

The twenty-third meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2021–2022 was called to order by President Martin via Zoom at 2:30 p.m. on Monday, April 18, 2022. Present via Zoom, in addition to the president, were Professors Clotfelter, Manion, Martini, Schroeder Rodríguez, Umphrey, and Vaughan; Provost and Dean of the Faculty Epstein; and Associate Provost Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with President Martin informing the members that, later in the day, she would be sending an update about the work of the [Campus Safety Advisory Committee and a related recent decision made by the college's board of trustees](#). The president noted that the committee had shared [its report](#) earlier in the day, and she encouraged the members to review the document. President Martin commented on the report's breadth, including its focus on sexual misconduct and student mental health, as these matters touch on the matter of safety, and she noted that the college has already begun to make changes in both areas. The president informed the committee that more information about immediate or planned changes in both realms will be shared with the community by the end of the semester.

Continuing, President Martin noted that a decision to change in fundamental ways the college's campus safety structure by abolishing or disarming the Amherst College police is within the purview of the board of trustees. The board reviewed the report and considered the Campus Safety Advisory Committee's recommendation on this matter at the board's meetings on April 9. The president informed the members that the committee did not recommend disarming the Amherst College Police Department (ACPD), but suggested evaluating whether weapons could be stored unless or until needed. Without any significant examples of places in the United States where this has been used successfully, the administration and the board do not favor this approach. Concern was expressed that potential delays in retrieving a weapon, could have critical repercussions, if there were to be a life-threatening risk, including, but not only, an active shooter on campus. The administration and trustees agreed that the best way to protect the campus in an immediate manner in the event of a serious threat is to have Amherst College police officers carry weapons, but not be present in primarily student spaces, such as residence halls and Valentine dining hall, except in the case of an emergency. After considering thoroughly the question of whether the college should have an armed campus police department, the trustees voted unanimously that it should, while also continuing efforts to shift functions to other units and to define more clearly the roles of the police, as well as the roles of community service officers and the campus safety assistants positions that are housed within the Office of Student Affairs. President Martin noted that the board also endorsed the college's efforts to reduce the number and presence on campus of armed officers. She said that more details about the report and its recommendations will be included in the update and that a summary of additional steps that the college plans to take would also be included.

Concluding her remarks, the president stressed the need to find alternatives to police involvement in the area of mental health crises. She informed the members about her plan, which was supported by the board, to bring in a group of experts to help reduce the college's reliance on the Amherst College police when responding to such crises. She informed the members that the team of consultants will include a former police officer, a college president who spent her career in student affairs leadership, and a physician, among other subject experts. The outside expert group will consult with the Campus Safety Advisory Committee and a wide range of other campus constituencies before making recommendations surrounding mental health initiatives, the president noted.

The committee thanked the president for the summary she had provided. In discussing the proposal that armed police not be present in residence halls except in the event of an emergency, the members asked if staff in the Office of Student Affairs who could be called up to respond to crises would be asked for their views about this idea. President Martin said that such consultation has and will continue to take place. She noted that it is her understanding that Liz Agosto, chief student affairs officer and dean of students, feels that it is necessary to have the Amherst College police serve as a back-up to student affairs staff in the event of an emergency. The discussion ended with the president informing the members that she plans to send an update on the college's anti-racism action plan later in the week.

Under "Questions from Committee Members," Professor Manion asked if it is possible to continue to have classes meet outdoors in tents. She commented on how much many faculty and students have enjoyed teaching and learning in the tents, noting the positive impact that has been felt on campus in regard to overall morale and mental health. Professor Manion said that it is her understanding that, in order to prepare for

commencement on May 29, the tents will be removed one week from today; she asked if they can be left in place until the end of classes. President Martin said that she had been concerned when she had learned about the need to remove the tents and sympathizes with this request. She understands that this is a facilities issue, however, and that the tents have to come down before the end of classes to prepare for commencement and other end-of-year events for seniors. She noted that she will consult with colleagues to see if it is possible to have tents available for a longer period of time prior to the end of classes.

Continuing with questions, Professor Clotfelter noted that he and other members of his department had recently attended a Workday training session and had observed that the learning curve for faculty and students will be steeper than colleagues had expected. Anticipating problems that could be faced by advisors if students do not attend Workday training to learn how to load information into Workday before their first meeting with their advisors, he asked the provost if students could be required to attend Workday training during late spring and over the summer. As possible enforcement mechanisms, Professor Clotfelter suggested that, perhaps, students' I.D.s could be rendered inactive or holds could be placed on registrations. Provost Epstein thanked Professor Clotfelter for raising this issue and said that she would speak with the staff colleagues leading efforts to implement Workday about this proposal and the problem more generally. Problems surrounding Workday are not unanticipated, she noted. Some progress has been made in efforts to replicate some processes from the Colleague system within Workday—for example, the ability to have two advisors sign off on some student requests—while noting that the system is fairly rigid. Some features surrounding advising that are possible now, however, will not be possible in Workday—at least at the outset. One example is the ability to generate an anomaly report if a student registers for a course without an advisor's approval, something that is possible in Colleague. She noted that Workday is a “young” product and that it is expected that it will be possible to add new features in the future. Professor Manion said that she had also attended a Workday training session and had been disappointed in the functionality of Workday Student, commenting that the system is not intuitive, requires many “clicks” when it seems that fewer should be possible, and does not make use of the vocabulary that is used universally within higher education. Thus, the user has to learn a set of new terms. She commented that some schools have abandoned Workday Student after implementing it, with some keeping other parts of the suite, and suggested that Amherst consider doing so. The provost said that there are no plans to abandon Workday Student.

Concluding the “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Paul Schroeder Rodríguez asked the president and provost about the City Streets festival, which had been held on April 10 and which he could not attend. President Martin said that the event had been very well attended and was a success, despite the cold weather. Provost Epstein agreed, noting that the mood and food had been great.

Conversation turned to the April 26 faculty meeting. The members voted on a series of motions, following up on discussions that had taken place at the committee's April 11 Committee of Six meeting. Professors Martini and Schroeder Rodríguez first drew straws to determine which of them (as Committee of Six members who would ordinarily be serving for a second year on the Committee of Six) should be proposed as members of the Faculty Executive Committee (FEC) and Tenure and Promotion Committee (TPC), respectively, for the next academic year. Based on the results of this exercise, the members agreed to propose that Professor Martini be appointed to the FEC and that Professor Schroeder Rodríguez be appointed to the TPC, each to serve for the 2022–2023 academic year. The members voted four in favor and zero opposed on the substance of the motion and four in favor and zero opposed to forward the motion to the faculty. Professors Martini and Schroeder Rodríguez abstained.

The members next considered a motion to revise the procedures used for tenure cases for appointments at the level of professor and associate professor with tenure, proposing that ad hoc committees comprising tenured faculty from related departments no longer be part of this process. The members reiterated their support for this proposal. It was agreed that the work carried out by such ad hoc committees, which places an undue burden on faculty from other departments, is duplicative of departmental efforts. The members did not see a reason for having an additional layer of review as a “check” on departments that are making senior hires. The committee expressed the view that departments are in the best position to assemble tenure dossiers and make tenure recommendations, as long as the future Tenure and Promotion Committee reviews the letters from the external reviewers soon after the submission of the department's recommendation, and has the

option of asking for additional external reviews, in order to give candidates' cases the fullest possible consideration and to address any concerns raised by any member(s) of the committee. This is a regular feature of the tenure process for tenure cases other than senior-hire cases now.

It was noted that, currently, the review of tenure cases of senior hires often occurs in a very compressed timeframe. Depending on how late in the spring the hire is made, the case is reviewed by the Committee of Six in the spring or the fall. When cases are delayed until the fall, the new hires most often come to the college as visitors for the first semester or year of their appointments. It is recommended that they not resign from their current positions until the tenure process is complete. This structure is not ideal for candidates, it was noted, and it is hoped that, by removing the ad hoc committee layer of review, it may be possible to complete the tenure process for more senior-hires in the spring. A member commented that the hiring of a greater number of senior colleagues has been a culture shift over the past decade. The president and provost noted that hiring at the senior level has been a successful way of addressing needs that have arisen due to the current demographics of the Amherst faculty—i.e., a large cohort of assistant professors and a significant cohort of longtime professors who have been retiring at a steady rate in recent years. The members commented that, while most of Amherst's tenure procedures may be used for senior-hire cases, and should be to the extent possible, the materials that are available to evaluate teaching effectiveness differ for senior hires. Whatever information is available—from student evaluations from the individuals' former institutions to examples of candidates' syllabi—are considered as part of the Committee of Six's rigorous review of teaching records, it was noted; but it is not likely that the teaching evaluation processes at other institutions will precisely mimic those at Amherst. The committee then voted six in favor and zero opposed on content and six in favor and zero opposed to forward the motion below to the faculty.

That the [Faculty Handbook \(III., A., final paragraph\)](#), be revised as indicated below with red text and black strike-outs. If approved, these changes will go into effect immediately.

Procedures for Academic Appointments to Tenured or Tenure-Track (Regular) Positions

At all ranks, new appointments to tenured or tenure-track positions are made by a recommendation from the president to the board of trustees, which has the final power of appointment.

For all such positions, the authorization to search requires the approval of the president or the provost and dean of the faculty, after consultation with the appropriate departments or committees and with the Committee on Educational Policy on the nature and ranking of the position. The president and/or the provost and dean of the faculty normally interview all final candidates and formulate all offers.

A faculty member may be jointly appointed to two departments, either upon joining the faculty after a formal search or as a current member of the faculty on the invitation of a second academic unit. The faculty member with such an appointment will participate as a voting member in all personnel and curricular decisions concerning his or her two home departments. As well, he or she will have the same rank and will teach regularly in both departments. All requests for changes in joint affiliations, including those for such appointments and for resignations, will be directed to the provost and dean of the faculty who will ask for the department's advice before making a change in appointment.

Recommendations for all appointments at the level of assistant professor, associate professor, and professor originate with the department or the committee responsible and are discussed by the chair of the department with the provost and dean of the faculty or the president. An appointment at the associate professor level may be made with or without tenure.

~~For~~ **To the extent possible, the college's regular tenure procedures are followed for** appointments at the level of professor or associate professor with tenure. ~~an ad hoc committee will be appointed by and report to the president. In forming such a committee, the president will consult with the Committee of Six and will draw upon the tenured~~

~~professors in the department(s) concerned, those from related departments, and the provost and dean of the faculty. Before formulating a final offer for appointment with tenure, the president will consult the departments concerned and consider the recommendations of the Committee of Six and the provost and dean of the faculty, and will subsequently inform all parties of the final decision.~~

The members then voted unanimously to forward the faculty meeting agenda for April 26 to the faculty.

Discussion returned briefly to the role of the chair of the FEC. The members agreed that the chair should collaborate with Provost Epstein and Associate Provost Tobin on a regular basis in setting the FEC's agenda. The members also decided that, if the committee holds open office hours for faculty, as the members had discussed earlier, that the entire committee is involved, rather than the chair alone. There should be multiple modalities for faculty to communicate with the FEC, ideally, it was agreed. Individual faculty and groups of colleagues, as well as members of other committees, should be encouraged to attend office hours, write to the FEC directly, and to engage with the members in other ways, the committee noted. The provost and the members stressed the importance of the president attending meetings of the FEC and the Tenure and Promotion Committee. President Martin said that it will be essential for the meetings of the committees not to exceed the envisioned schedule, in order to make this possible. Provost Epstein said that she expects that the FEC will meet twice a month, for ninety minutes, and that the Tenure and Promotion Committee will meet only to review faculty personnel cases and to consider related procedural issues, as needed. Noting that the new committee structure has been put in place as a three-year pilot, a member asked how assessment will be undertaken. It was agreed that it would be most informative to survey the faculty at the end of each academic year over the course of the pilot and to make refinements. At the conclusion of the three-year pilot period, the FEC should consider various mechanisms for gathering feedback about the effectiveness of the new structure.

The meeting ended with a conversation about a proposal prepared by the provost's office to revise the language in the *Faculty Handbook* about the reappointment procedures for tenure-track faculty, with the goal of ensuring alignment with practice. The members reviewed proposed revisions to the *Faculty Handbook* and, in the process, considered some questions that the provost's office had raised—including whether the Tenure and Promotion Committee should review candidates' scholarship at the time of reappointment (the members felt that departments should be expected to do so but that the committee should not), issues surrounding the ways in which honors students should be asked to evaluate their experiences with their thesis advisors, in order to protect students' identities (perhaps by ending the practice of having end-of-semester evaluations and instead soliciting letters annually from honors students); whether the provost should continue the relatively recent practice of sharing and discussing with the candidate and the department chair the minutes of the committee's deliberations, once the reappointment process has concluded (the members felt that this practice should continue, but that the members' votes should not be disclosed); and the process that should be used to determine whether the committee should meet with departments if serious questions arise about a case (it was agreed that the use of straw votes would be an effective tool). The committee discussed draft revisions to the section on the meaning of reappointment, as well as proposed language for criteria for reappointment. At the conclusion of the discussion and based on the decisions that they had just made, the members agreed to discuss at their next meeting a slightly revised "clean" draft of the language that they would consider. This version would not include strike-outs of current language (making the document easier to read). Once the members approve the proposed revisions, the goal is to bring them forward to the faculty in May.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Provost and Dean of the Faculty