

The twenty-first 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, March 28, 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 the provost informing the members that this year's Lazerowitz Lecturer is Sanam Nader-Esfahani, assistant professor of French. She will deliver a lecture titled "Lenses of Paper, Lenses of Power," on Thursday April 21, at 4:00 P.M., in the Kirkpatrick Lecture Hall in the science center. A reception will follow. The Lazerowitz Lecture is delivered each year by an Amherst faculty member below the rank of full professor, Provost Epstein noted.

Under "Questions from Committee Members," Professor Manion asked for an update on the presidential search process. President Martin said that she understands that the search is proceeding on schedule, while noting that she is not playing a role in the process. Professor Umphrey, a member of the search committee, commented that there is quite a bit of work ahead, but that it is hoped that a new president will be named by the end of May or early June.

Continuing with questions, Professor Schroeder Rodríguez asked, on behalf of a colleague, about the progress of discussions about having the college cover the costs of course materials for Amherst students. Provost Epstein, commenting that materials fees for art courses are now covered, noted that this is a complicated issue. She said that she would ask Matt McGann, dean of admission and financial aid, about the current thinking about covering the cost of materials for other courses.

Professor Vaughan next asked if the president and provost would provide information about the recently admitted class (admission decisions were released on March 18). Provost Epstein informed the members that the college had received 14,800 applications, a record high. There was a 7 percent admission rate, and 1,026 students were admitted this year. Plans call for a first-year class of 473 students. In regard to demographics, President Martin informed the members that 62 percent of admitted students are domestic students of color; 22 percent are first-generation college students; and 9 percent are international students. Fifty-one countries outside the United States and forty-seven states are represented in the accepted class, in addition to the District of Columbia and four U.S. territories. Students have until May 2, to accept or decline their offer of admission, it was noted.

Concluding "Questions from Committee Members," Professor Umphrey asked if the college plans to lift some of the requirements surrounding masking and/or other COVID protocols, as the case numbers continue to decline. President Martin said that an announcement about lifting some restrictions would be sent later in the week ([see the announcement of March 30, 2022](#), for details of these changes). The members then discussed the possibility of meeting in person and decided to wait a couple of weeks before making a decision about whether to do so. Conversation turned to a personnel matter.

Discussion returned to the committee's draft charges (see links to the charges in the motions at the end of these minutes) for the proposed Faculty Executive Committee (FEC) and Tenure and Promotion Committee (TPC). The members discussed final details surrounding exemptions from the ballot for the Faculty Executive Committee. The committee felt that, for the most part, the exemptions that have been in place for some time for the Committee of Six should be carried over ([See Faculty Handbook IV.1., S., a.](#)), with the exception that current and retiring members of some other faculty committees (e.g., the Committee on Educational Policy) should now be on the ballot. For the TPC, the committee will propose that no untenured faculty be on the ballot. The guiding principle in these decisions, it was agreed, should be finding ways to distribute service on the two major committees (the FEC and the TPC) among more eligible faculty, instead of having the same small group of faculty serve. Some members and the provost expressed some concern that, under this proposal, there might be a shortage of experienced tenured members to serve on the FEC and TPC, given that about one-sixth of the faculty is on leave in any given year. Others felt that newer tenured faculty should be given the opportunity to serve, and that the exceptions could be changed in the future, if it becomes necessary.

In regard to course release, Provost Epstein said that the president and she have decided that, if the proposed charges are approved, the tenure-track member of the FEC would receive one course release during the year in which the individual serves. The tenured members of the FEC and the members of the TPC (all of whom would be tenured) would receive one course release over the term in which individuals

would serve (one year if a member goes on leave, or two years otherwise). Some members suggested that, if a choice had to be made about course release, it would be most important for the chair to be given one, even if this meant that the other members would not receive one. The members decided to discuss this matter further.

The committee agreed to hold a faculty meeting on April 5 and to include on the agenda motions to divide the Committee of Six into two separate committees and motions to create the charges for these committees. In addition, the members decided to bring forward their motion to [revise the Faculty Handbook language about the criteria for tenure](#), with the purpose of enhancing clarity and achieving greater alignment with practice—codifying current standards rather than developing new expectations. The committee then voted six in favor and zero opposed on the substance of the following motions and six in favor and zero opposed to forward them to the faculty. Following that vote, the members voted six in favor and zero opposed to forward the faculty meeting agenda for the meeting of April 5, 2022, to the faculty.

Motion 1

That the Committee of Six be renamed the Faculty Executive Committee and that responsibility for faculty personnel matters be removed from the committee's charge;

That a new committee, the Tenure and Promotion Committee, be created and charged with the responsibilities in this domain that are currently within the purview of the Committee of Six—the evaluation of reappointment, tenure, and promotion cases and procedures, and related recommendations, and recommendations for named professorships. The procedures for these faculty personnel processes would remain unchanged;

That these changes take effect on July 1, 2022, and remain in effect until July 1, 2025, with the exception that the election of members to serve on the two bodies for the next academic year take place as soon as possible. If no proposal comes forward to adopt a different structure for carrying out the work of these committees, or to revert to the prior structure, these changes will remain in effect.

It was agreed that the next two motions would be considered if Motion 1 passed. The members noted that, if the faculty votes to divide the Committee of Six into two separate committees, it will be necessary to revise the [Faculty Handbook IV.S.,1.](#) and [Faculty Handbook IV.S., 1., a.](#) In addition, other references to the Committee of Six in the *Faculty Handbook* would need to be replaced with *Faculty Executive Committee* or *Tenure and Promotion Committee*, depending on the responsibilities being described, in accordance with the approved charges of the two committees.

Motion 2A

That [the proposed charge](#) be adopted for the Faculty Executive Committee, replacing [the current charge for the Committee of Six](#), under the schedule and parameters outlined in Motion 1, and that the *Faculty Handbook* be revised accordingly.

Motion 2B

That [the proposed charge](#) be adopted for the Tenure and Promotion Committee, under the schedule and parameters outlined in Motion 1, and that the *Faculty Handbook* be revised accordingly.

Motion Three

That the *Faculty Handbook* language about the criteria for tenure ([Faculty Handbook III., E., 3.](#)) be revised as indicated with red text and strike-outs below. If approved,

these revisions will be effective immediately and apply to all current and future tenure-track faculty.

3. The Criteria for Tenure

The college values faculty whose commitment to the life of the mind is demonstrated through **excellence in teaching, scholarship, and/or the creation of works of art, and contributions to professional service.** ~~and a concern for the general life of the college.~~ **Amherst tenures faculty who demonstrate growth, achievement, and continuing promise in both scholarship and teaching, evinced by a notable record of scholarly and/or artistic accomplishment and a demonstrated ability to teach undergraduates effectively. These two aspects of a candidate's record are of primary consideration in the tenure decision. Strength in one will not compensate for shortcoming in the other. A record of scholarly excellence must include evidence of original, peer-reviewed research and/or its equivalent in the creative arts. A record of teaching excellence must include evidence of the ability to convey knowledge and engage students in rigorous and stimulating ways, and a commitment to their intellectual and personal growth and academic accomplishment. Additionally, faculty members are expected to contribute to their home departments and programs, to the life and work of the college, and to their professional fields.** ~~Although distinguishing one quality from another—even for the purpose of discussion—separates what is inseparable in the life of a single individual, the distinctions which follow are an attempt to provide a clear description of the qualities the college seeks, especially among faculty who hold appointment without term. Effective teaching is regarded as a prime factor for reappointment and promotion. The college also gives great weight to the continued scholarly growth of faculty members. Research, publication and creative work are considered important indications of such growth. In addition, the college takes account of a faculty member's general contribution to the life of the college community.~~

~~While the balance among the varieties of intellectual distinction prerequisite to tenure may vary from individual to individual and from field to field, effective teaching or significant contribution to the community's well-being cannot compensate for absence of scholarship or creative work. Institutional considerations may play a role at the time of tenure, but if they are invoked, the president will give a full account of the reasons why. Institutional considerations include factors such as the tenure structure of the department, the rank structure of the department, and the fields of competence of the faculty member being considered for tenure in relation to those already represented in the department. Although the college has no formula for the percentage of faculty on tenure, or for the distribution of faculty by anticipated retirement or rank generally or within departments, a particular judgment may be made which takes such factors into account (adopted by trustee vote, April 4, 1992).~~

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Provost and Dean of the Faculty