

The fifth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2021–2022 was called to order by President Martin via Zoom at 10:30 A.M. on Wednesday, October 13, 2021. Present, 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.

Much of the meeting was devoted to the consideration of a personnel matter. Following that discussion, the members reviewed a draft of the committee's proposal to revise the first paragraph of the *Faculty Handbook* language about the criteria for tenure ([Faculty Handbook, III., E., 3.](#)). The proposal builds on the efforts of last year's Committee of Six, with the incorporation of some revisions offered by this year's committee. The members approved the draft and discussed whether the revised language, if approved by the faculty, should apply to all current and future tenure-track faculty, or whether tenure-track faculty who are at the college now should be grandfathered, as the current articulation of the tenure criteria was in place at the time they were hired. Since the changes to the language would not represent a change in policy, but would instead provide greater clarity about practices of very long standing, the members decided that the revised criteria should apply to all tenure-track faculty. It was noted that tenure-track faculty have asked for greater transparency surrounding the tenure process, and that the proposal has been developed with this request in mind. The members agreed to bring the proposal to the faculty at the first faculty meeting in the spring of 2022. The proposal reads as follows (proposed changes are in blue text and black strike-outs):

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 members next discussed the committee's draft template for departmental expectations for tenure, a document that the committee has been developing to guide departments' efforts to articulate their expectations for tenure—drawing on the standards of excellence in their disciplines. After making some further refinements, including incorporating the proposed language for the college-wide tenure criteria, the members agreed to review the template again at the committee's next meeting. The committee decided to share the finalized version with the chairs of academic departments prior to the November meeting of the chairs. Once departments complete the templates, the Committee of Six will be asked to review them and to offer feedback, as needed, Provost Epstein noted. It will be important for departments to share what they value and what is given the greatest weight in their disciplines, while not being so specific that flexibility cannot be preserved, as has been noted previously. At the committee's request, the provost agreed to provide a memo to the chairs that would frame the conversation about the template.

The meeting ended after the members reviewed a final draft of a motion to revise the procedure that Committee of Six members follow when the tenure cases of faculty members from their departments are considered. Currently, in accordance with the procedure voted by the faculty in 1986 (see [Faculty Handbook III., E., 4., e.](#) and [Faculty Handbook, IV., S., 1., a.](#)), under these circumstances, members must remain present during all tenure deliberations, but cannot participate in the committee's discussion or vote in the case of a colleague from their department. ([See the committee's minutes of August 30, 2021, and October 4, 2021](#), about the proposed revision, which, if approved, would result in members being absent when the committee considers the departmental colleague's case individually.) The members approved the language and agreed that the motion should be brought forward to the faculty at the first faculty meeting in the spring of 2022.

The meeting adjourned at 11:46 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Provost and Dean of the Faculty