

The Amherst Student



Volume CXXIV

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 1995

Number 15

LOOK OUT BELOW...



Jodi Cohen

Reminding students to watch out for falling snow, huge chunks of white plummeted into the Valentine Quad from the roof of Morrow Dormitory. The first major winter storm of the year dumped about a foot of snow in Amherst.

Committee To Assess Academic Supports

by TOM NASSIM
News Editor

Fulfilling promises made late last year by Dean of the Faculty Ronald Rosbottom, the College has established a new student-faculty committee to examine the support services available to students in "quantitative" disciplines such as mathematics, economics and the natural sciences. The need for such changes was expressed at a Dec. 5 meeting at Charles Drew House which focused on the academic concerns of minorities.

The Ad Hoc Committee on Services for Academic Support will be co-chaired by Associate Professor of Chemistry Patricia O'Hara and Rosbottom. According to the charge circulated to committee members, it "shall study ways of providing appropriate academic support for students who have difficulties in quantitatively-based courses."

The committee is charged with reviewing the present situation at the College, analyzing the support systems presently in place and their budgets, studying the means through which other colleges have addressed this inequality and finally making a recommendation. The recommendation will include steps the College can take in both the short

and long run which will meet the needs of students and support the work of faculty members.

The committee, which will hold its first meeting on Friday, is a coordinated attempt to resolve long-standing problems. "Everybody's happy that we're finally addressing this as a body, instead of fragmented efforts," said Rosbottom.

Lisa Blair '97, one of the speakers at the Drew House meeting and a member of the new committee, was optimistic about its prospects. "I think [this committee] will help put all students on an equal level," she said. "We all come here with different backgrounds and not everyone has had the preparation to excel in quantitative courses, and academic support can help steer them through those rocky areas."

According to committee member and Professor of Biology Richard Goldsby, "the basic issue of concern is the widespread preparation that students bring to courses.... We'll be talking to faculty members in courses where there have been some concerns." President Tom Gerety identified one such program, saying that the "problem centers around the pre-med track, the most rigid track." Gerety believes the pre-med

—Continued on page 3—

Advising Support System Will Be Committee Focus

—Continued from page 1—

track “has the sharpest sense of discouragement, they will be reviewing its tracking methods.”

The 16-member committee includes four student representatives: Blair, Yvette Borrego '95, Ashaki Brown '97, and Quyen Vu '97. The departments of Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics and Computer Science, Psychology and Economics are represented. Also participating are Dean of Students Benson Lieber, Dean of Admission Jane Reynolds and Dean of Freshmen Russell Weigel. According to Goldsby, the committee hopes to have suggestions by the end of the semester.

Nor are support systems for quantitatively-based areas the only ones receiving attention. On Thursday, at 7:30 p.m., a meeting will be held in the Campus Center Frontroom to discuss writing support options. Though mem-

bers of campus minority organizations have been invited, the meeting is “open to all students who want to come and listen,” said Writing Counselor Susan Snively. She explained, “[We will] talk about the kinds of problems and tasks that came our way first semester,” and emphasized that the floor will be open to any concern.

Another effort at reforming support services targets the advising system. Committee on Educational Policy members Charlton Copeland '96, Joshua Klein '96 and Leah Lin '96 recently asked students to evaluate the advising process. Klein expects that “we will end up with a set of proposals,” which will be submitted and voted on by the full faculty.

According to Klein, specific concerns with the present advising system include the lack of contact with advisors during pre-registration week and the needs of freshmen.