ lack of satisfaction with social life at Amherst had been broken down by underrepresented groups, information about students’ level of satisfaction about their academic experience had not been made available in this format. President Martin said that the data that had been presented had come from two different studies, one focusing on the social experience of students and the other on the academic experience. She noted that students had articulated some of their concerns about their academic experience at Amherst at the meeting about issues relating to the academic workload, which had followed *Amherst Uprising*. Many of these concerns had revolved around stress tied to particular policies at the college. Some of these policies are being reexamined by the Curriculum Committee and the CEP, and proposals for change are expected. The members next had a brief discussion about matters relating to tenure deliberations and procedures.

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, Professor Marshall commented on the “narrowness” of a great many of the

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, May 9, 2016**Amended May 16, 2016**

students' transcripts. Other members concurred that some of the "summa" transcripts were troubling in this regard. Professor Benedetto commented that students with the narrowest transcripts have the highest GPAs. In his experience, many students from more advantaged backgrounds take fewer academic risks in order to ensure that they will receive high grades. He noted that, ironically, students from underrepresented backgrounds and with less preparation are more likely to stretch themselves academically and sometimes earn lower grades as a result. In a way, they are penalized for following their advisors' advice to go outside their comfort zones. The committee discussed whether distribution requirements should be linked to Latin honors and noted the numerous different honors systems that the college has adopted over the years. None of the systems is perfect, it was agreed. Professor Douglas noted that some departments give A-pluses for honors work and courses, and others do not. He wondered whether there is a college policy about A-pluses. The dean said that there is no policy to her knowledge, and that departments determine their own systems.

Conversation turned to a [letter from Professor Rosbottom](#), who has written on behalf of the Advisory Committee of the Program in Architectural Studies, to recommend that the program be moved under the administrative aegis of the Department of Art and the History of Art. The dean noted that she supports this proposal, which would be an administrative move rather than a curricular one. She said that she plans to inform the CEP and the faculty via these minutes, but does not feel that the shift requires the approval of the CEP or the faculty. Dean Epstein explained that the new administrative structure, while not perfect, will enhance the mentoring that can be provided to untenured faculty members and will also offer more faculty resources to students. Authority for the program will continue to rest with the advisory committee. Professor Katsaros expressed some concern that the proposed structure might mean that the architectural program may not grow, since there might be a tendency to rely on faculty in the Department of Art and the History of Art and not to hire faculty for Architectural Studies. The dean commented that the proposed administrative structure would be more robust and thus better able to support new faculty.

The members reviewed a proposal from the College Council to revise its charge. The members expressed reservations about the proposed structure and the proposed mechanism for selecting student-members, which relies on appointment by the Association of Amherst Students (AAS), rather than student-wide elections. The committee agreed that, with the hour growing late and with no other regular Committee of Six meetings scheduled for this academic year, it seems best for next year's Committee of Six should take up this issue in the fall. The members then reviewed a series of proposals from the dean's office to revise other committee charges. The members agreed that the more substantive proposals should be considered by next year's Committee of Six and voted six in favor and zero opposed on substance and six in favor and zero opposed to forward the motions below to the faculty. These motions seek to clarify current language, to codify some current practices, and to remove the provost from the Committee of Six and the Committee on Priorities and Resources, since the position no longer exists at the college.

MOTION ONE

To offer greater clarity and to codify current practice, the Committee of Six proposes the following revisions to the introductory language about committees in the [Faculty](#)

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, May 9, 2016

Amended May 16, 2016

[Handbook, section IV., S.](#), and [Faculty Handbook, section IV., S., 1.](#), effective immediately, as indicated. New language is shown in bold red caps.

Faculty participate in the governance of Amherst College through their actions in meetings of the faculty and through service on committees of the faculty, committees of the college, committees of the Amherst College Board of Trustees, *ad hoc* committees and Five-College committees. For purposes of committee membership, candidates will normally be selected from the ranks of **FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME** ~~the regular tenured and tenure-track~~ **TENURE-LINE** faculty. Committee service is expected of all ~~regular-tenured~~ and tenure-track faculty, except for those in their first year. **AT AMHERST, RETIRING MEMBERS OF COMMITTEES ARE NORMALLY NOT REAPPOINTED OR RE-ELECTED TO THAT COMMITTEE FOR AT LEAST ONE YEAR.**

1. Committees of the Faculty

Faculty Committee Membership. The right to serve on the Committee of Six and the right to vote for members of that committee are limited to professors, associate professors, and assistant professors appointed to ~~regular~~ full-time or part-time ~~tenured and tenure-track~~ **TENURE-LINE** positions. The president of the college serves as chair of the committee, ex officio, and the dean of the faculty serves ex officio as secretary of the committee, each without vote (voted by the faculty, May 1990). The faculty members of the Committee of Educational Policy, the College Council, the Committee on Priorities and Resources and the Committee on Adjudication are elected by the faculty after nomination by the Committee of Six or after nomination from the floor. Faculty members of other regular committees of the faculty are appointed by the Committee of Six, usually for two- or three-year terms. Faculty members of college committees and/or of *ad hoc* committees may be appointed by the president of the college, with the advice of the Committee of Six, or may be elected by the faculty following the balloting system used for the Committee of Six.

MOTION TWO

The Committee of Six proposes the following revisions to the charge of the Committee of Six in the *Faculty Handbook*, [section IV., S.,1. a](#). New language is shown in bold red caps.

Motion Two, A.

The Committee of Six proposes the following changes to remove the provost as an ex officio member of the Committee of Six.

a. The Committee of Six. The executive committee of the faculty, called the Committee of Six, is composed of six members who serve two-year terms. The president of the college, **AND** the dean of the faculty, ~~and the provost~~ serve on the

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, May 9, 2016

Amended May 16, 2016

committee, ex officio, each without vote. The president serves as chair of the committee, and the dean of the faculty serves as secretary of the committee. ~~The provost neither attends those portions of the meetings during which the committee discusses tenure, reappointment, and promotion cases or related procedures, nor participates in decision-making about these matters (amended by vote of the Faculty, May 2014).~~

Motion Two, B.

The Committee of Six proposes the following revisions to codify current practice that allows part-time tenure-line faculty and faculty on phased retirement the option of not being included on the Committee of Six ballot. The Committee of Six proposes additional revisions to clarify the language of this section of the charge and to remove the provost from this section.

At least three of the members of the Committee of Six are elected in the spring of each year by direct faculty ballot. The first list circulated to the faculty consists of all those members of the faculty eligible for election to the Committee of Six. Each faculty member voting must vote for the exact number of vacancies to be filled. On the second ballot, the number of names is four times the number of positions remaining to be filled. On each succeeding ballot, the number of names presented on the ballot is twice the number of positions remaining to be filled. To be elected, a faculty member must receive a majority of the votes cast on a particular ballot. Balloting continues until all the positions to be filled have been filled by faculty members who have received a majority of the votes cast.

DURING ANY GIVEN ELECTION, ~~A~~all professors, associate professors, and assistant professors appointed to ~~regular, part-time or~~ full-time tenure-line positions are ~~eligible to~~ **INCLUDED ON THE** ~~serve on the~~ Committee of Six **BALLOT**, except: 1) the president; **AND** the dean of the faculty ~~and the provost (amended by vote of the faculty, May 2014);~~ 2) those ~~newly appointed during~~ **IN THEIR** first year at Amherst; 3) those who will not be at Amherst for one or both semesters of the year following the election; 4) members of the Committee on Educational Policy; 5) members of the College Council; 6) retiring members of the Committee on Educational Policy and the College Council (who are also ineligible for one year for election or re-election to either of these committees); 7) retiring members of the Committee of Six and those who retired from it in the previous three years (i.e., retiring members cannot be reelected for four years); 8) those who have served three or more terms on the Committee of Six and then exercise the option of taking their names off the ballot each year by contacting the Office of the Dean of the Faculty before the election begins; 9) and under extraordinary personal circumstances, after petitioning the president or the dean of the faculty, those individuals for whom service on the committee would be a particular hardship. **PART-TIME FACULTY MEMBERS IN TENURE-LINE POSITIONS AND THOSE ON PHASED**

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, May 9, 2016

Amended May 16, 2016

RETIREMENT HAVE THE OPTION NOT TO BE INCLUDED ON THE BALLOT.

Motion Two, C.

The Committee of Six proposes the following revisions to codify the current practice of not including on the Committee of Six ballot faculty members who are currently serving at least part-time in an administrative role outside their departments.

At least three of the members of the Committee of Six are elected in the spring of each year by direct faculty ballot. The first list circulated to the faculty consists of all those members of the faculty eligible for election to the Committee of Six. Each faculty member voting must vote for the exact number of vacancies to be filled. On the second ballot, the number of names is four times the number of positions remaining to be filled. On each succeeding ballot, the number of names presented on the ballot is twice the number of positions remaining to be filled. To be elected, a faculty member must receive a majority of the votes cast on a particular ballot. Balloting continues until all the positions to be filled have been filled by faculty members who have received a majority of the votes cast.

DURING ANY GIVEN ELECTION, All professors, associate professors, and assistant professors appointed to ~~regular, part-time or~~ full-time tenure-line positions are ~~eligible to~~ **INCLUDED ON THE** ~~serve on the~~ Committee of Six **BALLOT**, except: 1) the president; **AND** the dean of the faculty and the provost (~~amended by vote of the faculty, May 2014~~); 2) **OTHER FACULTY WHO ARE SERVING AT LEAST PART-TIME IN AN ADMINISTRATIVE ROLE OUTSIDE THEIR DEPARTMENT(S)**; 3) those ~~newly appointed during~~ **IN THEIR** first year at Amherst; 4) those who will not be at Amherst for one or both semesters of the year following the election; 5) members of the Committee on Educational Policy; 6) members of the College Council; 7) retiring members of the Committee on Educational Policy and the College Council (who are also ineligible for one year for election or re-election to either of these committees); 8) retiring members of the Committee of Six and those who retired from it in the previous three years (i.e., retiring members cannot be reelected for four years); 9) those who have served three or more terms on the Committee of Six and then exercise the option of taking their names off the ballot each year by contacting the Office of the Dean of the Faculty before the election begins; 10) and under extraordinary personal circumstances, after petitioning the president or the dean of the faculty, those individuals for whom service on the committee would be a particular hardship. **PART-TIME FACULTY MEMBERS IN TENURE-LINE POSITIONS AND THOSE ON PHASED RETIREMENT HAVE THE OPTION NOT TO BE INCLUDED ON THE BALLOT.**

MOTION THREE

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, May 9, 2016

Amended May 16, 2016

The Committee of Six proposes the following revisions to the charge of the Committee on Priorities and Resources to remove the provost as an ex officio member of the Committee on Priorities and Resources and to update the title shown, as indicated, in the [Faculty Handbook, section IV., S., 1, r.](#) New language is in bold red caps.

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 provost~~, the chief financial and administrative officer and the director of budget and analysis, and the ~~director of~~ **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.

Two of the three student members are elected from the student senate by that body and serve for terms of two years. One of these members is elected in one year, and a second in the other, alternately. A special election conducted from within the senate is used to select replacements for students unable to complete their terms of office. The third student member is selected by the senate from the executive branch of the student government for a one-year term, and serves without vote.

The two staff members of the committee are elected by the staff and normally serve staggered two-year terms.

The voting members of the CPR are its four faculty members, its two staff members, and two of its three student members (as described above).

The purpose of the CPR is to bring a range of faculty, student, and staff opinion to bear upon (1) the process of annually budgeting the resources of the college, and (2) the long-term allocation of resources. To ensure the CPR's involvement in the annual budget process, the administration will bring the budget currently being formulated before the CPR while there is still ample time to affect it. The administration will also present its sense of the priorities among competing claims on the college's resources. The CPR will present to the Amherst College Board of Trustees the committee's views on the annual budget as it is being prepared and on long-term financial concerns. In the spring term, the CPR will also receive and respond to new

Committee of Six Minutes of Monday, May 9, 2016**Amended May 16, 2016**

large capital requests and review the ongoing list of capital priorities and deferred maintenance projects. To discharge its responsibility to assess the continuing ability of the college's financial resources to support its educational mission, the CPR will periodically review the long-term financial impact of such things as the relationship between resources and programs, the level of compensation and benefits, the level and rate of change of the comprehensive fee, and other pertinent matters. To that end, the committee will query other offices and committees about proposals that have financial implications.

Particular responsibilities of the faculty members of the CPR are to represent to the administration the views of the faculty concerning the budget and to report to the faculty each year concerning the status of faculty salaries and compensation.

The committee may request that the Committee of Six include CPR reports or recommendations on the agenda of meetings of the faculty.

The members then reviewed drafts of faculty meeting agendas for the commencement meeting on May 19, as well as for the Labor Day meeting, and voted six in favor and zero opposed to forward both agendas to the faculty.

The meeting ended at 5:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty

Committee of Six Minutes of Thursday, June 9, 2016**Amended June 14, 2016**

The twenty-seventh meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2015-2016 was called to order by President Martin in the president's office at 11:00 A.M. on Thursday, June 9, 2016. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Benedetto, C. Dole, Douglas, Hart, Katsaros, and Marshall; Dean Epstein; and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

Discussion began with the dean sharing her recommendation for the director of the Moss Quantitative Center. The members expressed support for the nominee. The remainder of the meeting was devoted to a personnel matter.

The meeting ended at 12:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Dean of the Faculty