

The twenty-fifth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2019–2020 was called to order by President Martin via Zoom at 2:30 P.M. on Monday, April 20, 2020. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Basu, Brooks, Goutte, Horton, Schmalzbauer, and Sims; Provost and Dean of the Faculty Epstein; and Associate Provost Tobin, recorder.

Under “Topics of the Day,” the committee expressed support for having a virtual town-hall meeting the next evening for faculty and others who attend faculty meetings. Since the time of the members’ last meeting, President Martin and Provost Epstein had proposed holding the meeting, and the committee had supported the plan. All agreed that, during this time of social distancing, regular communication is particularly important. Provost Epstein commented that the unpredictable nature of the pandemic makes it challenging to plan for the future. Though this is an uncertain time, planning for a range of scenarios is exactly what the college must continue to do, she noted, and engaging the community in this effort will be critical. At the town-hall meeting, the president and provost said they would convey their view that it seems less and less likely that the fall semester will take shape as it ordinarily does. Provost Epstein said that she and President Martin want faculty to know that it will be necessary to begin to prepare, now and over the summer, to teach in a number of modalities in the fall—in-person, remotely, and in a hybrid format (a combination of remote and in-person learning). The provost commented that, at the town hall, she, President Martin, and Kevin Weinman, chief financial and administrative officer, would discuss the senior staff’s current thinking about various possibilities, in the hope of stimulating attendees’ creative thinking. In addition, she said, K. Weinman would briefly explain the seriousness of the financial challenges that Amherst is facing now and those that the college may face in the future. President Martin and Provost Epstein informed the members that it has been decided that the college will be open in some format in the fall, but that a number of possible scenarios are being examined. They stressed that, at this juncture, it is too early to make other decisions.

President Martin shared with the committee some details about what would need to be in place before students can return to campus (e.g., the ability to conduct widespread, accurate testing and contact tracing; having sufficient supplies of personal protective equipment; extending social-distancing protocols, perhaps including having students who may be on campus living in single rooms; and having the flexibility to adopt different strategies quickly, if needed). Professor Sims asked if science faculty might be able to begin conducting research in their labs, perhaps before it is possible to resume teaching on campus. President Martin said that she has been learning more about protocols that private labs would need to adopt if Governor Baker softens some social-distancing restrictions after May 4. For example, labs would need to have scientists work in shifts, to reduce the number of individuals in labs at one time, President Martin has learned. Everyone would need to wear gloves, masks, and gowns and have their temperature taken on a regular basis and testing, if possible, and rigorous social-distancing procedures would need to be in place. In addition, the labs would need to be able to change course quickly if problems arose. The president said that she is thinking about how these protocols could possibly be put in place in Amherst’s labs in the near term, in order to begin to bring Amherst scientists back into their labs. Nothing could be done, however, without the current restrictions being lifted, and the college having necessary protocols and supplies in place. Conditions would not be easy, if all this does come to pass, President Martin said, but she knows that faculty are eager to return to their research. The president informed the members that she has been consulting with government officials about possibilities and plans, including Congresswoman Katherine Clark, who represents the Fifth District of Massachusetts. On behalf of all Amherst science faculty, Professor Goutte expressed tremendous appreciation to the president for focusing on the issue of how research programs might resume in the sciences, even with necessary restrictions. She asked the president to share this information at the faculty town hall, given the many concerns about this issue.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Sims asked how the college’s planning is being guided by science and public health information or expertise. President Martin responded that consultation with experts in the field of medicine and public health is essential, in her view. The college is fortunate that a number of Amherst alumni and members of the college’s board of trustees are leaders in these fields, and that they are generously providing advice to her. They include Ezekiel Emanuel ’79, vice provost for global initiatives, chair of the Department of Medical Ethics and Health Policy, and Diane v.S. Levy and Robert M. Levy University Professor at the Perelman School of Medicine and the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania; David Kessler ’79, professor of pediatrics and epidemiology and biostatistics at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), former dean of the medical schools at Yale and the UCSF, and former commissioner of the Federal Drug Administration; and Harold Varmus ’61, Nobel Prize-winning scientist, Lewis Thomas University

Professor of Medicine at Weill Cornell Medicine and a senior associate at the New York Genome Center, and former director of the National Institutes of Health and National Cancer Institute; and Amherst trustee Shirley Tilghman, president emerita of Princeton and professor of molecular biology and public affairs there. President Martin noted that she has also been consulting with leaders within higher education. Provost Epstein is in regular contact with her counterparts within the Northeast deans' group, the NESCAC (New England Small College Athletic Conference), and the Five Colleges. President Martin noted that she is also drawing on Amherst's accomplished alumni and trustees to engage the college community in thinking further about the current and future impact of the pandemic. As was recently announced, she is convening a series of interviews and panels that will be live-streamed next week. The first of these events will take place on April 28 and will feature Nobel Prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz '64 H'74 and private equity manager and Amherst trustee David Novak '91, who will discuss the economic ramifications of the pandemic. Two days later, there will be a panel discussion that includes Professor Tilghman, Dr. Varmus, and Dr. Kessler. The committee expressed enthusiasm for these upcoming conversations and thanked President Martin for arranging them.

Professor Horton, praising the ongoing communication that has been taking place via emails from the administration and in the form of virtual town halls and meetings with department chairs, wondered if a (virtual) faculty meeting should also be held in the near term—even if there no formal business to conduct. He commented on the importance of maintaining the structures of faculty governance even during this unusual time. There are decisions surrounding the pandemic that should be made by the faculty, or on which the faculty should be consulted, as well as decisions that are clearly within the purview of the administration, Professor Horton noted. Professor Brooks commented that, when decisions are made, it would be helpful if the administration would be clear about who is making them. Professor Basu said that she has recognized the need for the administration to make recent decisions quickly, and to take decisive action as events have warranted. At times, however, doing so has meant more limited consultation with the Committee of Six, she has observed. Professor Basu commented that, as a result, some may worry that there will a reduced role for faculty governance at the college during the time of the pandemic; with this thought in mind, she wonders what questions that the faculty raise should be decided on by the Committee of Six. Provost Epstein commented that there are some matters on which departments may need to weigh in, and some that will involve the faculty as a whole. One of the issues that will come before the faculty first, she imagines, are any changes to the academic schedule that may be proposed. Decisions involving the curriculum will also be brought to the faculty, the provost noted. All agreed that creative thinking and a willingness to be flexible will be central to decision-making in the months to come.

Provost Epstein noted that plans also call for the Committee of Six to continue to meet weekly through May, and during June as well—perhaps biweekly or as needed. This schedule will enable the president and provost to continue to consult with the members on a regular basis. In addition, Provost Epstein said that she anticipates that broad faculty engagement in considering different scenarios will likely occur after classes end, when more information will have been gathered about possible options, and so as not to place additional pressure on colleagues at this point in the semester. In regard to developing and making recommendations about possible options that the college may wish to pursue, Provost Epstein informed the members that President Martin has constituted three working groups; faculty members, including the chairs of the Committee on Priorities and Resources (CPR) and the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP), will play a central role in the groups' deliberations. She noted that President Martin has asked K. Weinman to chair the Finance Working Group (the other members are Professor Jack Cheney, associate provost and associate dean of the faculty; Professor Javier Corrales, chair of the CPR; Tom Dwyer, director of financial planning and assistant treasurer; Kelley Mannix, assistant director of athletics for business operations; and Lisa Rutherford, chief policy officer and general counsel). Provost Epstein informed the members that the president has asked her to chair the other two groups. They are the Remote/Hybrid Learning Working Group (the other members are Riley Caldwell O'Keefe, director of the Center for Teaching and Learning; Professor Chris Durr; Jaya Kannan, director of technology for curriculum and research; Professor Ted Melillo, chair of the CEP; and Professor Austin Sarat, associate provost and associate dean of the faculty) and the Logistics Working Group, which will consider preparations that would be needed to bring students back to campus (the other members are Jesse Barba, director of institutional research and registrar services; Jim Brassord, chief of campus operations; Karu Kozuma, chief student affairs officer; and Matt McGann, dean of admission and financial aid). President Martin noted that the working groups will provide valuable information that will inform the efforts of the campus-wide committee that she will constitute in the next several weeks. This committee will resemble the

2008 Ad Hoc Advisory Budget Committee (ABC) in its make-up, with representation from all constituencies. The president and provost emphasized the importance of engaging the entire Amherst community in thinking about the challenges ahead, and in developing solutions. The members expressed appreciation and support for these plans and recommended that, at the upcoming town-hall meeting, as many specifics as possible be communicated. If different scenarios could be presented, then colleagues could start thinking about how they need to prepare, even if it is not known which scenario will ultimately take place. The committee asked when details about scenario-planning might be made available and the timetable for making decisions. The president and provost said that the hope is that more should be known in several weeks.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Sims inquired how students are being kept informed about the information under discussion. President Martin, who noted that the dean of students communicates with students via email frequently, informed the members that a virtual town-hall meeting for students would take place later in the week. Professor Sims, who said that she was pleased to learn of this meeting, next asked the provost for more information about how hybrid teaching is being envisioned. Provost Epstein explained that this form of teaching would make use of both remote and in-person instruction. It might be possible, for example, to offer two sections of the same course, one for students on campus and another for those who would need to access the course remotely. If extensive online teaching must take place in the fall, the provost said, the college will need to provide tools beyond Zoom. In the coming days, the working group devoted to hybrid and remote learning will be speaking with a number of vendors to learn more about the technology and support that could be provided to the faculty, with the goal of enhancing the ways in which content-rich and engaging courses could be developed and taught. In regard to the schedule in the fall, there are many possibilities. Things could start out being virtual, with students being brought back to campus later in the fall, or it could be the other way around. Another idea is to adopt a model that has been developed by Beloit College, which is currently garnering a lot of attention. Under this plan, the fall 2020 semester would be divided into two modules. Instead of a typical course load of four simultaneous courses over fifteen weeks, students would take two courses for seven weeks, have a break for a week, and then take two other courses for seven weeks. Courses would meet for six hours a week during these compressed modules. Faculty would each teach one course a module under the plan. Among the advantages would be that students and faculty would be juggling fewer courses and could concentrate on the material being taught and learned. There would also be additional flexibility if transitions needed to be made from on-campus instruction to remote instruction, the provost noted.

Turning to the next topic of conversation, Professor Horton asked about plans for the committee to meet with the Presidential Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion. Provost Epstein said that she would make the necessary arrangements (a meeting was subsequently scheduled for May 8). Thanking the provost, Professor Horton inquired as to whether the task force has issued any reports. President Martin said that she would confirm with Norm Jones, chief diversity and inclusion officer, what reports have been completed. The members also expressed the need to learn more about the work of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI), noting the important role that the ODI and the task force can play in working closely with faculty, students, and staff. The committee asked if it would be possible to meet with the members of the ODI as well. The members then returned to their conversation about finding ways for the college to address issues of racism on campus, a discussion that was now informed by their recent meeting with two leaders of the Black Student Union (BSU). President Martin, who has met with the BSU leadership in recent months, informed the committee that she would be meeting with the students again the next day. She said that she would be interested to learn more about the committee's meeting with the BSU.

The committee felt that its meeting, which was conducted as a listening session, had been informative and productive. The students had discussed matters relating to the recent racist incident involving members of the lacrosse team, the BSU's proposals for changes that Amherst should make to prevent and address hate speech and other racist acts on campus, and the BSU's call for greater clarity and transparency about college rules and procedures surrounding racist incidents. The members noted that they had largely listened during the meeting, asking clarifying questions, as needed. It was noted that the BSU is asking the college to follow up on the work of the External Advisory Committee on Diversity, Inclusion, and Excellence, which made recommendations in June of 2016, and on the ongoing work of the Presidential Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion, which has been developing a bias-response protocol and restorative practices. The committee noted that the BSU discussed the task force's proposal that the college institute bias-response protocols and restorative-justice practices to respond to incidents of hate speech and other racist acts on campus, a proposal recently renewed by the BSU. Right now, the students had informed the committee, practices surrounding reporting racist incidents

are informal, and many students do not know when or how to go through more formal channels that may be in place or how they will know if any action has been taken. President Martin said that she supports developing processes for handling alleged bias incidents and in documenting such incidents. The president commented that, in the past, in informal discussions, some have resisted the idea of bias-reporting systems at Amherst because of the potential threat that academic freedom and freedom of expression could be abridged. Perhaps the simultaneous implementation of restorative-justice practices could be helpful if a bias-reporting system is put in place at Amherst, however. The president and provost commented on the difficulty of extending bias-reporting protocols to a classroom setting. It was agreed that the issue of academic freedom and freedom of expression in the classroom need to be considered very carefully.

The members agreed that it is essential that the faculty address bias reporting in a way that protects academic freedom. President Martin commented that, while she has agreed with many of the students' proposals, reconsidering the language of the college's policy on academic freedom and freedom of expression is a faculty governance issue. She has stressed to the students that the Committee of Six developed, and the faculty approved, the college's Statement of Academic and Expressive Freedom, and that any change to the statement would require a vote of the faculty.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Brooks noted that the faculty has not discussed the relationship between academic freedom, freedom of expression, and hate speech during her time at the college, and she stressed the importance of doing so. While the committee emphasized that hate speech, including racist language, is not acceptable, the BSU does not accept that the college has responded in ways that indicate that this is true at Amherst, the members noted, and has not created effective structures for preventing and addressing such incidents. President Martin expressed the hope that addressing this issue would not become mired in the college's sometimes time-intensive processes. In some matters, such as this one, that have become urgent, the entire community should become involved in bringing about change, in her view. All agreed that, in fact, racism on campus is an urgent matter. Professor Basu expressed the view that ways should be found to deliberate around these issues now, rather than deferring consideration until the next academic year. The other members agreed and discussed the possibility of holding a faculty meeting in the near term that would include a committee-of-the-whole conversation about the matters that the committee had been discussing. After a wide-ranging conversation, it was agreed that the limitations of social distancing and the Zoom environment would make a committee-of-the-whole very challenging. The committee ultimately decided to defer holding a faculty meeting until it had been able to gather more information and engage in additional consultation on how best to address racism on campus.

Beyond a formal faculty meeting, the members discussed approaches that could take place at this time to focus the faculty's attention and concern on these important matters. Professor Schmalzbauer said that she would like to learn more about the issues that have been discussed surrounding academic freedom and freedom of expression, specifically in relation to racist or hate speech. She proposed organizing some virtual panel discussions led by Amherst faculty and other scholars who are knowledgeable about this topic, including current debates, in order to learn how to frame the faculty's future conversations. The other members agreed that engaging the faculty in discussion about academic freedom and freedom of expression in relation to hate speech, as soon as possible, is important, and that providing a range of perspectives is essential—both through events and, possibly by sharing relevant materials.

President Martin noted that, when she had re-read the report of the external committee recently, she had been struck once again by its emphasis on the need for the college to take an educational approach to addressing issues surrounding diversity and inclusion at Amherst. Most prominently, the external committee had recommended that Amherst find more ways to build intellectual community. President Martin said that she has long held the view that creating more shared intellectual experiences for students across difference is key to such efforts, an approach recommended by the external committee—and an approach that the curriculum committee also recommended. The members noted that at their meeting with the BSU, the students questioned why the college is not doing more to ensure that all Amherst students are educated about the history of racism in this country. President Martin said that she supports the curriculum committee's proposal for a sophomore seminar, for example, which Professor Basu noted could include a focus on this history, and which could help students develop a better understanding of current Amherst students' experiences as members of underrepresented groups on campus, and the racism that persists in this country at a structural level.

Continuing her remarks, President Martin noted that, while the curriculum committee had recommended a new required sophomore seminar, which could both help students build foundational skills and gain a better

understanding of issues surrounding racism, she is disappointed that the proposal has not garnered the support of the faculty. Professor Basu, a member of the curriculum committee, agreed wholeheartedly with the president, and she recommended that the Committee of Six include on its agenda soon the sophomore seminar and the curriculum committee's proposal regarding advising. The latter is also extremely important in this context, in light of the concerns raised by the BSU, Professor Basu said. Professor Goutte, who indicated her support for doing so, noted that the Committee of Six is an important conduit of information, and she suggested that ways be found for the committee to consider issues of diversity comprehensively as part of its regular work, rather than doing so only in response to incidents of racism.

Professor Schmalzbauer said that she also feels that it is important that all Amherst students take some courses that have a focus on issues of race, class, gender, and inequality. She noted the challenge of ensuring that students do so, when the first-year seminar remains the only college-wide requirement. Professor Schmalzbauer expressed concern about the narrowness of the student demographics in the courses that she teaches that touch on the areas under discussion. It could be useful, Professor Schmalzbauer suggested, to gather data on the demographic make-up of the students taking these courses across the college. Provost Epstein said that she would ask J. Barba to gather this information for the committee's review. President Martin concurred that this would be helpful information to inform future discussions, and Provost Epstein concurred that the data could be telling. President Martin commented that she is aware that the college has good data on issues surrounding race, class, and gender and the ways in which students access the curriculum.

Continuing the discussion of steps that can be taken now, Professors Basu and Brooks proposed that departments be asked to think about their curricula and to ensure that majors take some courses that address racism and exclusion. Professor Brooks suggested that departments could require majors to take a course in another department that enables their majors to develop their capacity for thinking critically about race, including histories and structures of racism. The members agreed that ways should be found to engage departments in this work and to foster collaborations across departments. Professor Basu asked whether certain athletic teams bear particular responsibility for acts of racism. She wonders whether this could be explored through the kind of investigations that had been conducted by the Ad Hoc Committee on Sexual Misconduct (SMOC). President Martin commented that the college does not have the data that suggest that athletic teams engage in racist behavior more than other groups do. Students have described a culture of racism at the college that is pervasive, the president commented, including in the classroom among some faculty and among some of their classmates.

The members agreed on the importance of taking tangible steps to move these issues forward. In addition to the ideas described above, it was agreed that the honor code should be revisited and possibly revised. To ensure that next year's Committee of Six takes up this issue, and that there is continuity in the approaches that will be taken, the members agree to meet with the new members on May 18 to discuss this topic. In addition to agreeing to meet with the presidential task force and ODI staff, members noted plans to meet with the BSU leadership again soon. In addition, the committee recommended that the administration develop a proposal for a bias-reporting protocol that would include restorative practices. President Martin commented that this work has already begun.

Provost Epstein next informed the members that she would soon announce the appointment of Pawan Dhingra, professor of American studies, to the position of faculty diversity and inclusion officer and David Schneider, Andrew W. Mellon Professor of Music, to the position of class dean. She noted that these colleagues would assume their administrative roles on a half-time basis for a term of three years, with the possibility of renewal, beginning July 1, 2020. She also informed the members that Professor Rick López will continue to serve as dean of new students, and that, under a new structure that has been developed to enhance our focus on the sophomore year, Senior Associate Dean of Students Jess Caldwell-O'Keefe will now serve as the dean of sophomores on a continuing basis. In the next academic year, Senior Associate Dean of Students Charri Boykin-East will be the class dean for the class of '22, and Professor Schneider will assume the role of class dean for the class of '21, for which Dean Caldwell-O'Keefe has been the class dean. In the future, Deans López and Caldwell-O'Keefe will continue in their respective deanly roles for first-years and sophomores, respectively, the other faculty class dean and Dean Boykin-East will each become the class dean for a junior class, continuing with that class through graduation. Professor Schneider will serve as the class dean for the class of '21 this fall and then become the class dean for the class of '23 the following year. Professor Dhingra will join Allen Hart, James E. Ostendarp Professor of Psychology, as one of the college's two faculty diversity and inclusion officers, who are situated within the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. The position supports and

advances the college's efforts to recruit and retain highly talented, promising, and accomplished scholar-teachers. Responsibilities include serving as a resource/mentor for faculty to support their career advancement, developing and implementing strategies that contribute to successful searches for faculty positions, conducting exit interviews with candidates for faculty positions, and developing and presenting workshops on topics in the area of diversity and inclusion that are of particular interest to faculty members.

Under "Questions from Committee Members," Professor Schmalzbauer noted that she was delighted to learn that Carlos Adolfo Gonzalez Sierra '14 has received the Paul and Daisy Soros Fellowship for New Americans. She noted that it is her understanding that Carlos is the first DACA student to win the award. She views the award as a wonderful honor and celebration of Amherst and its students, she commented. The other members agreed.

The committee then discussed an email from Professor Rangan in which she and Professor Frank asked about Amherst's current plans regarding contingent faculty. Provost Epstein said that the college is honoring all written commitments to new visitors, as well as the multi-year commitments that have been made to visitors previously. To her knowledge, there are very few visitors who will be leaving Amherst who will do so without moving on to positions elsewhere. The provost said that she envisions that very few new visitors will be hired during the foreseeable future. In regard to the question of lab instructors the provost said that those who occupy these positions are permanent staff who are essential to the academic mission. Lecturers are considered permanent faculty on renewable contracts who are essential to the academic mission. Provost Epstein commented that she cannot make more definitive statements at this time about extending the contracts of visitors who will conclude their contracts this year, but noted that she anticipates that, given financial pressures and uncertainty about student enrollments, hard decisions may need to be made. A member asked if visitors will have access to support that is envisioned for permanent faculty who will be teaching online. The provost said that all faculty will have access to these opportunities for faculty development. She also informed the members that she has written to all new faculty, both tenure-line and visitors, who will begin their positions at Amherst on July 1, 2020. She assured these colleagues that their appointments are secure. Professor Sims asked if faculty who have half-time appointments might be asked to teach additional courses if this is needed to ensure smaller classes sizes in the fall. Provost Epstein said that this is a possibility, but that she would need to know more about how the fall will take shape before knowing that is an option.

The members then discussed some of the topics that the committee hopes to address in its remaining meetings, which include finding ways to measure the distribution of service activities across such factors as faculty rank, departments/fields, gender, and race to try to determine if service obligations are equitable; guidelines for the administration of the common teaching evaluation form; several recommendations of the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee (as noted above); and clarification of the criteria for tenure.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Provost and Dean of the Faculty