

The first meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2018–2019 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:15 P.M. on Monday, September 10, 2018. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Basu, Engelhardt, Heim, Horton, Jaswal, Schmalzbauer and Dean Epstein, and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

Under “Topics of the Day,” Dean Epstein expressed gratitude to the many members of the community who have helped bring the science center project to fruition. She noted that [the annual summer research poster session](#), which was held in the new building on September 7, was a wonderful celebration of student work, and of the new space. The dean, who said that she also recognizes the challenges associated with a construction project of this scale and complexity, including the need to move a great deal of scientific equipment and to adjust to a new environment, thanked colleagues for their patience during this period of transition. Professor Jaswal noted that it would be important to be cognizant of the impact of the delay in research experienced by pre-tenure colleagues. The dean said that she is aware of this issue and is working on addressing faculty members’ needs on a case-by-case basis.

Dean Epstein reviewed issues of confidentiality and attribution in the committee’s minutes, noting that the public minutes should be used as a guide in regard to questions of whether matters discussed by the committee can be shared with others. She informed the members that, in her experience, very few conversations (with the exception of personnel matters and committee nominations that are under consideration) have not been included in the committee’s public minutes. The dean explained that minutes of discussions of certain sensitive or unresolved matters and plans in their formative stages, about which the president and the dean are seeking the advice of the Committee of Six, have sometimes been kept confidential. Generally, conversations about these issues are made public once the matter is in a less tentative state. Dean Epstein also discussed the circumstances under which the committee would communicate via email. It was agreed that email will not be used to communicate about personnel or other confidential matters, and that the use of email should be kept to a minimum in general.

Continuing with her remarks about the ways in which the committee will work, the dean discussed with the members the longstanding policy of appending letters to the minutes when the committee has discussed the matters contained within them. Colleagues are informed by the dean’s office as to when their letters will be appended. If colleagues state at the outset that they do not want the contents of a letter discussed in the public minutes, the committee will decide whether it wishes to take up the matter in question. The members decided that, for reasons of transparency, comments by committee members should be attributed by name in the minutes. It was agreed that the committee’s regular meeting times will be 3:15 P.M. on Mondays and 3:00 P.M. on Thursdays this fall.

The members then decided that the following dates should be held for possible faculty meetings during the fall semester: October 2, October 16, November 6, December 4, and December 18. The dean informed the members that Janet Tobin, associate dean for academic administration, will continue to serve as the recorder of Committee of Six minutes. Nancy Ratner, director of academic projects, will serve as the recorder of the faculty meeting minutes. The committee then turned briefly to a personnel matter.

Dean Epstein reviewed with the members a list of potential agenda items for the Committee of Six for the fall and invited the members to propose additional items. It was agreed that major issues for discussion by the committee will include the report of the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee; a continuation of last year’s work to clarify the criteria for tenure; issues surrounding support for associate professors, including “service sabbaticals”; a continuation of the committee’s work to clarify the criteria for promotion to full professor; mentoring of tenure-track faculty; some issues raised by the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) at the end of the last academic year (see [the CEP’s letter of May 8, 2018](#)); and teaching evaluations, among other topics. Professor Basu requested that the committee consider a proposal for a Five College Certificate in Reproductive Health, Rights and Justice, which the CEP and Committee of Six had reviewed last spring. Some members of the Committee of Six had raised a series of concerns about the proposal and had suggested that it be revised. It was agreed that this year’s committee will discuss the proposal.

The dean next consulted with the committee about the process that should be used to consider [the report of the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee](#), specifically whether it would be preferable to have a committee-of-the-whole conversation at a faculty meeting before forwarding the report to the CEP, which presumably will develop motions for the recommendations that are outlined in the report. These motions would be brought to the faculty for a vote. Professor Engelhardt said that he favors having a committee-of-the-whole discussion of the report at a faculty meeting as a first step. Alternatively, Professor Basu expressed the view that it would be preferable for the Committee of Six to forward the report to the CEP initially, as the full faculty's subsequent discussion would then be more focused on specific proposals from the CEP. Professor Horton pointed out that taking such an approach would also mitigate delays and allow the report to come before the faculty expeditiously. The members decided to have a discussion and then to forward the report to the CEP, without having a committee-of-whole conversation at a faculty meeting first.

Dean Epstein next raised the topic of developing a common teaching evaluation form. Tenure-track faculty members have expressed a strong desire for such an instrument, she noted, and have expressed the view that the current system of having forms that vary by department creates inequities. The dean commented that, in the spring of 2016, the Committee of Six had approved a form for a pilot that had been undertaken with a small number of faculty members who had volunteered to use the form. As part of the experiment, the director of the forerunner of the Center for Teaching and Learning, hari kumar, had developed a process of administration that had proven to be time-consuming and unsustainable. Professor Schmalzbauer shared her department's experience with participating in the pilot and noted that she appreciates the intent and spirit of the current form. At the same time, she feels that it would be desirable to re-examine the content of the form and to develop procedures surrounding its administration.

Continuing, the dean noted that last year's CEP expressed concerns about the quality of the form and would not endorse it as the default form for the evaluation of untenured faculty members' courses. Currently, the college offers a default form for tenured faculty that the CEP developed. In addition to recommending that the teaching evaluation form itself should be improved, with the goal of garnering more informative feedback, there have also been conversations about finding and implementing ways to improve the return rate on teaching evaluations, Dean Epstein noted. Last year's Committee of Six agreed that developing a common form should be a top priority, while noting the complexities involved in gaining consensus among departments. It was also agreed that the college should continue to take a qualitative approach to evaluating teaching effectiveness and should not switch to a numeric rating system.

Dean Epstein suggested that an ad hoc committee be formed to undertake this work. Professor Horton, commenting that the curriculum committee has recommended that a committee on student learning be created, wondered if the development of a common teaching evaluation form should be one of the first efforts of this body. Dean Epstein responded that she favors the establishment of such a committee and will work with the Committee of Six on this initiative, but feels that it will take some time to implement. It is her view that work should begin as soon as possible to develop the form and that constituting an ad hoc committee will move the project forward. The members agreed to form an ad hoc committee to work on developing a common form to use as one means of evaluating the classroom teaching of tenure-track faculty. The majority of the questions on the form should be designed to be standardized or uniform and suitable for use across departments, it was decided. The form should also allow departments the option of including additional questions, in order to evaluate aspects of teaching that they consider to be specific to their disciplines. The members decided to ask that the ad hoc committee also offer general guidance on the development of such customized questions, incorporating best practices. Professor Jaswal suggested that, in so doing, and as part of its general charge, the ad hoc committee consider issues surrounding implicit bias—in regard to the design of questions and the interpretation of results. Professor Schmalzbauer recommended that the committee also propose procedures for administration of the form. The other members agreed that this would be a good idea,

noting that it should be made explicit that responsibility for providing the form to students, and explaining the process of evaluation, lies with the tenured members of departments. The members also decided that the ad hoc committee should be asked to identify approaches to increase student response rates. Professor Basu wondered if the form that is developed for pre-tenure faculty should also be used by tenured faculty members. The committee agreed that this might be desirable, but decided to focus on developing and implementing the form for pre-tenure faculty initially.

The members discussed the composition of the ad hoc committee, agreeing that faculty members should serve, and that the ad hoc committee should consult broadly with academic departments and programs; department chairs and other tenured faculty members; the Consultative Group for Untenured Faculty and other tenure-track faculty members; former members of the Committee of Six; the Center for Teaching and Learning; the Office of Diversity and Inclusion; the director of institutional research and registrar services; and other colleagues on campus. In addition, the members decided that the committee should be asked to explore relevant literature and to seek information about the forms and practices used by peer institutions. The committee agreed to consider a formal charge at its next meeting and to develop a list of colleagues who might serve on the ad hoc committee.

Dean Epstein next asked the members for their thoughts about announcing to the Amherst community each year, via email, the names of faculty members who have been reappointed, tenured, or promoted to full professor. The committee expressed support for this idea. The dean then informed the members that Professor George has agreed to continue in the role of parliamentarian.

Returning to the topic of issues on which the members will focus this year, the dean consulted with the committee about moving forward with the Committee of Six's work of last year to clarify the criteria for tenure, aligning language with practice; to support associate professors, many of whom become overburdened with service obligations, including through a proposal for a "service sabbatical" (relief from college service for a semester or year following a leave); and clarifying the standards for promotion to full professor. The service sabbatical and promotion proposals were intertwined, it was noted; part of the reason for relieving associate professors of significant service burdens would be to create more space for them to continue to be productive scholars, effective teachers, and engaged citizens of the college during the years between receiving tenure and promotion to full professor. Professor Heim commented that members of last year's Committee of Six were divided about whether their efforts to clarify criteria for promotion to full professor should be construed as clarifying the standards for promotion or raising the standards. It was agreed that this year's committee should review the proposals to revise the language of the criteria for tenure and promotion to full professor, and the proposal to create service sabbaticals. A first step could be to meet with associate and full professors, who have not yet been consulted unless they served as department chair last year (the proposals were discussed at a meeting of the chairs). Another issue raised during the conversation with chairs was whether promotion to full professor should become automatic after a specified period had passed.

Under "Questions from Committee Members," on behalf of a colleague, Professor Basu asked whether the college is interested in joining the [New University in Exile Consortium](#) (New UIE Consortium). She noted that The New School launched the initiative to confront threats to scholars around the world. The founding member institutions are Barnard College, Brown University, Columbia University, Connecticut College, Georgetown University, George Mason University, The New School, Rutgers University-Newark, Trinity College, and Wellesley College. Professor Basu provided the members with a link to an article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* titled "[As Anti-Academic Anger Goes Global, Eleven American Colleges Revive an Institution for Exiles.](#)" She noted that each of the colleges and universities has made a commitment to host at least one endangered scholar. The dean said that she does not have updated information about the requirements and costs of joining the group. Professor Basu agreed to gather additional information and to report back to the committee.

At 4:15 P.M., Lisa Rutherford, chief policy officer and general counsel, and Norm Jones, chief diversity and inclusion officer, joined the meeting. Ms. Rutherford, offered general legal advice related to the tenure process and answered questions posed by the committee. Mr. Jones spoke with the members about approaches to mitigating bias when reading teaching evaluations, and in the tenure process more generally. At the conclusion of the conversation, the members thanked Ms. Rutherford and Mr. Jones, and they left the meeting at 4:51 P.M.

Continuing with questions, Professor Jaswal asked if there are plans to inform new chairs of faculty committees about the work of their committees, an idea that she recalls was an outgrowth of the Committee of Six's meeting last year with the Faculty Committee on Admission and Financial Aid (FCAFA). The president noted that the FCAFA did not meet last year, as it had been focusing on the report of the Ad Hoc Faculty Committee on Athletics. The need to sustain this focus, rather than to carry out its regular charge, had had an impact on the committee's ability to do its work. Dean Epstein noted that her office is currently organizing a meeting of chairs of major committees to discuss the role and work of the committees and how they can be most effective. Both new chairs and experienced chairs will participate. In addition, the dean's office arranged for former members of the Committee of Six to meet with new members to introduce new colleagues to the role of the committee and its responsibilities. The new members of the committee noted that the session had been very helpful. Concluding the discussion of issues on which the committee will work this fall, Professor Heim asked whether it might be desirable to develop a proposal to revise the Latin honors system, as there was a discussion at a faculty meeting at the end of last year in which some faculty raised concern about the current system. The dean noted that this is a complex issue and that she would add it to the list of topics. On a somewhat related faculty governance note, Professor Engelhardt asked what the quorum number is for the fall semester. The dean said that it is ninety-three.

Prompted by [an email that Chief of Campus Operations Jim Brassord had sent to all faculty and staff on September 6 about the "Future Use of Merrill and McGuire,"](#) Professors Engelhardt and Heim asked whether faculty members will be consulted about how space needs at the college will be met. Professor Engelhardt, responding to concerns shared by a colleague, noted that Mr. Brassord's communication, which included a statement that suggested that the Merrill site might be used for a new student center in the future, seemed to reinforce the notion that upgrading student spaces appears to be the college's priority, rather than addressing the needs of more teaching, research, and faculty office space. Professor Horton raised concern about a "mothballed" Merrill becoming an "eyesore" on campus and wondered how planning would proceed, in particular whether there is sufficient funding to address this problem. President Martin said that no decision has been made about future uses for Merrill and McGuire, including whether the buildings should be renovated or torn down. She sees the need for two processes to get under way at this time. One should focus on the short term, identifying and developing a timeline for projects that will meet immediate, urgent needs. Offices for faculty members and administrators and classrooms (in Chapin and Barrett, for example) fall into this category, in her view. Faculty will certainly be consulted as part of this work, she noted, adding that she plans to meet with Mr. Brassord and a small group of other administrators to develop a process. The second process will focus on major building and/or renovation projects that have been identified, which represent long-term, competing needs at this point (e.g., library, music building, Mead Art Museum, and student center), and which cannot be undertaken any time soon because of cost, the president said. Mr. Brassord's intention is to reconvene the Campus Framework Planning Committee, which was active during the strategic planning process, to consider these projects. This committee included members of the faculty, and faculty would be a part of the committee once again if it were to be reconstituted. President Martin said that she will report back to the committee about these two processes once she learns more.

On a related note in regard to the transformative potential that building projects hold, Professor Jaswal commented that the new science center is already proving to be a space in which community-building is taking place. President Martin agreed and said that she has been delighted to see students using the common spaces for study and conversation during her visits to the science center.

The members next reviewed proposals for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Summer Stipend competition and the Mellon New Directions Fellowship and selected nominees.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein  
Dean of the Faculty

The second meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2018–2019 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:15 P.M. on Monday, September 17, 2018. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Basu, Engelhardt, Heim, Horton, Jaswal, Schmalzbauer and Dean Epstein, and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with Dean Epstein informing the members that Professor McGeoch has agreed to serve as the parliamentarian in the event that Professor George is unable to attend a faculty meeting.

The members then continued their discussion of [The New University in Exile Consortium](#), (New UIE Consortium), an initiative created by The New School to bring “endangered scholars” to host institutions in this country. Professor Basu reported that she had called the founder of the program, Arien Mack, Alfred and Monette Marrow Professor of Psychology at The New School for Social Research, to learn more about the details of the program, including the costs of joining the consortium and the responsibilities required of host institutions. She said that she had learned that the expectation is that all members of the consortium will host a scholar for a two-year period and provide funding for the individual to attend seminars in New York on two occasions. In addition, the host institution provides the scholar with a salary of \$50,000 a year. It is possible that this amount could be reduced if another source of funding can be directed toward the salary, for example, if a scholar meets the criteria for support from the [Scholar Rescue Fund](#). In that case, that fund might support the scholar with a fellowship of \$25,000, and the host institution would be asked to match this amount.

Continuing, Professor Basu noted that there are a number of ways of identifying scholars. Some are listed on the University in Exile website and can be invited based on the information provided there, the institution can propose an individual, or a scholar might also be a participant in the Scholars Rescue Fund or [Scholars at Risk Program](#), of which Amherst is a member. The scholar may teach at the host institution, or just conduct research, depending on the preferences of the host, Professor Basu noted. Professor Heim asked about the next steps for a scholar at the conclusion of the two-year appointment at the host college or university. Professor Basu commented that one of the goals of the University in Exile program is to create a sense of community and to provide opportunities for the scholars to build professional networks. She noted that the advisory group for the program includes a number of distinguished scholars, some of whom have relationships with Amherst, or have spoken here. The committee suggested that it could be helpful to contact some of these individuals to learn more about the consortium.

The dean said that it is her understanding that placing scholars after their appointments end can present a challenge and a dilemma. She is aware of instances in which a host institution has felt an obligation to retain a scholar, as the individual might otherwise have had to return to a dangerous situation at home. Dean Epstein also knows of one case in which a scholar did secure a permanent appointment at another institution once the term at the host institution, after being extended, had ended. The dean also noted that it can be difficult to identify and vet scholars who would be good “matches” for a liberal arts curriculum. She said that the Five-College deans have discussed this issue. The deans have agreed to contribute to the Scholars at Risk Program via a donation, but generally prefer not to host scholars. Dean Epstein further commented that, when Amherst is deciding where to allocate its resources, choices have to be made. Joining the New University in Exile Consortium would likely mean not participating in and/or supporting another initiative, for example the Consortium for Faculty Diversity Scholars.

Professor Basu said that it would be helpful for the committee to be informed of the potential trade-offs that might need to be made to participate in the consortium. She argued for joining the program and potentially hosting a scholar, noting that doing so is consistent with the strategic plan’s priority that the college “prepare students for increasing global interdependence by cultivating international programs and perspectives.” Professor Schmalzbauer agreed, commenting that Amherst’s participation in the consortium would signal a commitment to academic freedom and diversity and inclusion. She expressed the view that, at present, Amherst seems conspicuously absent from the list of consortium members. The dean responded that many of Amherst’s peer institutions are not members of the consortium. Professor Basu recounted that the consortium’s leader is enthusiastic about Amherst becoming a member and

wondered why such a well-resourced institution might hesitate to join a group that seems consistent with its values.

Continuing, Professor Basu said that she wonders if consortium scholars could be included in the applicant pools for the two-year fellow positions at the Center for Humanistic Inquiry (CHI), or whether hosting them could be part of a Five-College effort that would lead to having them shared among institutions. The CHI has a theme that is selected for two years, and any scholars who would be associated with the center at a given time would have to have a research focus related to the theme, and/or teach courses that did so. In all likelihood, it would be difficult to find a match in the scholar pool, the dean said. Professor Jaswal wondered if a CHI theme could be developed around fields of endangered scholars. Professor Basu thought a possible theme could be “scholarship in exile.” Professor Horton, who noted that he has served on the advisory committee for the CHI, commented that adding this element to the already complex process of selecting fellows seems impractical. At the conclusion of the conversation, the committee suggested that information be gathered about the experiences of peer institutions, such as Wellesley and Trinity, that have joined the consortium. Professor Basu agreed to gather additional information in response to the questions that had been raised and to learn more about the experiences of peer institutions. She will then report back to the committee, she said.

Conversation turned to the topic of a new teaching prize that the college plans to establish in honor of Jeff Ferguson, the inaugural Karen and Brian Conway '80, P'18 Presidential Teaching Professor at the Amherst, who died last March. The intention is to award the prize beginning this spring, Dean Epstein said. The members asked about the origins of the award. President Martin explained that friends and family of Professor Ferguson contacted the college about the possibility of creating a prize in his honor, noting that they would like to contribute. Contributions are still coming in, and a donor has agreed to match whatever is raised if more funding is needed, President Martin said. She commented that she has granted this request, which she sees as a fitting tribute to Professor Ferguson, and hopes there will be future prizes of this kind. The dean's office worked out the details of the award, the winners of which will be selected by the Committee of Six, it has been agreed.

Continuing with the discussion, Professor Horton asked if Amherst has other teaching awards. The dean responded that the Association of Amherst Students (AAS) gives a teaching award each year. It was developed and is administered by students. President Martin said that she is hopeful that the college will develop a culture that places more emphasis on appreciation; giving awards of this kind will support that goal, in her view. Professor Basu agreed, commenting that doing more to honor faculty at different stages of their careers is something that the college should facilitate. The members reviewed the draft of a description of the prize, which included the criteria for selecting the two faculty members who will receive it each year. Referencing the draft description, which stated that eligibility for the award would be limited to tenured faculty members who have been at the college for at least ten years, Professor Engelhardt asked the dean why this constraint would be put in place. The dean said that, by taking this approach, the award would not become a consideration in tenure decisions and would be a way of honoring a substantial record of teaching. Professor Engelhardt agreed that these features of the award make sense. After more discussion about some of the details of the prize, which will carry a \$5,000 honorarium, and consideration of some revisions to the draft of its description, the members agreed that they would review a final version of the document at their next meeting. The dean would then be asked to solicit nominations, in accordance with the process outlined in the description, with the aim of awarding the prize to two faculty members this spring. The prize's description, once finalized, will be included in a future Committee of Six minutes.

The members next discussed nominations for several faculty committees. Before the conversation began, Professor Basu asked if untenured faculty members are regularly invited to serve on committees and, if so, whether this responsibility is evenly divided among them. The dean responded that efforts are made to give all tenure-track faculty members a committee assignment during their pre-tenure years. Consideration is given to the charges of the committees so that the service for faculty at this career stage is not too much of a burden.

Under “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Engelhardt commented that he was pleased to learn that Amherst College, along with two dozen or so other institutions of higher learning in Massachusetts, has joined the Higher Education Coalition of [Vote Yes on Three](#), thus endorsing a “yes” vote to uphold the 2016 Massachusetts law that prohibits discrimination against transgender people in public spaces. A vote on whether to uphold or repeal the law will be question three on the November ballot.

Continuing with questions, Professor Schmalzbauer shared with the committee information that had appeared in an article in the [Journal of Blacks in Higher Education](#) in August that pointed to a challenge facing Amherst. The piece focuses on the *Princeton Review*’s ranking of colleges in the category of “race/class interaction,” which was described as how strongly students who had been surveyed “agreed that different types of students interact frequently and easily at their schools.” The article includes the following passage: “Surprisingly, Amherst College in Massachusetts, which routinely finishes atop the rankings of the [JBHE annual survey](#) of Black students at the nation’s leading liberal arts colleges, was 11th on the list of schools with little race/class interaction.” President Martin and Dean Epstein agreed that finding ways to build community across difference is a priority at Amherst, and that the issue represents a challenge. The president pointed to a compelling opinion piece in the *Amherst Student* that she had just read on the topic of self-segregation. She noted that, in the piece, titled “[Grappling with Self-Segregation on Campus](#),” the author, Jae Yun Ham, a first-year Amherst student, describes his experiences with initially gravitating toward students who share his ethnicity. He also discusses his realization that he wants to form relationships with those from different backgrounds, as well. In his conclusion, the president said, Jae calls on the administration and student groups to create more ways for students to share their experiences with one another to promote cross-cultural interaction. President Martin agreed that answering this call is important. Dean Epstein agreed and noted that thinking about ways to address this problem is under way, though there is no one or easy solution. Professor Jaswal expressed the view that part of the problem is a lack of spaces at the college that bring students of different backgrounds together to engage in shared activities. She reiterated that she is seeing progress on this front in the open spaces of the new science center. President Martin agreed that the college needs more spaces of this kind. Professor Schmalzbauer said that it is her hope that this concern will be centered in discussions that are under way about the curriculum, athletics, and the organization of space on campus.

The members next discussed a schedule for its annual meetings with the members of the Consultative Group for Tenure-Track Faculty and with all untenured faculty. It was agreed that a meeting should be scheduled in the fall with the consultative group and that the committee could ask for the group’s guidance about the best time for meeting with all tenure-track faculty. In addition, in the spring, the president and the dean will meet separately with the consultative group and the tenure-track faculty, it was noted. Commenting that there are many new faculty members at the college at present, Professor Jaswal suggested that the president and the dean remind those who speak at faculty meetings to say their name and department before making remarks, helping members of the community put names to faces. She also proposed that, when calling on those who have their hands up, the president and dean make use of the inclusive pedagogy technique of calling first on someone who has not yet spoken.

The committee turned to a draft of a charge for the proposed Ad Hoc Committee for the Development of a Common Form to Evaluate Classroom Teaching. After considering the pros and cons of different options, the members agreed that, while it would be desirable to have the committee consider a broad range of mechanisms and issues surrounding the evaluation of teaching at Amherst, it would be best for the envisioned ad hoc committee to focus its work on developing a common teaching evaluation form. By narrowing the charge of the committee, it should be possible to develop a common form this year and to implement it in 2019–2020. The dean noted that many pre-tenure faculty members have requested that such a form be created, and it is her hope to complete this project this year, if at all possible. The committee agreed that a more holistic examination of the evaluation of teaching at the college should follow later. Perhaps the ad hoc committee on student learning proposed by the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee, could undertake this work, Professor Horton suggested. Professor Basu asked if



it might be possible for an entity other than an ad hoc committee to undertake this work. After some conversation, it was agreed that it is important that the development of the form be a faculty-driven effort, in consultation with other campus constituencies. The members decided that the director of the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) and the new assistant director of the center would bring valuable expertise to this work, and should be of counsel to the ad hoc committee, attending all meetings. The dean said that she would also consult with Professor Gentzler, faculty director of the CTL, about the matter. The members suggested some revisions to the draft charge for the ad hoc committee and agreed to finalize the document at their next meeting.

The committee next discussed whether to hold a faculty meeting on October 2 and possible agenda items. Professor Heim reminded the members that the committee, prompted by [a January 2, 2018, letter from Professor Wagaman](#), had agreed that the topic of intellectual responsibility should be on an upcoming faculty meeting agenda. The dean noted that this subject had been discussed briefly at a meeting of the chairs of academic departments and programs last May, and at a session for new faculty as part of their orientation program this year. Professor Horton noted that Professor Wagaman raised many important issues in her letter, for example, the question of whether a teaching evaluation should be solicited from a student against whom a faculty member has made allegations of misconduct. Professor Schmalzbauer asked if the program "[turnitin](#)" is used regularly by Amherst faculty as a way of checking for plagiarism. She noted that, at other institutions where she has worked, the practice was that all papers would go through the program before being turned in to the faculty member. The dean said that this is not Amherst's practice at this time, and that she is aware that some faculty have expressed philosophical objections to this approach, which might communicate that the college does not trust its students. Professor Engelhardt commented that some faculty feel that using this program in the way that has been described would curtail their flexibility when it comes to addressing incidents of plagiarism. Professor Schmalzbauer noted that the program just points out "red flags," showing the exact origin of excerpts from other sources that students have incorporated into their papers, and that the faculty member retains flexibility in how to address the issues that have been identified. She has found it helpful to have the tool as a resource, as it allows faculty to identify overt plagiarism in contrast to a student's misunderstanding of how to cite or what should be cited. The committee agreed that the topic of intellectual responsibility should be on a future faculty meeting agenda, and that a member of the Office of Student Affairs could give a presentation as part of the discussion.

Continuing with the conversation about the faculty meeting agenda, the members decided that, for the October 2 meeting, a discussion of the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee's proposal for the Non-Recorded/Pass Fail Option should be carried over from the last academic year. A committee-of-the-whole discussion of the proposal had appeared on the faculty meeting agenda of May 1, 2018, but time had run out at the meeting before the faculty could have the conversation. [The Committee on Educational Policy \(CEP\)'s letter of March 27, 2018](#), discusses the current version of the proposal, which includes changes made to the original by the CEP and Committee of Six. In addition, the members decided to invite Jodi Foley, director of accessibility services, to give a presentation about student accommodations and other issues (see the discussion of issues raised by the CEP later in the minutes). The full agenda would be approved at the committee's next meeting, it was noted. The members then turned briefly to a personnel matter.

The Committee next discussed issues raised in [a letter that had been sent to last year's Committee of Six by the CEP on May 8, 2018](#). Last year's members had not discussed this document because it had arrived after the Committee of Six had completed its work for the year. The committee turned to the first topic that the CEP had raised, the "growing trend in the college to require students in particular majors to achieve a particular grade in classes in order for these classes to count towards the major." The conversation began with Professor Engelhardt commenting on the Department of Economics' requirement that a student who receives a grade of *D* in a core theory course, in order to count the course toward the major, must take a special topics course on that area of core theory. The effect of this requirement, he commented, is that students are less able to explore an open curriculum because they lose the ability to choose one course. Professor Basu wondered how many students have been unable to

complete majors in departments that are putting restrictions of this kind in place. Dean Epstein said that she suspects that the number of students is very small. Professor Horton expressed concern that the restrictions are likely having the most impact on less-well-prepared students. He worries that students could be discouraged from pursuing a major as a result of encountering this barrier. In a sense, students could experience what amounts to double jeopardy, he said. They can pass a course, but it doesn't count for an important purpose. Professor Heim asked what happens to seniors under these restrictions, as they cannot graduate without a major. Dean Epstein said that such situations are quite challenging but that the college works assiduously to find solutions.

Continuing the conversation, the members wondered whether departments should be able to set a grade minimum for their courses and/or their majors. Professor Basu said that she would like to know how many departments are setting minimum GPAs for majors and if this is a trend, what is driving it. She wondered whether one reason might be that some departments believe that the allocation of FTEs is less dependent than it was in the past, on the number of majors. The dean pointed out that, while the number of majors is not usually significant, departmental enrollments are a consideration when making FTE allocations.

The committee asked the dean to consult with Jesse Barba, director of institutional research and registrar services, to determine how many departments have put restrictions in place that resemble those described in the CEP's letter. The committee would like to know each department's rationale for doing so and how many students are being affected by this practice. On a related note, the members discussed the downward trend in the number of students who are writing theses at Amherst. They wondered whether there is a relationship between GPA and undertaking and completing honors work, and whether this trend disproportionately affects students of color and/or first-generation students. The dean noted that the downward trend began about a decade ago. In 2009, 53 percent of Amherst students wrote a thesis and received honors. At present, 40 percent of Amherst students complete theses and receive honors. It was agreed that the increasing number of double and triple majors might also be having an impact on the number of students who write theses. The members were reminded that the CEP had proposed last year that a motion be brought to the faculty to eliminate the triple major. The idea had emerged during the consideration of minors, and had become intertwined with that proposal. While the proposal to introduce minors was voted down, no action has yet been taken on triple majors. The dean agreed to discuss this issue with the CEP, and she anticipates that a motion will be brought forward.

In regard to the faculty imposing other restrictions that are affecting the educational experience of Amherst students, Professor Basu raised the issue of faculty capping course enrollments. The dean noted that the CEP has been aggressive in advising departments to raise caps to eighteen students when possible. Dean Epstein commented that capping introductory courses, in particular, limits students' access to the curriculum and to many majors. The members wondered about the impact that enrollment caps are having on class size at the college.

Conversation turned to another issue raised by the CEP, concerns surrounding burdens placed on faculty due to the increasing number of student accommodations. The CEP noted that the need to create multiple exams, in particular, can be very time-consuming. This burden, according to the CEP, often falls disproportionately on pre-tenure faculty. The CEP suggested that Ms. Foley be asked, at a fall faculty meeting, to describe the rules and procedures governing accommodations. As noted earlier in these minutes, the committee agreed. In addition, the CEP suggested that there be a discussion of intellectual responsibility, as, perhaps, there should not be a need necessarily to create multiple exams, if there is confidence that students will adhere to the honor code. As noted earlier, the members agreed that such a discussion should take place.

Professor Basu said that she agrees with the CEP that, when there is a need to stagger exams, it would be best if the burden to rewrite exams falls on tenured faculty members. Professor Horton commented that the number of students with accommodations has increased dramatically. While the new testing center is a great help, it seems that other steps need to be taken to meet present needs. He said that he does not re-write exams in most instances, preferring to have students with accommodations take the same exam soon after other students in the class take it. Professor Engelhardt, noting that important

credit-bearing, academic arts activities occur between 6 P.M. and 10 P.M., for example, ensemble rehearsals, commented that offering exams in the evening to students who have accommodations can make it challenging for them to participate in these activities. The members agreed that it would be helpful to share the CEP's concerns with Ms. Foley and to ask her to provide data about the issues raised, and to brainstorm with the faculty to find solutions to some of the burdens placed on faculty. As noted above, the members also agreed that the topic of intellectual responsibility should be on the agenda of an upcoming faculty meeting.

In regard to the CEP's third topic, teaching evaluations for tenured faculty, the members agreed that the dean should remind tenured colleagues at the next faculty meeting that response rates improve significantly when students fill out the evaluations in class. Faculty should be encouraged to schedule a time during class for this purpose. The CEP also noted interest in developing a standard form for the evaluation of teaching. As noted earlier, the committee has already put plans in place to charge an ad hoc committee with undertaking this work.

The members discussed the final issue raised by the CEP in its letter, the bunching of particular courses in a given department. The members agreed that tenured colleagues, in particular, should exercise good will when choosing the times that they select to teach their courses. Professor Horton suggested that the [online interactive chart](#) that Professor McGeoch has created, which shows the meeting times of all courses taught in a given semester, is very helpful when thinking about distributing courses across timeslots. The members thanked the CEP for drawing attention to these important issues. Professor Engelhardt asked the dean if work is being done to propose a new class schedule and to find a daytime slot for faculty meetings. The dean said the Office of Institutional Research and Registrar Services intends to begin work on this project sometime this fall.

The meeting concluded with Professor Horton asking the dean if she had received any additional responses to the report of the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee from members of the community. The dean said that the last comments, which represented responses to the first draft of the report, were received in early January.

The meeting adjourned at 5:33 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein  
Dean of the Faculty

The third meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2018–2019 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:00 P.M. on Thursday, September 20, 2018. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Basu, Engelhardt, Heim, Horton, Jaswal, Schmalzbauer and Dean Epstein, and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with Dean Epstein informing the members that Professor McGeoch has agreed to serve as the parliamentarian in the event that Professor George is unable to attend a faculty meeting. The dean then shared faculty members’ responses to invitations to serve on several faculty committees. The committee then discussed a nominee for another faculty committee.

The members next reviewed a revised description, which incorporated feedback offered by the committee at its previous meeting, of a new teaching prize that the college plans to establish in honor of Jeff Ferguson, the inaugural Karen and Brian Conway ’80, P’18 Presidential Teaching Professor at Amherst. Professor Ferguson died last March. The members approved the description, and the dean said that she will solicit nominations for the prize. Plans call for the Committee of Six to select two recipients this spring. The full description appears below.

The Jeffrey B. Ferguson Memorial Teaching Prize honors the memory of an accomplished scholar and beloved Amherst College professor. The inaugural Karen and Brian Conway ’80, P’18 Presidential Teaching Professor at the college, Jeff Ferguson taught in the Department of Black Studies for more than two decades. The departmental curriculum that he designed, and his skills and dedication as a teacher, provided the opportunity for countless students to develop foundational intellectual skills that transformed their lives and contributed to their success—during their time at Amherst and beyond. Professor Ferguson enabled students to become close readers and persuasive writers who grounded their scholarly work in sound argumentation and thorough research.

The Ferguson Prize is awarded annually to two Amherst faculty members who see teaching as an art and vocation, engage in pedagogical innovation in their courses, have a significant impact in their department or program and on the broader curriculum, help students develop foundational skills in the finest liberal arts tradition, inspire students and colleagues alike to cultivate the life of the mind, and have a lasting impact on students’ intellectual and personal development.

Tenured faculty members who have been at the college for at least ten years are eligible for the prize, which carries a \$5,000 honorarium. The recipients of the prize are announced at the commencement faculty meeting. They are expected to give public talks focusing on teaching at or around homecoming.

The dean of the faculty solicits nominees for the prize from current students, from the faculty, and from Amherst alumni who have graduated within ten years prior to the year in which the award will be bestowed. Self-nominations are not accepted. The Committee of Six selects the prize recipients. Individuals may only receive the prize once.

The committee then reviewed revisions to a draft charge for the Ad Hoc Committee for the Development of a Common Form to Evaluate Classroom Teaching, which incorporated feedback offered by the committee at its previous meeting. The members approved the charge, which appears below. The members also asked the dean to invite four faculty members to serve on the ad hoc committee.

**Charge to the Ad Hoc Committee for the Development of a Common Form to Evaluate Classroom Teaching**

The Committee of Six charges the Ad Hoc Committee for the Development of a Common Form to Evaluate Classroom Teaching with creating a form that will be used by all Amherst College departments as one of several means of evaluating the classroom teaching of tenure-track faculty. The majority of the questions on the form should be standardized or uniform and suitable for use across departments. The form should also allow departments the option of including additional questions, in order to evaluate aspects of teaching they consider to be specific to their disciplines. After considering best practices at Amherst and other institutions, the ad hoc committee should offer general guidance on the development of such customized questions. In so doing, and as part of its general charge, the ad hoc committee should consider issues surrounding implicit bias—in regard to the design of questions and the interpretation of results.

In addition to developing an evaluation form, the ad hoc committee should make recommendations regarding procedures for its administration. It should be made explicit that responsibility for providing the form to students, and explaining the process of evaluation, lies with the tenured members of departments. The committee is also asked to identify appropriate approaches to increase student response rates.

In conducting their work, the four faculty members who will serve on the committee should draw on the expertise of the director and assistant director of the Center for Teaching and Learning, who will attend the committee's meetings.

The Committee of Six requests that the ad hoc committee consult broadly with academic departments and programs; department chairs and other tenured faculty members; the Consultative Group for Untenured Faculty and other tenure-track faculty members; former and current members of the Committee of Six; the Center for Teaching and Learning (as noted above); the Office of Diversity and Inclusion; the director of institutional research and registrar services; and other colleagues on campus.

The ad hoc committee is asked to submit recommendations to the Committee of Six in the spring of 2019. The relevant section of the *Faculty Handbook* is included below.

*Faculty Handbook* III., E., 4., a., (5)

[https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean\\_faculty/fph/fachandbook/facstatus/fulltimetenture](https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/dean_faculty/fph/fachandbook/facstatus/fulltimetenture)

(5) (Note that in October 1998, the faculty voted that evaluations of teaching are to be requested of all students from every course, including every honors and special topics course taught by an untenured faculty member. These evaluations are to be signed and are normally to be solicited in essay format in all classes in the final week of each semester on a form to be devised by the instructor in collaboration with the department. After the submission of grades, they will be made available to the instructor without the names of the respondents.) All written evidence used to evaluate teaching effectiveness including the semester-end evaluations solicited from students in all courses, the retrospective letters solicited at the time of reappointment review, and the retrospective letters solicited at the time of tenure review from all current and former students taught since the time of

reappointment. The department letters soliciting letters from students should be included with their responses. Solicitation of retrospective letters must include all students from every course, including every honors and special topics course taught by the candidate (voted by the faculty, October 1998). Each person asked to write such a letter should be informed that his or her response will be treated as confidential by the college. (Reviews from Scrutiny or other anonymous materials are inadmissible as evidence.)

The committee turned to a proposal, forwarded by the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP), for [a three-year academic calendar covering the 2019–2020, 2020–2021, and 2021–2022 academic years](#). In [its cover note to the committee](#), the CEP noted, “While we understand that this calendar may still be subject to changes as a result of decisions made by other members of the Five College Consortium, the CEP voted to approve the calendar as it currently stands, with four members in favor and one [Professor Harms] opposed at its meeting on September 5, 2018.”

The CEP also forwarded [a memo from Jesse Barba](#), director of institutional research and registrar services, in which he noted the following: “College peers have not yet finalized calendars this far out, which does leave the possibility that adjustments will be necessary if there are unforeseen changes in their schedules (particularly from the university). The most likely place for there to be modification is around the spring break week. The proposal also assumes that the second round pre-registration pilot will be continued. While the pilot may not be extended or made permanent, for clarity it seemed best to include these dates in the proposal rather than attempt to add them back in after approval.” The dean explained that the calendar is coming forward now, when it is still possible that minor changes might need to be made, because of the need to have approved dates for commencement and reunion, which would remain the same if the potential changes that have been described happen.

In response to the committee’s questions about the nature of Professor Harms’s reservations, Dean Epstein said that Professor Harms had expressed the view that, because the faculty voted to shorten the spring semester, but did not move exams, commencement, or reunion forward, in sync, the spring semester is now left with a reading period that can be as long as nine days between the last day of classes and the first day of exams. Her concern is that over that period, students (especially those with no final papers) can lose focus and study discipline. She does not think such an extended reading period serves students well.

The members discussed some responses to the changes to the spring-semester calendar that the faculty had approved in May of 2016, which are reflected in the current calendar proposal, after first reviewing the changes that had been voted. It was noted that the College Council, when bringing its calendar proposal forward at that time, had pointed out that the fourteen-week semester, which was then in place, only offered time for a brief reading period (often only two or three days), with two of those days occurring on the weekend when few faculty members are available. The proposal had called for a spring semester with a full thirteen weeks of in-class instruction. It also had included the provision that, if a need arose to make up days lost because of bad weather, or a day devoted to a community event, the first three days of the fourteenth week would consist of up to three make-up days, followed by a four-day reading period on Thursday through Sunday. In years with fewer snow days, the reading period would lengthen, up to a week. In summary, the proposal had called for three full weeks of interterm, fifteen instructional weeks, four reading days, and four-and-one-half to five exam days.

The committee had a brief conversation about the fall semester’s shorter reading period. The dean commented that the idea is that the week of Thanksgiving break offers a time that students can use to catch up on their work. It was noted that three make-up days were used last year to make up class time that was missed because of weather cancellations and for a memorial service for Christopher Collins ’20. The members agreed that it would be best to give the calendar changes a chance before any revisions are suggested. The members voted six in favor and zero opposed on the substance of the calendar proposal and six in favor and zero opposed to forward the proposal to the faculty.

The committee reviewed a draft faculty meeting agenda for a faculty meeting to be held on October 2 and voted six in favor and zero opposed to forward the agenda to the faculty. Professor Schmalzbauer informed the members that a student had contacted her about making an announcement at the upcoming faculty meeting about the Association of Amherst Students (AAS) voter registration drive. In addition, there was a request that the student making the announcement ask the faculty to encourage students to vote. The members agreed that AAS President Silvia Sotolongo'19 should be allowed to make the announcement, immediately after the dean's remarks, but that it should be stressed to her that drive must be a non-partisan effort. The members then turned to personnel matters.

The members next discussed [the report of the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee](#). Dean Epstein suggested that it would be helpful for the Committee of Six to offer its views so as to inform the CEP's consideration of the report and its formulation of motions. The dean noted that Professors Basu and Horton served on the curriculum committee. Professor Heim began the conversation by commending the curriculum committee for its excellent work. The other members also expressed their appreciation for this effort. Professor Heim commented that she was pleased to see that the curriculum committee has brought forward a proposal for a two-semester college seminar program, the argument for which she finds persuasive. She said that she sees this recommendation as a way to achieve a broader vision of the goals of the curriculum, and expressed the view that putting the seminar program in place would provide an alternative to the departmentalism that is at the core of Amherst's culture. Professor Jaswal also expressed support for the proposal.

Professor Engelhardt, who praised the report, asked how the curriculum committee envisioned the process of ensuring that the cohorts of students who would take each seminar would be diverse, in order to foster a sense of belonging and inclusion. It will be important, he feels, that students not feel that they are being "marked" to represent a particular identity and are responsible for contributing to a diversity effort. The devil will be in the details, he imagines, when it comes to the process that will be used to form the cohorts. Professor Basu said that the curriculum committee gave a lot of thought to this issue. The idea of making diversity the explicit focus of the seminars was rejected. The curriculum committee felt that there would be a danger, under such an approach, that students would see taking a "diversity seminar" as a box to be checked. In composing first-year seminars, the college, in Professor Basu's view, has done an excellent job of ensuring that each seminar is made up of students who are diverse on every dimension. The curriculum committee imagined that the same model would be used, and the same process followed, for the college seminars.

Professor Schmalzbauer, who expressed her admiration of the report, wondered if the curriculum committee had considered taking a broader view of diversity in regard to the college seminars. She feels that, in gaining an understanding of diversity, it is imperative that students develop an understanding of how resources and opportunities are distributed across identities. Professor Basu agreed, while noting that the curriculum committee felt that, if there were a requirement that all college seminars have a focus on structural inequality and inclusion, it would limit which faculty and which disciplines would engage in the seminar program. Faculty members who wish to teach this topic could certainly do so, under the proposal, perhaps in clusters of seminars, Professor Basu noted. On a related note, Dean Epstein commented that the curriculum committee, in its proposed learning goals statement, recommended (as goal four) that students "develop a sense of the common good." There are multiple references to inequality in the recommended language for this goal.

Continuing the conversation about the curriculum committee's report, Professor Heim raised the issue of the college being unusually rigid about accepting for credit summer course work (unless it is to make-up for course that the student failed at Amherst) or Interterm course work, in particular through summer-abroad programs. The dean said that offering credit under such circumstances could lead to students amassing enough credits to graduate early, which the college does not support. Taking such courses for credit could allow a student to advance in the curriculum, however, she commented. In answer to the question of why a student would want to take such a course for credit, it was noted that doing so might indicate that the course is more rigorous and allow for it to appear on a transcript, which might be helpful for graduate school. Professor Heim commented that there is tremendous value in studying a foreign

language in an intensive way, without distractions. Some students, because of their majors, cannot study abroad during the regular semesters, and it seems that the college should be encouraging them to gain exposure to other cultures in other ways.

Dean Epstein informed the members that the college is committed to raising funds to support summer opportunities for language study and other international experiences that would take place in the summer, for which the language departments have advocated. Professor Basu noted that some students who are struggling or have a course deficiency could benefit from taking a lighter course load in the fall and spring, if they could take credit-bearing courses in the summer. In this way, students might experience less stress and perform better during the academic year. Professor Horton pointed out that the only way students can take a reduced course load is if an accommodation is warranted and approved. There is an impact on financial aid if students take fewer than 3.5 courses a semester, as they will no longer be considered full-time students below this threshold. Some members noted that students with more resources may be able to do curricular work in the summer, while other students may need to work to help support their families during this time. The dean commented that the college is working to find ways to help address such inequity in opportunity, including through the new Meiklejohn Fellows Program.

Professor Horton, continuing the discussion of the report, said that the issue of improving advising represents a significant issue facing the college. He commended the work of Nancy Ratner, director of academic projects and a member of the curriculum committee, who built an online advising portal. To further develop a culture of excellent advising at the college, it is important, in Professor Horton's view, that as many faculty as possible participate in the intensive advising pilot. He views class-size and advising load differentials among faculty as a major issue that should be addressed. Professor Horton wondered if there are roles for the CEP or another body to play when it comes to finding ways to improve advising at Amherst. Professor Engelhardt said that he appreciates the take-aways that the curriculum committee's report offers in regard to advising—that departments and advisors should be encouraged to think beyond the individual meeting model, one point that was made. Early on in the major, for example, group advising would be helpful. These seem like “easy fixes” that could be topics of discussion for a future meeting of chairs of departments and programs. Professor Jaswal suggested that it would be helpful for vehicles to be developed to encourage faculty members to share the tools and strategies that they employ as advisors. She noted that she has her advisees fill out forms about a range of topics and asks them to update the forms after each advising session. The result is an “action list” to guide students. This technique offers students signals that the advising conversation is a holistic exercise and is about more than simply choosing classes, Professor Jaswal said.

Continuing the discussion of advising, the dean asked the members if they are generally supportive of the curriculum committee's recommendations about advising. Professor Jaswal, saying that she is, also noted that there will continue to be inequities among faculty if advising is not evaluated as part of reappointment, tenure, and promotion decisions. Some faculty may choose to focus more on scholarship and teaching, and to pay less attention to advising, during their pre-tenure years, as advising is not “counted.” Professor Basu echoed this concern. The dean commented that some institutions see advising as an extension of teaching, noting that Amherst does not. Here, it is considered a part of service, she noted. Since advising is an expectation of the college, and plays an important role in the open curriculum, the faculty may wish to discuss how advising should be assessed, Dean Epstein commented.

Professor Schmalzbauer wondered why some faculty members have fewer than eight college advisees. Dean Epstein responded that the dean of new students tries to equalize the advising burden by not assigning college advisees to advisors who have many major advisees. In addition, he may choose not to assign advisees to faculty who are seen as ineffective advisors. Within departments, the number can depend on the number of department members and the resulting advising load for majors. The dean was asked if she supports establishing the position of assistant or associate dean of advising. She said that she needs to think about this idea further. President Martin commented that, when it comes to advising, students and parents most often raise concerns about the consistency of advising, i.e., the challenges that can occur when there is a transition from one advisor to another due to an advisor's leave. The committee agreed that it is important that chairs ensure that this shift is done with care and that communication is



key. Professor Basu commented that it can be helpful to coordinate with the class deans, who often become mentors to students who are struggling, to ensure that all forms of advising cohere. She suggested that it could be helpful to develop guidelines for advisors about when to reach out to class deans to share information and collaborate.

Continuing the conversation about advising, Professor Jaswal wondered if it would be helpful to create a development program for advisors, as suggested in the curriculum committee's report. Professor Engelhardt said that he supports having regular conversations and development opportunities (including through the intensive advising pilot) that focus on advising. Sharing resources, in his experience, is also helpful. Professor Basu noted that most advisors meet with their advisees only around the time of pre-registration. It is desirable, in her view, to meet with advisees at other times to discuss aspects of academic life that go beyond course selection. Professor Jaswal suggested that the college provide funding so that advisors can take their advisees out for a meal. President Martin commented that, perhaps, faculty who excel at advising and wish to dedicate more of their time to this role could receive additional compensation. The members noted research has revealed that most students are pleased with major advising. They are much less satisfied with pre-major advising. In its report, the curriculum committee estimated that advisors with eighteen advisees would spend less than forty hours a year on regular advising meetings under the committee's proposal. Professor Horton noted that the 2012 advising committee survey found that 60 percent of Amherst students reported meeting with their advisors for fifteen minutes or less. The committee agreed that the college needs to do better in this realm. Professor Horton suggested that focus groups be conducted with students and with faculty to learn more about the strengths and weaknesses of advising at the college.

The discussion concluded with the dean asking the members for their views about the curriculum committee's recommendation that there be a faculty-wide discussion about breadth in the curriculum. The committee expressed support for doing so, and for asking Mr. Barba to gather further data on students' course-taking patterns to inform the conversation, which could take place this fall. A discussion of the honors system might emerge in relations to this discussion, it was noted. The committee agreed that the report of the curriculum committee should be forwarded to the CEP, which will now be charged with developing actionable items in the form of motions. Professor Basu suggested that it could be helpful for the committee to advise the CEP about the order in which the curriculum committee's recommendations should be brought before the faculty. The members agreed that the college seminar proposal, the learning goals statement, and questions surrounding advising should be brought to the faculty as soon as possible. In addition, the members agreed that it would be beneficial to charge and constitute the committee on student learning, this year if possible.

The meeting adjourned at 5:33 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein  
Dean of the Faculty

The fourth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2018–2019 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:00 P.M. on Thursday, September 27, 2018. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Basu, Engelhardt, Heim, Horton, Jaswal, Schmalzbauer and Dean Epstein, and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

Under “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Schmalzbauer asked, on behalf of two colleagues, that Chief Advancement Officer C.J. Menard be invited to give a presentation about the comprehensive campaign at a future faculty meeting. One of the colleagues had a scheduling conflict and could not attend Mr. Menard’s September 24 presentation, which was part of a series of informal dialogues with members of the senior staff on a variety of topics. Dean Epstein, who had attended the event, noted that Mr. Menard had spent a good deal of time discussing the structure of the advancement division and the responsibilities of its staff, and a bit less time on matters relating to *Promise: The Campaign for Amherst’s Third Century*. The dean wondered if there might be more interest among faculty in learning about the campaign, rather than the structure of advancement. On the other hand, there may well be an appetite for learning more about administrative areas of the college, she commented. In the past, the dean said, the faculty has placed priority on transacting business at faculty meetings and has sometimes been reluctant to spend a significant amount of time on presentations by administrators. This view may be changing, however.

Professor Horton expressed the view that faculty colleagues might appreciate learning more about the key role that faculty can play in the campaign. Professor Jaswal said that it would be informative to learn more about individuals and their roles, and the types of advancement activities faculty can support. Advancement colleagues often reach out to faculty to make requests, she commented. Professor Schmalzbauer said that it is her understanding that both colleagues who asked for the presentation are most curious about what is happening with the campaign. President Martin said that it is her intention to provide an update on its progress as part of her remarks at the October 2 faculty meeting. The members agreed that a presentation of this kind would be of great interest to the faculty. The committee decided that, at future faculty meetings this year, it would be desirable to have members of the senior staff, particularly those who have not yet given a presentation at a faculty meeting, discuss their work at the college. The regular presentations about the college’s financial health, which have been given by Kevin Weinman, chief financial and administrative officer, are appreciated by the faculty and should continue, it was agreed. Once they settle into their new roles, it would be desirable to hear from Hikaru “Karu” Kozuma, chief student affairs officer, and Matthew McGann, dean of admission and financial aid, both of whom who joined the college this summer, the members noted. The dean suggested that, in addition, Chief Communications Officer Sandy Genelius should be invited to speak this year. The members agreed that learning more about the work of Ms. Genelius and her staff would be interesting. The idea would be for each of these individuals to speak at different faculty meetings for twenty minutes or so.

Continuing with questions, Professor Engelhardt said that he would like to have a follow-up conversation about an issue that the committee had discussed on September 17, when considering the concerns raised in [a letter of May 8, 2018, that the Committee on Educational Policy \(CEP\) had forwarded to the Committee of Six](#). Professor Engelhardt explained that, as he was signing a special topics request form recently, his attention was drawn to the following language (highlighted in yellow) in the college catalog on page eighty-six of this year’s printed catalog:

#### SPECIAL TOPICS COURSES

Departments may offer a semester course known as Special Topics in which a student or a group of students study or read widely in a field of special interest. It is understood that **this course will not duplicate any other course regularly offered in the curriculum** and that the student will work in this course as independently as the director thinks possible.

Before the time of registration, the student who arranges to take a Special Topics course should consult the instructor in that particular field, who will direct the student’s work; they will decide the title to be

reported, the nature of the examination or term paper, and will discuss the preparation of a bibliography and a plan of coherent study. All students must obtain final approval of the Department before registration. Two Special Topics courses may not be taken concurrently except with the prior approval of the student's Class Dean.

Professor Engelhardt reminded the members of the description that the CEP had provided in its letter of the Department of Economics' practice, which he now sees as inconsistent, possibly, with the catalog language about special topics courses not duplicating any other course that is regularly offered in the curriculum. (The economics department requires students who receive a grade of *D* in a core theory course, and who want to count a course in that area of core theory toward the major, to take Econ 390 [a special topics course focusing on that area of core theory] and to receive a grade of *C-* or better in that special topics course.) The CEP's letter noted that the Department of Biology would now like to institute a similar requirement, and in particular to count only courses with a *C-* grade or higher toward the major. Professor Horton said that his department, at times, has offered special topics courses that duplicate courses that it regularly offers, if the courses in question are not being offered during a given semester. The members agreed that the language of "regularly offered in the curriculum" may make such an approach permissible. The committee agreed that this matter should be referred to the CEP for consideration, and that it might be desirable to "soften" the catalog language surrounding special topics in the interest of providing departments with greater flexibility.

On a related note, Professor Basu asked that the committee, at some future point, return to a discussion of another issue that the CEP had raised in its letter—the practice among some departments of requiring students who wish to become a major and/or to undertake honors work to meet a requirement for a minimum GPA. The dean said that she will see that data are gathered on these topics and would add this topic to a future Committee of Six agenda. Professor Basu next informed the members that she has been gathering information from peer institutions that are participating in of [The New University in Exile Consortium](#), (New UIE Consortium), an initiative created by The New School to bring "endangered scholars" to host institutions in this country. She said that, when her research is complete, she looks forward to sharing the results with the committee.

The members continued their conversation about future agenda items. Professor Horton, commenting that Title IX regulations are in flux, said that he would like to discuss a process for offering additional training to the faculty. He feels that such a "refresher" would be beneficial and said that it would be helpful for the committee to receive an update about how the college is thinking about offering such training to faculty. Professor Jaswal then proposed an additional agenda item, a discussion of how to better inform students about how to navigate the process that will help them gain access to opportunities that are available to them through the college. In her experience, many students, particularly during their first two years at Amherst, when they have not yet declared a major and do not yet have a major advisor, may be unaware of how to gain access to resources. While it is helpful that there are links to be found on the Amherst website for many resources, many students do not realize they could or should be seeking such resources, Professor Jaswal commented. For example, many undeclared students could benefit from funding available to present research conducted at Amherst or elsewhere at a conference, and to attend conferences that specifically welcome underrepresented students. These include meetings organized by the SACNAS (Society for Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science) or ABRCMS (Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students), Professor Jaswal said, but there is no mechanism to announce these opportunities outside of departmental notification of majors. She continues to believe that having an advisor within the Loeb Center for Career Exploration and Planning who works exclusively with students interested in STEM would go a long way toward solving this problem in the sciences. Dean Epstein commented that the heads of administrative departments that report to her are actively working on this issue, and are exploring ways of making opportunities more transparent to students. Professor Horton noted that the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee had also been concerned about the gap in advising that students face before they declare a major. Though they have a pre-major advisor, that faculty member might not be aware of the opportunities available in the discipline in which an

advisee is interested, if it differs from the advisor's own discipline. The members turned to a discussion of nominees for a faculty committee.

Dean Epstein informed the members that some faculty members have been concerned about Amherst students' level of engagement in the country's political process. The dean said that it might be informative to describe, via these minutes, steps that the college, in collaboration with the Association of Amherst Students (AAS), is taking to encourage students to vote in the November midterm elections. She stressed that care is being taken to ensure that there is no partisanship involved in these efforts, which include the announcement by AAS President Silvia Sotolongo '19 at the October 2 faculty meeting, during which she will ask faculty to encourage students to vote. Dean Epstein said that Chief Student Affairs Officer Kozuma shared with her some other steps that have been taken, which he described as follows:

### **Preliminary Efforts**

- "Tabling" is occurring in the Keefe atrium with computers, a printer, and a scanner to start out-of-state registrations and absentee ballots.
- Students are being given access to envelopes and postage in the mail center, which will be adjacent to the registration table.
- Students from Amherst Political Union, Amherst College Democrats, Amherst College Republicans, and *The Student* are encouraging fellow students to register, and then to vote absentee if they are out of state.
- The college is using [allintovote.org](http://allintovote.org) as the online tool to drive our efforts. We will have a comprehensive list of state deadlines for registration and absentee voting. We also have certain states tagged that have some more difficult procedures for getting registered (e.g., Michigan, where students have to have registered in person before they're able to vote absentee).

The members next discussed a personnel matter.

Conversation turned to [a September 4, 2018, note from Professor Sitze](#), who served on the Ad Hoc Faculty Committee on Athletics last year. In the note, he suggests that the Committee of Six consider charging the College Council with "the responsibility of understanding the ways in which the college can improve the athlete/non-athlete divide in student social life." The members agreed that the issues raised by the Special Committee on the Place of Athletics at Amherst, which issued its report in January of 2017, and the ad hoc committee, which concluded its work at the end of the last academic year, are significant and pressing. Professor Horton, who acknowledged that the issues in question are challenging to study, wondered if more data could be gathered to guide next steps.

President Martin commented that she appreciates Professor Sitze's recognition of the breadth of issues facing the college in the area of student life, and the call in his note to consider these issues more broadly. She also finds the ad hoc faculty committee's emphasis in its report on the importance of integrating athletics more fully into the life of the campus to be more helpful than earlier documents' focus on balance.

The president added that Amherst must go even further in this direction, in her view, adopting a holistic approach to addressing a set of extraordinarily complex, interconnected challenges in the area of student life, which go beyond the oft-repeated athlete-non-athlete divide. The formulation of the problem at hand is important, she commented. So as not to limit our thinking, we should not assume in advance that we know what the challenge is, or that there is only one. In this case, she believes that there is value in not naming what needs to be changed, so as to remain open to the complexities. At the center of what needs to be done across the spectrum of concerns, in the president's view, is to find new ways for students to connect with one another and for student affairs to develop an infrastructure for creating social events that

occur regularly and that are open to all. The classroom, and associated learning experiences, is one key to ensuring that students connect.

Professors Engelhardt and Schmalzbauer said that they read Professor Sitze's note as an expression of concern that the momentum that has been building on the work of the ad hoc committee, and before that the special committee, not be lost. Professor Jaswal commented that the faculty also want to be sure that there is accountability, as well as forward movement, when it comes to addressing these concerns.

The dean reviewed steps that have been taken since last year. Individual recommendations of the ad hoc committee have been forwarded to the relevant governance committees—the College Council, the Faculty Committee on Admission and Financial Aid (FCAFA), the Committee on Education and Athletics—each of which will be examining these ideas this year. This comprehensive approach is preferable to charging a single committee with undertaking work that spans the charges of many committees, indeed many facets of college life, the president and the dean believe. In addition, President Martin stressed the importance of giving Mr. Kozuma the time and space he needs to consult with members of the community and develop recommendations, which may be taken up by other groups, as he brings tremendous expertise and experience to this work.

Continuing the conversation, Dean Epstein informed the members that, at the request of the president, she is chairing a group of administrators, the Bridging Divides Group, that is exploring issues surrounding student social life. Each administrator brings a different professional perspective. The group, which meets every second Monday, Dean Epstein said, is made up of Don Faulstick, director of athletics; Norm Jones, chief diversity and inclusion officer; Karu Kozuma, chief students affairs officer; Matt McGann, dean of admission and financial aid; and Lisa Rutherford, chief policy officer and general counsel. As part of the group's work, it is reviewing the results of student surveys, which reveal significant concern about social life at the college.

The committee offered its support for the steps that have been put in place to consider and address the quality of student life on campus, including issues surrounding athletics. The members asked the dean to contact Professor Sitze and express the committee's appreciation to him for writing and prompting this conversation. As he will learn from the minutes, things have moved forward since last May, when the ad hoc committee submitted its report. He should also be heartened that a number of faculty committees are taking up the report's recommendations. Professor Engelhardt said that, in addition, he finds it reassuring that a group of professionals is bringing significant expertise to bear on the issues surrounding student social life, including those involving athletics. The dean commented that she sees the efforts being made by coaches to diversify their teams as a welcome sign of progress.

Beyond student life, President Martin commented on the need for the college to continue to address issues of campus climate more broadly. Citing the staff survey, she said that, in her view, it is important in for the entire community to build a more positive and appreciative culture. Professor Basu agreed, noting that the environment at Amherst can feel very demanding and punitive, and that more needs to be done to recognize and appreciate staff and faculty achievements.

The members next discussed a proposal that was developed by last year's Committee of Six to revise the language about the criteria for tenure and the procedures followed in tenure decisions that appears in the [Faculty Handbook \(III.E., 3. And 4.\)](#). (Any revision of this language is subject to a vote of approval by the faculty and would apply only to tenure-track faculty who are hired after such a faculty vote, it was noted.) The work of last year's committee focused on codifying current standards and policy, rather than developing new policies and expectations, the dean explained. The proposal includes statements of values at the aspirational level, as well as clarification about what constitutes growth and achievement. The new members of the committee said that they find the proposed language to be compelling, and some members suggested small revisions. It was agreed that, after these changes are incorporated into the draft, it would be helpful to share the revised proposal with tenure-track faculty members at a meeting that the Committee of Six will host with them this fall to discuss the proposal. The members also decided to share the proposal with associate professors to get their feedback. The committee agreed that it might also be useful to have a follow-up meeting with tenure-track faculty to discuss the tenure process more generally, and that, perhaps, former members of the Committee of Six might also want to share their knowledge and

impressions at this event. It was noted that the chairs of academic departments and programs discussed the proposal (without today's revisions) last spring, and that tenure-track faculty had briefly discussed it with the Committee of Six. The members then turned to a personnel matter.

The meeting adjourned at 5:33 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein  
Dean of the Faculty

The fifth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2018–2019 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:15 P.M. on Monday, October 1, 2018. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Basu, Engelhardt, Heim, Horton, Jaswal, Schmalzbauer; Dean Epstein; and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

Under “Topics of the day,” the dean informed the members that it has been brought to her attention that there is an error in the committee’s minutes of September 20, 2018. The threshold for being considered a full-time student for financial aid purposes is twelve semester-credit hours, the equivalent of *three* Amherst courses—and not 3.5—as had been noted in the minutes.

The members discussed two motions forwarded for consideration by the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP). The committee first considered [the CEP’s recommendation that a policy be adopted to “guard against faculty members’ teaching their own close relatives.”](#) After considering the various implications of this policy, the members expressed support for the motion and concurred with the CEP’s rationale for creating a policy of this kind. After agreeing on some small revisions to the language, the members decided to finalize the motion at their next meeting, and to consider where in the *Faculty Handbook* the new policy should be placed, if approved by the faculty. It was agreed that the revised motion should then be shared with the CEP.

The committee next considered the CEP’s motion to limit students to no more than two majors. To effect this change, the CEP is proposing a revision to language that appears on pages seventy-nine and eighty of the current *Amherst College Catalog*. The CEP is recommending that this change, if approved by the faculty, take effect with students entering with the class of 2023. The members reviewed [the draft motion](#), expressed support for it, and offered some revisions. The committee agreed to finalize the language at its next meeting and to share the revised motion with the CEP.

Continuing the discussion of the majors motion, Professor Engelhardt commented that the CEP’s proposal to limit students to two majors leaves unaddressed the question of whether a Five-College certificate program would “count” as one of the two majors. It is his hope that, if the new policy is adopted, it would still be permissible for a student with two majors to complete a certificate as well. He anticipates that this issue might arise during the faculty’s discussion of the motion. Certificate programs, Professor Engelhardt has observed, can serve to add depth or breadth to an Amherst major; crucially, these programs offer structured paths for Amherst College students to explore curricular offerings beyond Amherst’s campus. Noting his involvement in the thriving Five College Certificate in Ethnomusicology, Professor Engelhardt said that he is very supportive of certificate programs and worries that, if they were to be counted as majors, particularly under the CEP’s proposal, Amherst students might be less likely to participate in the programs. Professor Horton said that he does not see a problem with students having two majors and completing a Five-College certificate, commenting that notation of certificates on student transcripts appears in a space that is separate from the notation of majors. The other members agreed that certificates differ from majors and should not be counted as majors, and that Amherst students’ participation in these programs should not be constrained.

Under “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Horton asked how a faculty member’s work with students to conduct research over the summer is evaluated as part of the process of tenure review. He has always considered these efforts to be part of his teaching. He also wonders how advising is evaluated as part of the process. The dean responded that all thesis students are asked to complete end-of-semester evaluations and retrospective letters. Other students, including summer research students and advisees, are not asked to provide commentary unless they have also taken a course with the professor. Professor Horton expressed concern that the faculty’s efforts surrounding student research during the summer are not compensated or considered as part of their teaching and service during the tenure process. He noted that there are disciplinary differences in regard to the importance placed on this form of teaching, with colleagues in many STEM fields spending considerable time on this endeavor. Doing so with undergraduates often only indirectly advances the faculty member’s own research, he said. The members discussed the desirability of the college offering summer salary for faculty who are essentially teaching over the summer. Professor Horton noted that grants that include summer salary are becoming more and more competitive. Dean Epstein commented

that faculty receive an honorarium for their work with SURF (Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship) students. It might be possible to increase this funding in the future.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Jaswal said that she shares Professor Horton's views and concerns. If Amherst wishes to be considered an undergraduate research college, faculty members who engage students in their research over the summer should receive more support and recognition, she commented. Such faculty are supporting the mission of the college, she said. This form of teaching should also be considered as part of the evaluation of teaching effectiveness that takes place as part the tenure process, in Professor Jaswal's view. On a related note, she asked the dean if it might be possible to streamline the administrative process for indicating that individual research students will be working in a faculty member's lab. The current procedure, which must be followed to ensure that research students are paid, places a burden on faculty, she noted. The dean said that she would look into this matter.

In regard to the issues raised and the tenure process, the members wondered if ways can be found to have work with research students and advising credited. It was noted that faculty should make sure that their work with students is clearly indicated on their CVs, including when they co-publish with research students. Some members suggested that research students be solicited for commentary about their experiences, which would represent a change in procedure. Professor Basu wondered if departments have policies regarding how much time pre-tenure faculty should spend working with research students in the summer, including the number of research students they should take on, ideally. Professor Jaswal said that she is unaware of such policies. Generally, these decisions are left to the discretion of pre-tenure faculty members who make their own decisions about research students. Professor Jaswal suggested that course release and/or course credit for teaching in the summer should be considered. The dean noted that this is a very complex issue that has significant financial and staffing implications for the college. The members agreed that the issues raised should be examined holistically and that the committee should discuss in the spring the issues that had been raised.

The members briefly discussed once again the proposal that was developed by last year's Committee of Six to revise the language about the criteria for tenure and the procedures followed in tenure decisions that appears in the [Faculty Handbook \(III.E., 3. And 4.\)](#). (Any revision of this language is subject to a vote of approval by the faculty and would apply only to tenure-track faculty who are hired after such a faculty vote, it was noted.) The members made some further revisions to the document and agreed to finalize the proposal at their next meeting. The proposal will be sent to all tenure-track faculty with the invitation to attend a meeting on October 25 to discuss the draft. After receiving feedback from pre-tenure colleagues, the committee will meet with associate professors to get their response. It might also be helpful, the committee decided, to share the final proposal with chairs of academic departments and programs, as some language has changed within the proposal since the chairs were consulted last year, and, in some departments, there are new chairs.

The meeting concluded with the committee discussing a proposal developed by last year's Committee of Six to support associate professors, many of whom become overburdened with service obligations and to clarify the standards for promotion to full professor. Professor Heim reiterated that the members of last year's Committee of Six were divided about whether their efforts to clarify criteria for promotion to full professor should be construed as clarifying the standards for promotion or raising the standards. Professor Basu asked for more information about the proposal that last year's committee had developed for a "service sabbatical" (relief from college service for a semester or year following a leave). Professor Heim explained that the service sabbatical and promotion proposals were intertwined. Part of the reason for relieving associate professors of significant service burdens would be to create more space for them to continue to be productive scholars, effective teachers, and engaged citizens of the college during the years between receiving tenure and promotion to full professor, last year's committee had felt.

Continuing the conversation, Professors Engelhardt and Heim said that, upon reflection they are now less enthusiastic about the idea of a service sabbatical. This proposal had come to the fore after the committee had discussed finding ways to allow faculty who had just received tenure to be excused from service on the Committee of Six. Not all Committee of Six members had been in favor of taking untenured and recently tenured faculty off the Committee of Six ballot. It was noted that the 2016



COACHE (Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education) survey had indicated that, on average, associate professors at the college are the least satisfied with their Amherst experience. The members agreed that there is great potential for associate professors to continue to have active scholarly lives and that determining how best to evaluate them for promotion to full professor is important. Professor Heim commented on the difficulty of considering promotion cases under the current system, given that there is very little information provided beyond the CV of the individual, and that the criteria for promotion are vague. Without soliciting outside letters, it is difficult for departments and for the committee to engage with associate professors' scholarship. There is little evidence of teaching effectiveness, as tenured colleagues are not required to share their teaching evaluations.

Professor Basu said that she believes that Amherst is an outlier among its peers when it comes to promotion to full professor. The college's standards for promotion are light, in her view. She suggested that it would be helpful to gather information on the promotion practices of peer colleges. The dean agreed to have her office to do so. Taking a longer and harder look at what the criteria for promotion should be is important, Professor Basu commented. While she would consider excellence in scholarship, teaching and service criterion for promotion, she would suggest some flexibility in the relative importance accorded to each of these three areas. In this respect, the criteria for promotion at the time of tenure and to full professor might be different, she said.

Professor Schmalzbauer wondered if it might be helpful to broaden the definition of what constitutes growth and accomplishment at the time of promotion beyond the traditional metric of peer reviewed publications. Having candidates submit a portfolio of some sort might be helpful to the committee. She echoed Professor Basu's desire for a fuller conversation about this topic.

Professor Jaswal also expressed support for thinking expansively when it comes to how candidates' records should be judged at the time of promotion. Quoting the *Faculty Handbook* language that "tenure imposes upon all who receive it the reciprocal obligation to make the fullest use of such freedom and to carry the results of honest and imaginative inquiry to the larger society," she suggested that meeting that responsibility seems especially important in these times, and may be most effective when scholars communicate about their research in ways that extend beyond the traditional venues of journals and presses, and reach new audiences. Associate professors also are at a point in their career where they are expected to contribute to shaping their respective fields (including working to make them more representative and accessible) through engaging in leadership roles in professional societies, conference organization, etc. Professor Engelhardt commented that tenure provides the academic freedom and security that can allow faculty to explore and take risks in ways that they can't during their pre-tenure years. He offered the examples, given at a discussion at a chairs' meeting last year, of taking decades to work on a biography project or publishing research in an experimental or non-traditional medium. Communicating one's work through a different modality, which may be on the cutting edge, is another example, he noted, adding that doing so can be transformative. In his view, peer review, while extremely important in its different forms, should not be the exclusive measure of scholarly success at the time of promotion. Professor Horton asked if thought has been given to promoting all associate professors after an extended period of time, in order to avoid inequity. It was noted that this issue has been discussed in the past; though a conclusion has not yet been reached, there has been support for the idea. The members agreed that the categories (scholarship and creative work, teaching, and service) evaluated at the time of promotion should be the same as those evaluated at the time of tenure. The ways in which excellence and growth are demonstrated, and the criteria by which achievement is judged, should allow for more flexibility at the time of promotion, the members felt.

Professor Basu commented that the length of time between promotion to associate professor and promotion to full professor should become more fluid. While some faculty may be ready to be promoted after six years in rank, it may be more appropriate for others to stand after eight years. For many faculty, the years after receiving tenure are very full, with family obligations, for example, and productivity can ebb and flow during this period. She knows of several women faculty who have had children after receiving tenure and resume active scholarly lives some years later. Professor Schmalzbauer suggested that it would be helpful to explore new ways to gather evidence about

teaching, and the members decided that soliciting retrospective letters might be a sound approach. Professor Heim said that she is in favor of developing a more robust process around promotion to full professor and making expectations clearer. The challenge is how to develop criteria for promotion when there is no means to evaluate whether the standards are being met. The committee agreed to continue its discussion of promotion at a future meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 5:33 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein  
Dean of the Faculty

The sixth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2018–2019 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:15 P.M. on Monday, October 15, 2018. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Basu, Engelhardt, Heim, Jaswal, Schmalzbauer; Dean Epstein; and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

The members who had attended the college fall festival that had been held on October 14 commented on how much they had enjoyed the event, and others who had other commitments that day expressed regret that they had been unable to attend what has become an annual tradition in their families. President Martin said that she is pleased that attendance at the festival was robust and that so many members of the community seemed to have a good time.

The president informed the members that the family of Christopher Collins ’20 had recently been on campus to plant a tree at the college in Chris’s honor. A new weeping copper beech now overlooks the hills and is beautiful, she said, and the family is grateful to have this remembrance.

Dean Epstein reminded the members that the committee’s meeting with all tenure-track faculty is now set for October 25. The purpose is to engage in conversation about the proposal to clarify the criteria for tenure.

Noting the tradition of *not* holding faculty meetings on Election Day, the dean suggested that the faculty be asked to hold Tuesday, November 13, for a possible faculty meeting, though this date does not fall on the first or third Tuesday of the month. The members agreed that it would be desirable to have a faculty meeting in November, if possible, as it appears that there will be business to conduct.

Under “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Schmalzbauer asked how the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) interprets enrollment figures for cross-listed courses, since she has been told that there is some relationship between enrollments and decisions about FTE allocations. The dean responded that departmental enrollments are one of a number of factors that are considered when making FTE allocations, and that the CEP has access to enrollment figures for cross-listed courses, as do all faculty and departments, via the college website. ([The link to the information](#) was later provided to the members.) Dean Epstein commented once again that it is her understanding that other considerations, such as the area of inquiry being requested, are more important when choosing among the proposals. On a related note, Professor Jaswal said that it is her understanding that, for courses that are cross-listed, it can be difficult for faculty to interpret the grade distribution report that is sometimes provided to faculty by the Office of Institutional Research and Registrar Services, since grades are tallied separately for students in the same course who are registered via another department. The report includes, for purposes of comparison, the distribution of the professor’s grades, that of the professor’s departments, and those of the college as a whole.

Professor Basu said that she would like to discuss further a topic—the conditions under which the college or a department might take a stand on political issue—that had been a subject of an interesting conversation at the October 12 meeting of chairs of academic departments and programs. In advance of the chairs’ meeting, as a starting point for the discussion, the dean had provided an article, titled [“Taking a Stand: Should College Faculties Ever Vote to Take Collective Stands on Political Issues? A Debate at William Mitchell Raises the Question,”](#) which had appeared in *Inside Higher Education* in 2012. Professor Basu, commenting that she has continued to think about the issue of departments issuing statements, expressed the view that defining what is considered *political* seems to be at the crux of the issues raised. The boundaries can be fuzzy, she noted. While Professor Basu appreciates the institutional constraints involved, she feels that there are pressing issues, particularly in today’s climate, on which individual faculty, entire departments, and/or the college might wish to weigh in. At the meeting, an example that was discussed was whether it would be appropriate for the geology department to make a departmental statement confirming the veracity of climate change and global warming, as scientific research in this area is under attack.

Continuing, Professor Basu said that entire fields can, and are coming under attack, and she feels that, again, individual scholars and departments might feel compelled to take a stand. For example, she could

imagine that a department of sexuality, women's and gender studies might want to issue a statement in defense of the discipline and of feminist scholars. The dean commented that she had brought this topic to the chairs' meeting to generate conversation and to raise awareness, and noted that the college does not regulate whether faculty or departments can make statements of the kind that Professor Basu has mentioned. The dean raised some complexities that might be involved if a department should make a statement. For example, some colleagues might feel pressured to sign on, even if they hold a different view, she noted. The dean said that she worries that untenured colleagues might feel particular pressure in this regard. In addition, if a department makes a statement on a particular topic, a result might be that some students choose not to take courses in that department because they are no longer comfortable doing so. The dean said that, while she can imagine that a department might choose to make a statement if an issue rises to a level that department members feels warrants this approach, it is also important that departments not rush to take a stand based on pressure that students might exert, and faculty members' desire to be supportive of them. The members agreed that the issues that the dean had raised were significant ones.

Dean Epstein noted that some of the points that Professor Basu has been summarizing from the chairs' meeting may have become intertwined with what she considers to be a separate issue. The dean had informed the chairs that she would be sending an email to the community (ultimately sent on October 18) about restrictions on the use of college resources—including email—for political activity. Her intent in doing so was to remind everyone, as the midterm elections approach, of these restrictions. They derive from federal laws and IRS regulations governing the college's tax-exempt status, as well as Amherst's own policies, including the Electronic Resources Acceptable Use Policy, which states the following: "E-Resources may not be used, committed, or made available, without prior authorization of the dean of the faculty (in the case of faculty), the chief human resources officer (in the case of staff), or the chief student affairs officer (in the case of students), who will consult with the chief information officer, for political or lobbying activities." As noted in the email, while the college encourages all members of the Amherst community to engage in the political process at the local, state, and national levels, it is important to remember these restrictions, the dean said. Fortunately, voter registration and/or a get-out-the-vote drives on campus are allowed by the IRS as long as no preference is shown for or against a certain candidate or political party, the dean commented. The college appreciates the joint efforts of the Association of Amherst Students and the Office of Student Affairs to facilitate voter registration and encourage voting. Dean Epstein noted that, additionally, student organizations (but not departments of the college) may engage in certain types of partisan activities or campaigning.

Returning to the earlier topic, Professor Basu commented that, in regard to the institution taking a stand, it was noted at the meeting of the chairs that the college, as an institution, most typically does so when the issue relates to students and/or higher education. She feels that individual faculty members and departments might also wish to defend the liberal arts mission and should exercise their ability to speak out and voice their own views. The president and the dean agreed, while noting that the bar should be higher for a collective (e.g., departments and the college) than it is for an individual faculty member, when it comes to issuing statements. Professor Heim commented on the challenge of defining what is political during an era when it seems as though virtually everything has become highly politicized. The members agreed that there are constituencies that may wish to provoke a response from the college for the sake of doing so, and that there is a need to be sensitive to this issue. Professor Horton agreed, that, at times it may be best to pivot away under such circumstances. Professor Jaswal commented that, for most issues, it seems appropriate to validate that faculty, departments, and the institution are listening, and to invite discussion. Professor Basu agreed, while noting that, at times, scholars and departments may wish to be proactive and to set a tone, rather than adopting a reactive position. Professor Schmalzbauer posed the question of how public intellectual work might be affected if departments were discouraged from taking stands on timely issues on which their faculty are experts.

At the conclusion of the conversation, the committee agreed that it would be informative to engage the full faculty in a discussion of the issues that had just been raised at a time when there is not necessarily a pressing and/or acute need to do so. Professor Heim agreed, while commenting that it may

be more challenging to think about responses to topics in the abstract. Professor Jaswal commented that case studies might provide helpful ways of discussing the issues at hand. Professor Basu agreed that it would be useful for the faculty to familiarize itself with the precedents. The members expressed support for having a conversation, but were uncertain about the best format for doing so. One idea might be to hold a gathering of the faculty. Such a meeting could replicate the special meeting that the president and dean convened in September of 2017 during the first week of classes. The purpose was to discuss concerns about how the college could ensure that the campus is safe, while also upholding Amherst's commitment to free inquiry and expression, including the ability of faculty to create a classroom environment in which they are free to teach their subjects and to foster a free exchange of ideas that is respectful and free of intimidation and derision. Professor Engelhardt commented that the ways in which faculty respond to the issues facing the broader society can be a form of teaching in the performative sense, that is a model for students to follow in regard to civil discourse.

The members reviewed revised drafts of the Committee of Six's proposal to clarify the *Faculty Handbook* language about the criteria for tenure and the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP)'s proposal to limit students to two majors and the CEP's recommended policy that faculty not teach their children or other close relatives. After making some further revisions to the documents, the members asked the dean to send the CEP's proposals back to that committee for review. She agreed to do so.

The committee considered a committee nomination. Discussion then turned to the next steps regarding the academic calendar, the proposal for which the faculty returned to the CEP after a discussion at the faculty meeting of October 2. Following that meeting, Professor Courtright sent [a letter](#) and [attachment](#) to the committee. In anticipation of the current conversation, the dean provided the members with [the Five-College guidelines governing calendar coordination](#) and [a memo](#) and [corrected calendar](#) from Jesse Barba, director of institutional research and registrar services, as well as other background materials.

During the faculty meeting, it had been noted that the calendar proposal contained a number of errors. In the corrected calendar, the dean noted, the error in dates in year two have been corrected; the exam dates for the second and third year have been corrected, and there is a three-day fall break in 2020, with classes resuming on Tuesday, October 13. This day would follow a Monday class schedule and would allow for a two-day reading period and a full five-day exam period, she noted. Continuing, the dean said that Mr. Barba has stressed the importance of having five days in the exam period. The fall break in 2021 (year three), in the corrected version, would include the standard four-day break, shortening the reading period to two days, with a standard five-day exam period. At the conclusion of the summary, Dean Epstein expressed the view that the faculty should be allowed to vote on the corrected version of the calendar that was originally sent. The members agreed.

Dean Epstein commented that the concern that Professor Call had raised at the faculty meeting about Tuesday following a Monday schedule after the fall break remains an issue in year two (as opposed to in year three), as was the case in the calendar proposal that had been shared at the faculty meeting. The result would be back-to-back Monday/Wednesday classes, which the members did not view as a major concern. The only way to alleviate this concern would be to shorten the exam period to four days or extend the semester to December 23, Mr. Barba has suggested. Both options would pose substantial scheduling challenges, in his view. These issues complicate matters, the dean noted, and the CEP will need to weigh in on matters of principle. Doing so can take place independent of the faculty voting on the corrected version of the calendar proposal, she said. It was noted that Professor Harms had suggested that there be a "floating date" for exams, and that, if no make-up days have been used prior to this time, the exam period could start earlier. In that way, there could be both a Monday and a Tuesday off for fall break in the second year of the corrected calendar, for example. The members expressed support for this plan, which could result in the number of make-up days/days of reading period always being the same.

The meeting concluded with a discussion of information that Professor Basu had gathered from institutions that are participating in the [New University in Exile Consortium](#) (New UIE Consortium). The New School launched the initiative to confront threats to scholars around the world. The founding

member institutions are Barnard College, Brown University, Columbia University, Connecticut College, Georgetown University, George Mason University, The New School, Rutgers University-Newark, Trinity College, and Wellesley College. Professor Basu noted that those participating in this effort with whom she had spoken praised the consortium and are dedicated, as institutions, to its goals. She suggested that the college join the consortium and take the approach of circulating a list of UIE scholars to academic departments each year. Those departments that are interested in hosting a scholar could then inform the dean, and the Committee of Six could be involved in the process of making final selections. The process would replicate in some ways the one used to select STINT Fellows. Professor Basu noted that the college would need to provide the scholars with housing through the rental pool or a housing stipend. The department would need to offer office space. She noted the precedent of Amherst hosting scholars who were affected by Hurricane Katrina a number of years back, and the commitment by the Five-College institutions, including Amherst, as well as colleges and universities, more broadly, to supporting scholars who are at risk, for example as research fellows. Professor Basu suggested that the Five-College Consortium become a member of the UIE and that it be left to individual institutions whether they wish to host scholars. The other members agreed that this would be desirable. The dean said she wonders how hosting scholars might work at a practical level and reiterated that participating in this UIE may have an impact on the college's ability to participate in other related initiatives, as doing so may have an impact on the salary pool for visitors. It is a matter of resource allocation, she noted. The members agreed that it would be important to confirm that, if Amherst joins the UIE, there would not be an obligation to host a scholar each year. It was agreed that the dean should contact the director of the UIE and then report back to the members about what she learns. Dean Epstein agreed to do so.

The meeting adjourned at 5:33 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein  
Dean of the Faculty

The seventh meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2018–2019 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:00 P.M. on Thursday, October 18, 2018. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Basu, Engelhardt, Heim, Horton, Jaswal, Schmalzbauer; Dean Epstein; and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

The entire meeting was devoted to personnel matters.

The meeting adjourned at 5:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein  
Dean of the Faculty

The eighth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2018–2019 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:15 P.M. on Monday, October 22, 2018. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Basu, Engelhardt, Heim, Horton, Jaswal, Schmalzbauer; Dean Epstein; and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with President Martin informing the members that the board meetings and celebrations surrounding the opening of the new science center, which had taken place the previous weekend, had gone very well. She thanked the community for coming together to make the science center celebration such a success.

Dean Epstein informed the members that she has now completed interviews with faculty who are interested in serving as director of the Center for Humanistic Inquiry (CHI), beginning in the next academic year. Professor Umphrey, the inaugural director of the CHI, will step down from this role on June 30, 2019. The dean informed the members that she has selected a new director and that a public announcement would be made soon.

Under “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Horton, on behalf of a colleague, asked how decisions are made about naming opportunities at the college. The colleague had wondered specifically about the recent naming of the men’s and women’s soccer program in honor of Ted Beneski ’78, P’08 and Laurie Beneski P’08. President Martin noted that naming opportunities are developed through a process of collaboration that involves advancement, the donor, and the president. She informed the members that the Beneskis have been tremendous supporters of college for many years, most notably in areas directly related to the academic mission. Recently, the couple made a robust contribution to the Promise campaign. The gift is allocated primarily to campaign priorities, specifically, academics and the Loeb Center, President Martin said. In honor of this gift, and of the Beneskis’ exceptional generosity to Amherst over many years, the college named the men’s and women’s soccer program—which holds great meaning to them—in their honor. The soccer program will receive modest support from this gift, President Martin noted.

While recognizing that the committee’s agenda is quite full at this time, Professor Basu requested that, as soon as time can be found, the members have a discussion about the proposal to establish a Five College Certificate in Reproductive Health, Rights and Justice. On another topic, Professor Basu asked how a department should respond to students’ lobbying efforts to request an FTE in a particular discipline. She noted that some students have contacted the Department of Sexuality, Women’s, and Gender Studies about hiring a faculty member who specializes in Asian-American studies. The dean commented that the CEP considers college-wide needs in the FTE allocation process, and that there was a recent hire in Asian American studies. The committee agreed that conveying the complexities surrounding decisions regarding the curriculum can be a “teachable moment” for students. The remainder of the meeting was devoted to personnel matters.

The meeting adjourned at 5:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein  
Dean of the Faculty



The ninth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2018–2019 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:15 P.M. on Monday, November 5, 2018. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Basu, Engelhardt, Heim, Horton, Jaswal, and Schmalzbauer; Dean Epstein; and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

Under “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Schmalzbauer asked, on behalf of a colleague, what the process would be to modify the college’s mission statement as indicated below.

*Terras irradiant*  
“Let them give light to the world.”  
1821

Amherst College educates ~~men and women~~ **STUDENTS** of exceptional potential from all backgrounds so that they may seek, value, and advance knowledge, engage the world around them, and lead principled lives of consequence.

Amherst brings together the most promising students, whatever their financial need, in order to promote diversity of experience and ideas within a purposefully small residential community. Working with faculty, staff, and administrators dedicated to intellectual freedom and the highest standards of instruction in the liberal arts, Amherst undergraduates assume substantial responsibility for undertaking inquiry and for shaping their education within and beyond the curriculum.

Amherst College is committed to learning through close colloquy and to expanding the realm of knowledge through scholarly research and artistic creation at the highest level. Its graduates link learning with leadership—in service to the College, to their communities, and to the world beyond.

After considering different governance options, the committee agreed that the Committee of Six’s recommendation to move forward with this revision, with the goal of making the language of the mission statement more inclusive, would be sufficient to effect this change. If, after reading these minutes, faculty members have any objections to this approach, the committee agreed to reconsider moving forward in this way.

On behalf of another colleague, Professor Jaswal raised concerns surrounding accessibility at the new science center, specifically the difficulty of entering the building from the outside because of the weight and design of the exterior doors. Professor Horton described challenges he has faced with the doors when trying to move heavy items into the building. In his view, there is no entrance to the building that is accessible to individuals using wheelchairs or pushing strollers, for example. The dean said that she will share these concerns about accessibility with Jim Brassord, chief of campus operations, and ask him to respond.

Professor Schmalzbauer, once again on behalf of a colleague, asked Dean Epstein for an update on plans to explore whether the college can create a community hour. She noted that, especially in these times, it seems important to have a community space and time to come together to discuss issues, such as the recent shootings and changes to immigration policy, which have an impact on many members of the community members. The dean said that she had just met with Jesse Barba, director of institutional research and registrar services, about this very topic. He has begun the process of examining the class schedule, with the goal of finding a way to set aside time that could be used for a community hour, possibly daytime faculty

meetings, and department meetings. Mr. Barba has informed the dean that he thinks that it may be possible to reserve the noon hour, most likely on Tuesdays and Thursdays, for these purposes. He believes that, in order to do this, it will be necessary to extend the academic day until 5:00 P.M. or 5:30 P.M. The dean noted that some labs and seminars already extend into these timeslots. Mr. Barba will propose a plan to the dean, and she will then share it with Committee on Educational Policy. A vote of the faculty will be required to implement changes.

Continuing with questions, Professor Basu, referring to an email that the dean had sent last month to department chairs about emergency preparedness training, noted that there has been some confusion within departments that have faculty in several different buildings. The dean said that a number of faculty members have written to her about this issue. She has encouraged them to participate in the training with others in the building where their offices are located, as some of the training is site-specific. Professor Basu suggested that the dean write to the chairs with this information, and she agreed to do so.

The members discussed whether to have a faculty meeting on November 13. In advance of the committee's meeting, Professor Heim had informed the members that she and other members of the Amherst community who live adjacent to the college had received certified letters from Joe Flueckiger, director of dining services, announcing a public hearing that would be held on November 13, at 7 P.M., regarding the college's application for an all-alcohol, on-premise license for a pub located in Schwemm's. Professor Heim had also informed the committee in advance of the meeting that she had received a letter from a colleague who had expressed concern that having a faculty meeting on November 13 would prevent any faculty member who might also wish to attend the hearing from doing so. The writer of the letter had expressed the view that having a faculty meeting that conflicts with the hearing could be misconstrued by some as an attempt to keep liquor-license dissenters from attending the public hearing, because of the responsibility of faculty members to attend faculty meetings. Professor Heim reported that the colleague had noted that some of those whose property abuts the college might well have concerns that they would like to express. The certified letter received by neighbors from Mr. Flueckiger had said that "any questions and concerns" would be best addressed at that hearing or by emailing Mr. Flueckiger directly. Dean Epstein noted that the college has had a provisional liquor license since the beginning of the fall semester and has been serving only a few beers per night to a limited number of students. President Martin commented that serving alcohol at the campus pub represents a modest effort to enhance students' engagement with one another. It is preferable for students to drink in this communal space than to do so in their rooms, she noted. It was agreed not to have a faculty meeting on November 13 and to ask the faculty to continue to hold December 4 for a possible faculty meeting. The dean recommended that, prior to the hearing, faculty members who have concerns about the liquor license speak with Mr. Brassord. Professor Heim agreed to contact the writer of the letter to convey this suggestion. The remainder of the meeting was devoted to personnel matters.

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein  
Dean of the Faculty

The tenth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2018–2019 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:15 P.M. on Monday, November 12, 2018. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Basu, Engelhardt, Heim, Horton, Jaswal, and Schmalzbauer; Dean Epstein; and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

Returning briefly to the topic of the public hearing that is set for November 13 at 7 P.M. regarding the college’s application for an all-alcohol, on-premise license for a pub located in Schwemm’s, the dean said that it is her understanding that no faculty members have contacted Jim Brassord, chief of campus operations, about concerns.

Conversation turned to the accessibility of the science center’s entrance doors. Dean Epstein reported that, as the members had requested, she had contacted Mr. Brassord, about this issue. He stressed the importance of being able to enter and exit all campus buildings with dignity and ease, and provided additional information relating to specific issues surrounding the doors. While it might be assumed that motorized openers are the best solution for optimizing accessibility, this is not always the case, he told the dean. According to Mr. Brassord, the architects of the science center had weighed multiple factors and had proposed a solution that responds to a range of exigencies. They specified doors that are low-pull force with offset pivot hinges (considered the most accessibility-friendly type of door configuration). This approach was taken to optimize use for all. In this regard, as in other aspects of the new building, the facility meets and exceeds all federal and state accessibility laws, Mr. Brassord had explained. The paddle-operated automatic doors that are familiar to many of us have some downsides, he noted. Because of the motorization mechanism, these doors are harder to open, requiring increased pull force to overcome the motor when not using the power opener. As a result, many able-bodied people use the operators, which leads to many other problems, including significant energy loss (the doors must remain fully open for a much longer duration than normal doors would, and thus blasts of cold or warm air enter interior space). They also require increased maintenance, resulting in more down-time; the motorized doors are obviously much less accessible than the current doors, when the motorized units are not working. Having explained the thinking behind the design that is in place, Mr. Brassord noted that, with any new facility, there is naturally a period of evaluating the building’s efficacy and user-friendliness once it is put into use. He told the dean that he and Tom Davies, director of design and construction, will be deeply engaged in this process.

Continuing the discussion, Professor Jaswal suggested that the college’s disability and inclusion task force be consulted about issues surrounding accessibility at the new science center. Dean Epstein said that there is no longer an active task force, but that consultants will be examining accessibility on campus and could be asked to consider the concerns that have been raised. Professor Jaswal agreed that this approach would be helpful. The remainder of the meeting was devoted to personnel matters.

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein  
Dean of the Faculty

The eleventh meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2018–2019 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 6:10 P.M. on Thursday, November 15, 2018. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Basu, Engelhardt, Heim, Horton, Jaswal, and Schmalzbauer; Dean Epstein; and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

The members discussed [a proposal from the Committee on Academic Standing and Special Majors, which the Committee on Educational Policy \(CEP\) had endorsed and forwarded](#) to the Committee of Six, that the deadline for declaring an interdisciplinary major be shifted to the seventh week of the first semester of the junior year. It was noted that the current catalog language (see page eighty) permits students to submit a proposal up until the eighth week of the second semester of their junior year. The Committee on Academic Standing and Special Majors explained that the current timing creates a potential problem if, by the time the deadline has been reached, students have no path to graduation if their proposal is not approved. By moving the deadline to the middle of the first semester of the junior year, students would have time to complete a regular, preexisting major should their proposal be rejected. Under the proposal, which, if approved, would be effective beginning with the class of 2023, students could request an extension under special circumstances. The members expressed support for the revisions that appear below and decided to include the proposal on the next faculty meeting agenda. The committee agreed to take a formal vote on this matter when that agenda is considered at the committee’s November 26 meeting.

#### INTERDISCIPLINARY MAJORS

Students ~~with special needs~~ who **WOULD LIKE** ~~desire~~ to construct an interdisciplinary major will submit a proposed program, endorsed by one or more professors from each of the departments **OR PROGRAMS** concerned, to the Committee on Academic Standing and Special Majors. Under ordinary circumstances, the proposal will be submitted during the first semester of the junior year and ~~not under any~~ **NO** circumstances later than the ~~eighth~~ **SEVENTH** week of the ~~second junior~~ **FIRST** semester **OF THE JUNIOR YEAR**. The program will include a minimum of six upper-level courses and a thesis plan. ~~Upon approval of the program by~~ **The Committee on Academic Standing and Special Majors WILL AUTHORIZE THE APPOINTMENT OF** an ad hoc advisory committee of three professors, **WHICH WILL APPROVE** ~~appointed by the Committee will have all further responsibility~~ any possible modifications in the program, administering an appropriate comprehensive examination, reviewing the thesis and making recommendations for the degree with or without Honors. Information on **PROPOSING** ~~preparation, form, and submission of proposed~~ interdisciplinary programs is available in the Office of Student Affairs.

The remainder of the meeting was devoted to personnel matters.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein  
Dean of the Faculty

The twelfth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2018–2019 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:15 P.M. on Monday, November 26, 2018. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Basu, Engelhardt, Heim, Horton, Jaswal, and Schmalzbauer; Dean Epstein; and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder. The meeting was devoted to personnel matters.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein  
Dean of the Faculty

The thirteenth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2018–2019 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:15 P.M. on Thursday, November 29, 2018. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Basu, Engelhardt, Heim, Horton, Jaswal, and Schmalzbauer; Dean Epstein; and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

Under “Topics of the Day,” President Martin informed the members that she has met with the consultants who have just concluded their evaluation of accessibility on Amherst’s campus. The president said that the consultants’ informal summary of their visit had been helpful. The consultants pointed to some issues that the faculty will need to consider that bear directly on academic policies, some of which are already under discussion.

Turning to another topic, the president said that she had attended an event on November 28, titled “Student Voices from the Frontlines of Climate Change: In Support of the Climate Action Plan,” which was sponsored by the Association of Amherst Students and the Direct Action Coordinating Committee. Both President Martin and the dean, who had also been present, were impressed with the quality of the discussion and the high level of engagement of those who participated. The president informed the members that a committee of faculty, students, and staff—chaired by Laura Draucker, director of the Office of Environmental Sustainability—has been working to develop a comprehensive climate action plan (CAP) for the college since 2015. The board of trustees has been informed of the progress of these efforts, which the trustees have supported, President Martin noted. The president explained that the plan will chart a course toward achieving a carbon neutral campus and define strategies to transition the college’s thermal infrastructure from fossil fuel combustion to electrically powered ground source heat pumps, conserve energy, shift to renewable energy sources, and, if necessary, purchase carbon offsets. A significant number of students, who at present are aware only of the broad contours of the CAP, are circulating a petition to support its goals, and are urging the college to adopt the plan. President Martin informed the members that it is expected that the plan will be considered by the board of trustees in January. If the board makes a commitment to the plan, a great deal of decision-making will remain, including the development of a timeframe and detailed plan for its implementation, she noted. The members encouraged President Martin to share this information with the faculty at the December 4 faculty meeting, and she agreed to do so. In addition, the committee requested that Jim Brassord, chief of campus operations, be asked to give a full presentation on the plan at the first faculty meeting of the spring semester. The committee expressed support for the development of a climate action plan. On a related front, Professor Heim noted that, over her years at the college, she has noticed that many trees have been removed and have not been replanted. She wondered if efforts are under way to ensure the proper conservation of the college’s land, which encompasses many acres of forest, she understands. President Martin agreed that this is an important issue and noted that a number of agreements are under consideration at this time, in service of this goal.

Dean Epstein next informed the members that Amherst will join the [New University in Exile Consortium](#) (New UIE Consortium). The New School launched the initiative to confront threats to scholars around the world. The founding member institutions are Barnard College, Brown University, Columbia University, Connecticut College, Georgetown University, George Mason University, the New School, Rutgers University-Newark, Trinity College, and Wellesley College. The committee expressed enthusiasm for this initiative, thanked the dean for facilitating the college’s participation, and thanked Professor Basu for her initiative and persistence on this matter.

Continuing her remarks, Dean Epstein suggested a revision to the recently established criteria for eligibility for the Jeffrey B. Ferguson Memorial Teaching Prize. At present, she reminded the committee, only current tenured faculty members who have been at the college for at least ten years, will be eligible for the new prize. The dean recommended that senior lecturers who have been at the college for the same period of time also be eligible, and the members agreed to this change.

Under “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Horton suggested that the dean follow up on last year’s vote of the faculty on the matter of half-credit courses by clarifying the current policies, particularly regarding “matching.” He noted that, while it is clear that a maximum of four half courses may be combined for credit “toward the degree,” as noted in the catalog, there seems to be some

confusion about the rules for combining two half courses for credit. The dean noted that it is her understanding at this time that the chemistry department is the only science department that has decided that its labs may be taken for half credit, a system that will begin in the next academic year. Other departments will be taking a close look at how this format works, she understands. In regard to the rules for matching half courses, the current policy is that it is permissible, as noted in the catalog, to combine two half courses to be counted as the equivalent of a full course, if the two halves match in a manner designated by the offering department or program (the relevant passage appears on pages 77–78 of the current catalog). This policy doesn't speak to the possibility that the two half courses may be offered by more than one department or program and what the resulting approval process will be. Dean Epstein noted that, for many years, only two departments regularly offered half courses, and there was no matching across these departments. Due to the vote last year, a number of questions have emerged, in anticipation of departments and programs expanding their number of half-credit offerings. It seems that there is a need now to clarify the rules that govern "college credit" (general credit that is counted as one of the thirty-two, or in some cases thirty-one, courses required for the Amherst degree) when matches occur across departments. In practice, departments have decided whether two half courses that have been matched can be counted to meet the requirements of both the major and college credit, even in cases in which a student is not pursuing a major offered by the department. Some members noted that, since current catalog language does not authorize departments to restrict which courses can match for college credit, and half-credit courses can occur as special topics courses in any department, it seems odd that departments could make that determination. Professor Jaswal reported that the chemistry department does not plan to restrict matches of half-credit labs only to other chemistry half-credit courses. In her view, cross-departmental matching is desirable to enable students to have the most flexibility in exploring the curriculum. Professor Engelhardt expressed agreement with Professor Jaswal's position with respect to half-credit courses in music. The dean noted that the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) plans to discuss this matter in the spring, and she expects that it may be necessary to propose new catalog language to offer the clarification that is needed.

The members next discussed [a proposal to revise the wording of the special topics policy that the CEP had forwarded to the Committee of Six](#). The members reviewed the suggested revision to the *Amherst College Catalog* language (which appears on page eighty-six of the current catalog) regarding this policy and voted unanimously to support the substance of the following changes and to forward them to the faculty for a vote.

Departments may offer a semester course known as Special Topics in which a student, or a group of students, ~~study or read widely in~~ **EXPLORES** a field of special interest **THROUGH SELECTED READING, ORIGINAL RESEARCH, OR ARTISTIC PRODUCTION**. ~~It is understood that t~~ This course **NORMALLY** will not duplicate any other course regularly offered in the curriculum, and ~~that~~ the student(S) will work in this course as independently as the **INSTRUCTOR** ~~director~~ thinks possible.

**IN ORDER TO REGISTER FOR A SPECIAL TOPICS COURSE, THE STUDENT MUST HAVE FIRST** ~~Before the time of registration, the student~~ **OBTAINED PERMISSION FROM THE INSTRUCTOR; TOGETHER STUDENT AND INSTRUCTOR** ~~who arranges to take a Special Topics course should consult the instructor in that particular field, who will direct the student's work; they will decide the~~ **COURSE** title to be reported, the nature of the examination or term paper, and will **FORMULATE** ~~discuss the preparation of a bibliography and a plan of coherent study.~~ All students must obtain final approval of the Department before registration. Two Special Topics courses may not be taken ~~concurrently~~ **IN THE SAME SEMESTER** except with the prior approval of the student's Class Dean.

The members next considered [two additional motions, forwarded by the CEP, to revise other catalog language to implement a new policy](#). The CEP noted that, during the last academic year, the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee had recommended a series of revisions to the college policy that had allowed students to take up to two courses under a pass/fail grading system. Last fall, the CEP discussed those proposals and forwarded its recommendations to the Committee of Six, which had responded by conveying its own recommendations and returning the policy to the CEP. After much discussion, the CEP has now “enthusiastically endorsed” further revisions and is proposing to create a Flexible Grade Option (FGO). The CEP, the dean explained, is proposing that, if approved by the faculty, the FGO take effect in the fall of 2019 and apply to all enrolled students. The CEP developed two options/motions (see below), commenting that it “marginally prefers” the one that appears below as Motion One. The CEP further recommended that, given the extent of the revisions, that the faculty be presented with [a “clean” copy of the proposed changes](#) (i.e., a copy with the proposed changes incorporated into the current catalog language) and [a copy of the current policy from the catalog](#), in addition to a copy that shows, via strike-throughs and all caps (see below), the proposed additions and deletions to the current catalog language. Continuing the conversation, the members noted that, under Motion One, the CEP is proposing (see below) that a student would declare the FGO option during the add-drop period and would have five days after receiving the grade in the course to decide whether to accept it, or to convert it to a *pass*. Second-semester seniors would not be permitted to declare an FGO. Instructors would not be informed as to which, if any, students are taking a course under the FGO option. Unrecorded FGO grades would be kept by the registrar until the start of the second semester of a student’s senior year. Taking this step would enable previously unrecorded grades to be recovered via petition to a student’s class dean and the registrar, should doing so become necessary as a consequence of changing majors or changing post-graduate plans. The suggested revision to the catalog reads as follows:

MOTION 1:

**CATALOG LANGUAGE:**

**FLEXIBLE GRADE ~~PASS-FAIL~~-OPTION (FGO)**

**THE PURPOSE OF THE FLEXIBLE GRADE OPTION (FGO) IS TO ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO EXPLORE THE BREADTH OF AMHERST’S OPEN CURRICULUM AS THEY SEEK TO MEET THE COLLEGE’S STATED LEARNING GOALS. Amherst College students WHO ENTER AS FIRST-YEARS may choose, with the permission of the instructor, a ~~pass/fail arrangement in two~~ ELECT TO TAKE UP TO FOUR of the ~~32~~-TOTAL NUMBER OF courses required for the degree UNDER THE FGO; TRANSFER STUDENTS WHO ENTER AS SOPHOMORES MAY ELECT TO TAKE UP TO THREE COURSES REQUIRED FOR THE DEGREE UNDER THE FGO; AND TRANSFER STUDENTS WHO ENTER AS JUNIORS MAY ELECT TO TAKE UP TO TWO COURSES REQUIRED FOR THE DEGREE UNDER THE FGO., but STUDENTS MAY not take more than one SUCH course in any one semester. COURSES TAKEN IN THE SECOND SEMESTER OF THE SENIOR YEAR ARE NOT ELIGIBLE FOR THE FGO.**

**TO ELECT A COURSE AS FGO, STUDENTS MUST FILE THE FGO FORM, SIGNED BY THEIR ADVISOR(S), WITH THE OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR BY THE END OF THE ADD-DROP PERIOD. INSTRUCTOR PERMISSION IS NOT REQUIRED ON THE FGO FORM, AND INSTRUCTORS ARE NOT INFORMED IF STUDENTS HAVE ELECTED THE FGO OPTION FOR THEIR COURSE.**

**STUDENTS WILL HAVE FIVE DAYS AFTER THE DATE GRADES ARE DUE TO EITHER ACCEPT THE GRADE ASSIGNED BY THE INSTRUCTOR, OR IN THE CASE OF**



**PASSING GRADES (“D” OR BETTER), ELECT TO HAVE A PASS (“P”) DISPLAYED ON THEIR TRANSCRIPT FOR THE COURSE. (NO GRADE POINT EQUIVALENT WILL BE ASSIGNED TO A “PASS.”) IF THE LETTER GRADE ASSIGNED BY THE INSTRUCTOR IS AN “F,” AN “F” WILL BE RECORDED. IF THE STUDENT TAKES NO ACTION, THE ASSIGNED GRADE WILL REMAIN ON THE TRANSCRIPT.** ~~The choice of a pass/fail alternative must be made by the last day of add/drop at the beginning of the semester and must have the approval of the student’s instructor and all major advisors. No grade point equivalent will be assigned to a “Pass.,” but courses taken on this basis will receive either a “P” or an “F” from the instructor, although in the regular evaluation of work done during the semester the instructor may choose to assign the usual grades for work submitted by students exercising this option.~~

**SECOND SEMESTER SENIORS WHO HAVE NOT EXHAUSTED THEIR FGO OPTIONS MAY SELECT ONE COURSE TO BE TAKEN PASS/FAIL. TO DO THIS, SENIORS SUBMIT A PASS/FAIL FORM, SIGNED BY THEIR ADVISOR(S) AND THE COURSE INSTRUCTOR, TO THE REGISTRAR BY THE END OF THE ADD-DROP PERIOD. (NO GRADE POINT EQUIVALENT WILL BE ASSIGNED TO A “PASS.”)**

The members expressed support for Motion One (Motion Two and the original policy appear at the end of this discussion), viewing it as the “cleaner” of the two possibilities that have been proposed. Motion Two was seen as offering less flexibility and presenting students with more complexities, which could lead to more angst in their decision-making process, in the committee’s view.

Several members noted that, having the option to earn an “A” under the FGO would be an incentive for some students to work hard in the course, even if they declare the FGO. Professor Engelhardt noted one exception that would have to be made if Motion One were to be approved. If students were to declare the FGO for a class that was being taught by their advisor, that advisor, unlike other faculty, would be aware that the student had chosen this option. This was not seen as a significant concern. Professor Heim commented that the proposal would in effect replace the pass/fail, except for second-semester seniors. Professor Jaswal wondered how the FGO might affect students in courses in which group work counts for a significant portion of the grade. Other members felt that the new policy would likely not have that much of an impact, as students who declared the FGO would probably still be striving to achieve a high grade. It was noted that, while faculty may currently decide that their courses are not offered pass/fail, under the proposal, professors could not opt out of the FGO. The dean commented that, at present, more than half of the students who exercise the pass/fail option do so in the second semester of their senior year. When asked why, under the proposal, declaring the FGO would not be a possibility for students in the second semester of the senior year, she explained that there would not be sufficient time for the registrar to process honors and students’ eligibility to graduate. In regard to whether the FGO could be used to satisfy major requirements, the dean noted that the CEP preferred not to legislate a policy, leaving the decision up to departments. Professor Engelhardt asked if the registrar’s office would be able to handle the burdens that might be placed on its staff to implement the proposal. The dean said that it is her understanding that the office will be able to accommodate the changes. A shift to a new computer system, a project that is currently at the planning stage, is expected to allow for more functionality, the dean said.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Horton expressed support for the FGO as a means of encouraging students to take academic risks and to explore the curriculum fully. Commenting on the role of a “D” as a passing grade, he wondered whether the faculty might consider making a change to a “C-minus.” He expressed the view that a “D” is demonstrative of a very low level of engagement. On a related note, Professor Horton said that the college can expect that grade inflation will be one effect of the FGO, while also commenting that, at maximum, FGO courses could account for only one-eighth of a student’s courses at Amherst. The committee discussed

whether some students who might make use of the pass-fail option might avoid the FGO, though the FGO could essentially be used as a de facto pass-fail option, but with greater flexibility. Professor Schmalzbauer feels that some students might still prefer an outright pass-fail option. She suggested that the pass-fail option might enable a different psychological context for students by overtly removing grades from the picture all together.

The members expressed a unanimous preference for Motion One with one minor revision (see below in blue) and the addition of a line (see below in blue) that would require the registrar to keep unrecorded grades as part of a student's record in perpetuity, as opposed to the proposed timeframe of "until the start of the second semester of a student's senior year."

STUDENTS WILL HAVE FIVE DAYS AFTER ~~THE DATE~~ GRADES ARE DUE POSTED TO EITHER ACCEPT THE GRADE ASSIGNED BY THE INSTRUCTOR, OR IN THE CASE OF PASSING GRADES ("D" OR BETTER), ELECT TO HAVE A PASS ("P") DISPLAYED ON THEIR TRANSCRIPT FOR THE COURSE. (NO GRADE POINT EQUIVALENT WILL BE ASSIGNED TO A "PASS.") IF THE LETTER GRADE ASSIGNED BY THE INSTRUCTOR IS AN "F," AN "F" WILL BE RECORDED. IF THE STUDENT TAKES NO ACTION, THE ASSIGNED GRADE WILL REMAIN ON THE TRANSCRIPT. UNRECORDED FGO GRADES WILL BE KEPT BY THE REGISTRAR.

The committee voted six in favor and zero opposed on the substance of Motion One and six in favor and zero opposed to forward the motion to the faculty.

The alternative motion that the CEP proposed appears below.

#### MOTION 2:

Under this proposed system, a student would declare a minimum grade during the add-drop period. Second-semester seniors could use this option. All other components of the FGO system would remain the same.

FLEXIBLE GRADE ~~PASS-FAIL~~ OPTION (FGO)  
 THE PURPOSE OF THE FLEXIBLE GRADE OPTION (FGO) IS TO ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO EXPLORE THE BREADTH OF AMHERST'S OPEN CURRICULUM AS THEY SEEK TO MEET THE COLLEGE'S STATED LEARNING GOALS. Amherst College students WHO ENTER AS FIRST-YEARS may choose, with the permission of the instructor, a ~~pass/fail arrangement in two~~ ELECT TO TAKE UP TO FOUR of the ~~32~~ TOTAL NUMBER OF courses required for the degree UNDER THE FGO; TRANSFER STUDENTS WHO ENTER AS SOPHOMORES MAY TAKE UP TO THREE OF THE COURSES REQUIRED FOR THE DEGREE UNDER THE FGO; AND TRANSFER STUDENTS WHO ENTER AS JUNIORS MAY TAKE UP TO TWO COURSES REQUIRED FOR THE DEGREE UNDER THE FGO. STUDENTS ~~but~~ MAY not take more than one SUCH course in any one semester. TO ELECT A COURSE AS FGO, STUDENTS MUST FILE THE FGO FORM SIGNED BY THEIR ADVISOR(S), WITH THE OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR BY THE END OF THE ADD-DROP PERIOD AND MUST DECLARE TO THE REGISTRAR THE MINIMUM GRADE THEY WILL ACCEPT WHEN THEY FILE THE FORM. INSTRUCTOR PERMISSION IS NOT REQUIRED, AND INSTRUCTORS WILL NOT KNOW IF A STUDENT HAS ELECTED THE FGO OPTION OR THE MINIMUM GRADE DECLARED BY ANY STUDENT EXERCISING THAT OPTION IN THEIR COURSE. IF THE GRADE ASSIGNED BY THE INSTRUCTOR IS LOWER THAN THE MINIMUM GRADE, THE REGISTRAR WILL RECORD A PASS ("P") IN THE CASE OF PASSING GRADES ("D" OR BETTER) ON THE STUDENT'S TRANSCRIPT. IF THE LETTER

**GRADE ASSIGNED BY THE INSTRUCTOR IS AN “F,” AN “F” WILL BE RECORDED. (NO GRADE POINT EQUIVALENT WILL BE ASSIGNED TO A “PASS.”)** ~~The choice of a pass/fail alternative must be made by the last day of add/drop at the beginning of the semester and must have the approval of the student’s instructor and all major advisors. No grade point equivalent will be assigned to a “Pass,” but courses taken on this basis will receive either a “P” or an “F” from the instructor, although in the regular evaluation of work done during the semester the instructor may choose to assign the usual grades for work submitted by students exercising this option.~~

The CEP provided the original policy, shown below, which reads as follows:

#### **PASS/FAIL OPTION**

Amherst College students may choose, with the permission of the instructor, a pass/fail arrangement in two of the 32 courses required for the degree, but not in more than one course in any one semester. The choice of a pass/fail alternative must be submitted by the **last day of add/drop** and must have the approval of the student’s advisor. No grade-point equivalent will be assigned to a “Pass,” but courses taken on this basis will receive either a “P” or an “F” from the instructor, although in the regular evaluation of work done during the semester the instructor may choose to assign the usual grades for work submitted by students exercising this option.

At 4:15 P.M., Lisa Rutherford, chief policy officer and general counsel, joined the meeting for a conversation about the [proposed amendments to federal Title IX regulations](#). It was noted that the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights released these draft regulations on November 16. On November 29, the Federal Register published the proposed regulations, launching a mandated sixty-day notice and comment period. Ms. Rutherford informed the committee that, in consultation with other higher education attorneys, she and her colleagues at Amherst are reviewing the 149-page document to determine exactly what is being proposed. Ms. Rutherford explained that, if the draft regulations are enacted in their current form, a result, in all likelihood, will be that the college will need to make some changes to its sexual misconduct policies and practices. In this regard, she noted that the proposed changes generally fall into the following three categories: rules with which Amherst’s policy and procedures are already consistent (e.g., live hearings and the opportunity to engage in cross-examination); rules that, if finalized as presently drafted, will require some modifications to the college’s policies and/or practices (e.g., the specific method by which cross-examination must occur and the definition of sexual harassment); and rules that, if finalized as presently drafted, may permit, but not require, modifications to Amherst’s policy and/or practices (e.g., informal resolutions in complaints of sexual violence). Ms. Rutherford reviewed with the committee a [chart](#) that compares key elements of the proposed regulations with existing Amherst College policies and practices. She noted that, if the changes are made, the definition of sexual harassment would read as follows: “...Unwelcome conduct on the basis of sex that is so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the recipient’s education program or activity; or sexual assault.” The new definition would create narrower standards that are more consistent with Title VII employment law, rather than Title IX, Ms. Rutherford noted. She pointed out that behavior that might not meet the criteria for the new definition might still be prohibited under the college’s honor code.

Continuing the conversation about the changes, Ms. Rutherford discussed with the members the proposed rule that “Sexual harassment that occurs off-campus and which isn’t related to the institution’s programs or activities is not covered by Title IX.” It was agreed that this change could have serious negative implications across institutions of higher education. Professor Engelhardt asked how this change would affect how misconduct by students that takes place on Five-College campuses is addressed, whether students’ actions take place on their own campus or the campus of another consortium school. How is sexual misconduct addressed now within the Five Colleges, he asked. Ms. Rutherford explained that, at present, incidents of sexual misconduct are adjudicated under the policies of the campus

on which the alleged respondent is enrolled. She does not yet know the impact of the proposed regulation.

It was noted that another significant change revolves around the standard of evidence under which cases of sexual misconduct are adjudicated. Under the proposed amendment, the institution “may use the preponderance of the evidence standard only if it utilizes that standard for other conduct violations that could result in similar sanctions. Further, the institution must use the same standard of evidence in addressing complaints against students and complaints against employees, including faculty.” It was noted that, at present, Amherst’s faculty process uses the “clear and convincing” standard of evidence. Amherst’s student process uses the “preponderance of the evidence” standard. If the change is implemented, the college would need to choose a single standard, which would be a challenging scenario, all agreed. Ms. Rutherford also discussed with the members the ways in which hearings to adjudicate sexual misconduct cases would be conducted under the proposed new rules. She noted that the regulation that cross-examination be conducted by an “advisor,” who would likely be an attorney, would place students in very difficult situations. President Martin commented on the inequities that would likely be a feature of this system, with those who have greater resources potentially hiring expensive attorneys while others could not do so.

In regard to the student response to the proposed changes and communicating the impact of the proposed changes, Ms. Rutherford noted that Laurie Frankl, Title IX coordinator, and Amanda Vann, associate director of health education and sexual respect educator, are reaching out to Amherst student groups, including the Association of Amherst Students (AAS). Professor Basu noted that the Department of Sexuality, Women’s and Gender Studies will discuss these and other issues at an upcoming meeting that the department has scheduled with the resource center directors.

Concluding the conversation, the president commented that, if the regulations are put in place, it is clear that institutions of higher learning will face new challenges when investigating and adjudicating cases of sexual misconduct, and that the regulations, taken together, will likely have the effect of discouraging survivors of sexual assault to come forward. She urged Amherst faculty, students, and staff to consider submitting a [formal comment on the proposed regulations](#) via the Federal Register’s website. President Martin stressed, as she later reiterated in a letter to the community, that Amherst will remain fully committed to promoting sexual respect, finding ways to prevent sexual misconduct, and responding swiftly, fairly, and compassionately to all members of the community who are affected by it.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein  
Dean of the Faculty

The fourteenth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2018–2019 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:30 P.M. on Wednesday, December 5, 2018. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Basu, Engelhardt, Heim, Horton, Jaswal, and Schmalzbauer; Dean Epstein; and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

Under “Topics of the Day,” President Martin discussed with the members her concern regarding the community’s awareness about the serious implications of the [proposed amendments to federal Title IX regulations](#). She emphasized the need to find as many mechanisms as possible to communicate the consequences that would accompany these changes, if they were to be implemented, and to encourage faculty, students, and staff to submit a [formal comment on the proposed regulations](#) via the Federal Register’s website during the sixty-day notice and comment period that began on November 29. While several aspects of the proposed changes would have a detrimental impact, she stressed that the following proposed amendments would have a particularly profound effect on the ability of the college to adjudicate cases of sexual misconduct, and the willingness of survivors of sexual assault to come forward: narrowing the definition of sexual harassment, and proposed changes to the standard of evidence under which cases of sexual misconduct are adjudicated, the ways in which hearings to adjudicate sexual misconduct cases would be conducted (in particular, the method by which cross-examination be conducted by an “advisor,” who would likely be an attorney), and the definition of a mandated reporter. President Martin reminded the committee that, under the proposed amendment, an institution “may use the preponderance of the evidence standard only if it utilizes that standard for other conduct violations that could result in similar sanctions. Further, the institution must use the same standard of evidence in addressing complaints against students and complaints against employees, including faculty.” It was noted that, at present, Amherst’s faculty process uses the “clear and convincing” standard of evidence. Amherst’s student process uses the “preponderance of the evidence” standard. If the change is implemented, the college would need to choose a single standard.

The committee agreed that the proposed changes present a serious threat to current college policies. The members discussed the challenges of gaining the attention of the community at this very busy time in the semester and as the break between the semesters is only weeks away. The committee agreed that discussing this matter at the December 7 meeting of the chairs of departments and programs could be helpful. It was decided that the Lisa Rutherford, chief policy officer and general counsel, should be asked to attend the chairs’ meeting (she later agreed) to provide information about the proposed changes, and that the [chart](#) that her office has developed, which compares key elements of the proposed regulations with existing Amherst College policies and practices, should be distributed to the chairs. Following the meeting, the chairs would be asked to share the substance of the discussion with their departmental colleagues. President Martin noted that Laurie Frankl, Title IX coordinator, and Amanda Vann, associate director of health education and sexual respect educator, will continue to reach out to Amherst student groups, including the Association of Amherst Students (AAS).

Under “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Heim inquired, on behalf of a colleague, whether faculty who retire from the college are still permitted to have parking stickers that allow them to park on campus. President Martin said that she would follow up on this matter with Jim Brassord, chief of campus operations. (Mr. Brassord later informed the president that faculty and staff who retire from the college are provided with parking stickers, upon request, and are thus permitted to park on campus.)

Professor Jaswal asked, on behalf of a colleague, if the impact on athletics and other co-curricular activities will be considered when developing a proposal for a community hour. The colleague raised the question after learning that such a proposal might include extending the academic day. Professor Jaswal also wondered about the status of the proposal. Dean Epstein responded that the impact on co-curricular activities would be considered, and said that she would check in with Jesse Barba, director of institutional research and registrar services, about his schedule for bringing a proposal forward.

Following up on the discussion about the calendar and the reading period that had occurred at the faculty meeting on December 4, Professor Horton inquired whether the Committee on Education Policy (CEP) could be asked to offer clarification about what academic work may be assigned and what deadlines can be imposed during this time. At present, there is a good deal of ambiguity, he noted, and

there seem to be constraints imposed that might not be serving students' educational needs. Dean Epstein said that she would be happy to bring this issue to the CEP, while noting that it is her understanding that work cannot be due during the reading period, with the goal of protecting this time for students to prepare for exams and to work on papers and other final projects before the exam period. In the past, when faculty wanted to leave campus before exam period, they would often make final projects due during the reading period, which placed additional pressure on students, she noted. Professor Horton commented that the long gap between the end of the semester and the beginning of exam period, during which no assessments can be assigned, for example, can eliminate a preparation tool that can be helpful to students and can have a detrimental effect on the scheduling of end-of-semester final presentations. He suggested that having a break in April by creating a long weekend might help break up this long period. Professor Heim shared Professor Horton's concerns, as did Professor Engelhardt, and suggested that departments should be given more flexibility when it comes to deciding how to use the reading period. Professor Jaswal said she hopes that a middle ground can be found between piling a large amount of work on students at the end of the semester, and giving departments some latitude in how they use reading period, with the goal of helping students and not creating greater pressures on them. She also urged that discussions around adjustments to the reading period include considering how to alleviate some of the additional challenges faced by the music department because of the shorter calendar. Professor Engelhardt elaborated on how the current rules governing the reading period present significant challenges for the music department. Senior thesis performances occur in the first weeks of the semester to take advantage of intensive rehearsal opportunities during the January break and to provide enough time for faculty to evaluate theses within the department's complicated workflow. The shorter calendar means that thesis performances are compressed toward the beginning of the semester, affording some students less time to devote to their theses. The schedule also places constraints on performances by student and professional ensembles, as it is difficult to schedule rehearsals and performances when Buckley is being heavily used for thesis rehearsals. Finally, the shorter calendar entails increased labor demands on the music department staff who support the same level of student and professional performance in a compressed timeframe.

The remainder of the meeting was devoted to personnel matters.

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein  
Dean of the Faculty

The fifteenth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2018–2019 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:15 P.M. on Monday, December 10, 2018. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Basu, Engelhardt, Heim, Horton, Jaswal, and Schmalzbauer; Dean Epstein; and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with Dean Epstein reporting back on an issue raised at a previous meeting of the committee (December 5, 2018) by Professor Jaswal, who had asked, on behalf of a colleague, if the impact on athletics and other co-curricular activities will be considered when developing a proposal for a community hour. The colleague raised the question after learning that such a proposal might include extending the academic day. Professor Jaswal had also asked about the status of the proposal. Dean Epstein had responded that the impact on co-curricular activities will be considered, and had said that she would check in with Jesse Barba, director of institutional research and registrar services, about his schedule for bringing a proposal forward. The dean informed the members that Mr. Barba has now told her that it is his hope to use the month of January to test the few alternative class schedules that he and Eva Nowicki, the registrar, have developed, which have been informed by the last year of course enrollments. Unfortunately, this is a rather laborious and manual process, Mr. Barba had noted, but he and Ms. Nowicki believe that they could have a proposal ready sometime after the add-drop period in the spring. Professor Jaswal suggested that the Committee on Education and Athletics be consulted as part of this process.

The members next discussed [a memo of November 30, 2018, from Professor Griffiths](#) regarding the process for making a revision to the mission statement, a matter discussed by the Committee of Six on November 5, 2018, and questioned by Professor Griffiths at the December 4 faculty meeting, as well as in his memo. At the November 5 meeting, the committee had discussed the following change to the statement, with the goal of making the language of the mission statement more inclusive:

*Terras irradiant*  
“Let them give light to the world.”  
1821

Amherst College educates ~~men and women~~ **STUDENTS** of exceptional potential from all backgrounds so that they may seek, value, and advance knowledge, engage the world around them, and lead principled lives of consequence.

Amherst brings together the most promising students, whatever their financial need, in order to promote diversity of experience and ideas within a purposefully small residential community. Working with faculty, staff, and administrators dedicated to intellectual freedom and the highest standards of instruction in the liberal arts, Amherst undergraduates assume substantial responsibility for undertaking inquiry and for shaping their education within and beyond the curriculum.

Amherst College is committed to learning through close colloquy and to expanding the realm of knowledge through scholarly research and artistic creation at the highest level. Its graduates link learning with leadership—in service to the college, to their communities, and to the world beyond.

After considering different governance options, the committee had agreed that the Committee of Six’s recommendation to move forward with this revision would be sufficient to effect this change. The members had noted that, if faculty members had any objections to this approach, the committee would reconsider moving forward in this way.

Professor Griffiths asked the committee to reconsider its decision, commenting in his memo that he is “unaware of any article of college governance that would grant the Committee of Six the right unilaterally to amend a corporate document voted, in the last instance, by the board of trustees and the corporate faculty, after extensive consultation with graduates, students, administrators, and the staff association, among other bodies.”

Some committee members and Dean Epstein agreed with Professor Griffiths's view of the importance of respecting process and desire for consultation. Several members felt that process is important in cases of substantive change. In this case, the revision upholds the college's commitment to respect and inclusivity and is not a change in meaning, in their view. Professor Jaswal stressed the possible negative repercussions for some students who are particularly vulnerable in regard to issues of gender identity and inclusion, if objections were to be raised by members of the community during a period of public discussion. She commented that the current language of the mission statement may be read as excluding some students, faculty, staff, and alumni in ways that are painful. She also argued that expressions of outrage about questions of procedure on this matter seem ill-placed when considered in relation to the abuses and exclusions individuals and communities face whose very identities are regularly called into question, and she stressed the deleterious effects of this on the entire Amherst community.

Professor Heim said that she sees the proposed revision as a nonsubstantive change to inclusive gender-neutral language of the sort that does not usually get debated on the floor of the faculty when such changes are routinely made in official documents. To argue that this is a substantive change requiring campus-wide discussion throws open to debate the inclusion of all students, which itself contradicts the rest of the college's mission statement (in that it, for example, affirms the education of exceptional students "from all backgrounds"). The members agreed that how people characterize their own identities should not be debated on the floor of the faculty, and that such a discussion could erode trust among faculty, students, and staff.

To provide faculty with an opportunity to endorse the revision prior to consideration by the board of trustees, the members agreed to invite the College Council, as a representative body of students, staff, and faculty, to discuss the proposed change to the mission statement early in the spring term and to forward a summary of its conversation to the Committee of Six. The Committee of Six would then include this information, along with an invitation to the community to comment on the proposed revision of the mission statement, in its minutes. Ultimately, the Committee of Six would then forward a recommendation to the president to take to the board. The remainder of the meeting was devoted to personnel matters. The meeting adjourned at 5:48 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein  
Dean of the Faculty



The sixteenth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2018–2019 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:00 P.M. on Thursday, December 13, 2018. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Basu, Engelhardt, Heim, Horton, Jaswal, and Schmalzbauer; Dean Epstein; and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with Dean Epstein informing the members that she has realized that an issue was overlooked when the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) formulated its proposal for a Flexible Grade Option (FGO); the matter of students who wish to change classes to *pass/fail* later in the semester had been neglected. In other words, she commented, the CEP has done a good job of figuring out how to use a pass/fail mechanism to encourage students to explore the curriculum, but has not yet proposed a way to help students who are struggling with a class at the mid-semester point. The CEP discussed two possible options, but perhaps there are others, the dean noted. The first is to make a pass-fail option available with a much later decision point, perhaps up to week ten of the semester (under the current FGO proposal, there is a pass-fail option only in the spring semester of the senior year). The other possibility would be to allow students to declare an FGO later in the semester. It was agreed that the CEP should be asked to discuss this matter early in the spring term.

Under “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Horton noted that, subsequent to the meeting of chairs of academic departments and programs on December 7, during which Lisa Rutherford, chief policy officer and general counsel, had discussed the Department of Education’s proposed Title IX regulations and how they relate to Amherst’s sexual misconduct policies, he was pleased to see that the faculty was invited to attend informational discussions on December 18 and 19. Some members noted that productive conversations about these issues appear to be taking place within departments as well.

Continuing with questions, Professor Horton, reminding the members of the concerns that Professor Trapani raised at the May 17, 2018, meeting of the faculty, suggested that the faculty reexamine the system for awarding honors at the college. (It was noted that, at the faculty meeting, Professor Trapani had expressed disappointment that, under the current system, two neuroscience majors had missed graduating magna cum laude by .10, even though one of the students had received a Watson Fellowship and a department prize.) Professor Heim suggested that the committee be provided with the history of the honors system, as well as data about the distribution of students, who have earned summa honors by field, to inform a future discussion about this topic. The dean agreed to provide this information this spring.

Conversation turned to [the proposal, forwarded by the CEP](#), for a [Five College Reproductive Health, Rights, and Justice \(RHRJ\) Certificate Program](#) which the committee had discussed last spring. At that time, the committee and the president had raised concern about an overemphasis on advocacy. The CEP had had similar concerns, but ultimately the members of that committee had been reassured by [Professor Basu’s responses to their questions](#). During last spring’s conversation, some members, the dean, and the president had wondered whether incorporating the goals of the proposed certificate into the existing [Five College Certificate in Culture, Health and Science \(CHS\)](#) might be preferable to approving the new certificate proposal. Some members had also expressed concern that only a relatively small number of the required courses for the certificate would be taken at Amherst and Mount Holyoke.

Professor Basu, who has participated in the Five College RHRJ Certificate Steering Committee offered details about the origins of the certificate and what it entails, and responded to the committee’s questions concerning advocacy. She began by explaining that an unusually large number of faculty within the Five Colleges teach courses on topics relating to gender, sexuality, and women, which led to the formation of the [Five College Women’s Studies Research Center](#). The center, she noted, is valuable, but is not student focused, and the number of faculty members who make use of the center is relatively modest. Over the past few years, a number of different programs have emerged, and there is particular energy around the topic of women and science, among others, she explained. The decision to create the RHRJ certificate is an outgrowth of this interest. She noted that Smith and Mount Holyoke approved the certificate in 2015, Hampshire and the University of Massachusetts followed, and that Amherst is an outlier in not participating.

Professor Basu described the goals of the certificate program, which she said include the following: interpreting reproductive questions broadly by focusing not just on abortion but on access to health care;

exploring rights, health, and justice together rather than separately; considering what reproductive health or justice mean from domestic and global vantage points; and creating a distinctive intellectual community among faculty. She noted that course enhancement grants and other activities are available to faculty through the program, and commented that faculty in the early stages of their careers benefit most from the intellectual companionship and support for their work these opportunities provide. The certificate program also encourages students to take courses across campuses on a defined area of study, while ensuring that advisors on their own campuses guide and direct their students' efforts.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Basu informed the members that, last year, more than seventy Amherst students signed a petition requesting that the college make the certificate available, and many others have written to her separately about this proposal. In the petition, it was noted that the certificate spans STEM and humanities fields, and that students who are interested in pre-med fields and/or in public health are particularly enthusiastic about the RHRJ certificate. Students who created the petition also commented that many pre-med students who can't or don't want to double major are eager to earn an interdisciplinary certificate. Conversely, Professor Basu noted, some humanities students want to obtain a certificate that has a science component. In the petition, students also conveyed that they would benefit from making connections with other Five-College students and with Five-College faculty. They also expressed excitement about the community-engagement feature of the certificate. Professor Basu added that some Amherst students who are already taking the courses that are required for the certificate feel it is unfair that they can't earn the certificate when students at all the other four institutions can.

Professor Basu noted that Amherst students created a Reproductive Justice Alliance in 2016 and have organized multiple events, including a reproductive justice week. These students are part of a large body of students within the Five Colleges who are interested in reproductive health, she explained. Professor Basu said that she is impressed with the level of student engagement around these issues, which she thinks the college should harness and channel. She noted that the alliance has been collaborating with a range of other campus groups to co-organize events, including the Amherst College Democrats and Republicans, the Loeb Center, and the alumni office.

In answer to whether the certificate courses overlap with the CHS, Professor Basu informed the members that those who proposed the certificate considered making it a track within the CHS program, but decided against the idea. It was noted that the CHS is already the largest of the existing Five College certificate programs. The certificate under discussion is growing rapidly, and it was felt that it would be best to keep the two programs separate for practical reasons. There also was, and continues to be, a desire to build an intellectual community that shares common interests in reproductive issues.

Turning to another issue raised by the Committee of Six last year, about whether there are enough courses that can be included in the certificate, Professor Basu said that she had asked participating faculty at other institutions this question. They responded that the number of courses at Amherst and Mount Holyoke are similar, and that there are many related courses on both campuses, she noted. Although they agreed that there could be more core courses, they told her that faculty have developed such courses after the certificate was adopted.

In regard to the question of activism and advocacy, Professor Basu noted that, to obtain a Five College RHRJ Certificate, students must successfully complete six courses, including one foundational course, one transnational course, and one upper-level (300 or above) course (suggested courses are identified by each campus). Students must also complete a special project on reproductive health, rights and justice. They are encouraged to link this project to a community-engaged experience, Professor Basu noted, and she quoted the following from the certificate description: "Through the required special project component, students are encouraged to take what they learn out of the classroom and into an appropriate community-engaged experience where they can connect their academic pursuits with policy and advocacy work. Students work with their certificate advisor to connect with campus-based centers, as well as local and national policy and advocacy organizations, to pursue internships and other opportunities and learn through hands-on experience." Professor Basu explained that the members of the certificate steering committee have emphasized that this requirement is designed to encourage community-based learning rather than activism; that students are evaluated on the basis of their written work on the project rather

than simply on the basis of their community engagement; that an internship is not a necessary part of the experience; and that an Amherst faculty member would determine whether the project is suitable and oversee it for Amherst students.

Professor Basu concluded her remarks by discussing her own experience serving as a discussant for a book by Loretta Ross, a visiting professor at Hampshire College and founder of Sister Song Women of Color Reproductive Justice. In this book, *Radical Reproductive Justice*, Ross and her co-authors argue that the views of women who oppose abortion and are committed to women's reproductive health must be respected and appreciated, or the movement for reproductive justice risks becoming narrow and exclusionary. Professor Basu noted that the founders of the RHRJ certificate, who had also attended the meeting, share Ms. Ross's views, which are upheld in the design of the certificate. Professor Basu said that she was impressed by how broad the range of views was among the scholars who have developed the RHRJ certificate. She feels that Amherst should support the certificate because the college is part of the Five College Consortium and because the program is academically rigorous; addresses important issues nationally and globally; and enables students to develop practical skills and engage in experiential learning within the context of a liberal arts education.

Dean Epstein expressed some concern that it appears that students in the certificate program are granted credit for internship experiences. The college does not offer such credit, she noted. For Amherst to participate, there would have to be a structure in place that would embed a community-engagement experience within a course, for example a special topics course, and an Amherst faculty member would need to oversee the work for the course. Simply writing up information and reflecting on the experience would not be acceptable. Professor Schmalzbauer said that she can imagine a range of academic work that would tie in to a special project in the community, for example an oral history project. She added that American studies also has a community-engagement requirement and noted the impressive array of intellectually rigorous projects she has observed students complete. Professor Engelhardt agreed, commenting that students already conduct ethnographic work for courses or as part of theses that also require them to connect that work to critical engagement with related literature. Professor Heim agreed that the structure of a special topics course, under the supervision of an Amherst faculty member, would make sense, ensuring a substantive intellectual experience for the student. President Martin commented that, while she does not doubt that experiences in the community can be compelling and meaningful for students, such experiences alone should not be credit-bearing. She and the dean expressed hesitation about having Amherst participate in a certificate with a community-engagement requirement outside a class structure, as doing so could be a slippery slope. In order for Amherst to participate, language would need to be developed that would make it clear that such experiences must be part of a course that includes serious intellectual engagement with texts, research, and writing. Professor Horton, who agreed, suggested that, before a certificate proposal is brought forward, some language should be added that would convey the requirements surrounding the special project, and the academic context in which it would need to take place, at Amherst specifically.

Professor Basu pointed out that Amherst has had successful courses that involve a community-engagement component, for example in local prisons. While initially there was some anxiety about such courses, as a result of their success, and support from the Center for Community Engagement, they have been taught by several faculty members. Learning beyond the Amherst classroom has also become very popular with some students, she noted. She agreed that students should not be given credit for a community-engagement experience alone, but feels that the Amherst faculty member would ensure that the special-topics course would involve serious academic work. Some members suggested that another approach might be that students could complete the certificate's special project requirement, but not for credit toward the Amherst degree. Professor Jaswal commented that research indicates, and her own experience confirms, that many first-generation and underrepresented students in STEM fields are motivated by community-engagement experiences, and their participation often appears to enhance their success in the academic setting. She supports offering students such opportunities, expressing the view that students will be interested and excited, and that community-engagement experiences give them an academic boost.

The members concluded the conversation by discussing whether other Five-College certificate programs in which Amherst participates might have experiential requirements, noting that the [Five College Certificate in Sustainability Studies](#) comes to mind (it offers a choice of whether to complete one). The committee wondered to what degree Amherst could tailor the RHRJ to the college's own requirements. To address continuing concerns about an emphasis and proclamation of advocacy, the members wondered whether Amherst might modify the language (removing references such as "an emphasis on advocacy," perhaps, and focusing more on policy, for example) to include issues surrounding globalism, race, inequality, and poverty, for example, in the context of reproductive health, rights, and justice. Professor Engelhardt commented that it would be important not to preclude students from ethnographic research that would focus on groups, for example, pro-life groups, that do advocacy work. Professor Horton, noting Professor Engelhardt's point, wondered if, perhaps, the experiential component of the RHRJ should allow students to engage with groups that have a focus on advocacy, while excluding advocacy from the coursework. Professor Basu agreed that the certificate requirements should be broad, and that the certificate should not foster divisive partisanship on campus.

It was agreed that the dean should ask Jesse Barba, director of institutional research and registrar services, how many of the Five College certificates in which Amherst participates have an experiential component and how many Amherst students have completed them. The members also agreed that it would be important to know how the college has awarded credit for such components and, when this has been done, how the component has been vetted and evaluated.

The meeting adjourned at 5:35 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein  
Dean of the Faculty

The seventeenth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2018–2019 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 9:00 A.M. on Wednesday, December 19, 2018. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Basu, Engelhardt, Heim, Horton, Jaswal, and Schmalzbauer; Dean Epstein; and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

The entire meeting was devoted to personnel matters.

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein

Dean of the Faculty

The eighteenth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2018–2019 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:00 P.M. on Monday, January 28, 2019. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Basu, Engelhardt, Heim, Horton, Jaswal, and Schmalzbauer; Dean Epstein; and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with President Martin informing the members that the meetings of the board of trustees, which took place January 25 and 26, had been productive. She shared the news that the board voted unanimously to adopt a Climate Action Plan that sets a goal for the college to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. President Martin noted that the Climate Action Task Force, which is composed of Amherst students, faculty, and staff, developed the plan, with the support of outside experts and engagement with other institutions of higher learning that have demonstrated success in climate action. (A [statement](#) from board chair Andrew J. Nussbaum ’85 about the plan was later posted on the college’s website.) The committee expressed its enthusiasm and support for this initiative.

Continuing her remarks, President Martin said that she had also discussed the Campus Framework Plan with the trustees, a significant number of whom were not on the board when the framework plan was completed during the strategic planning process. The president explained that the plan is not a campus plan, but a framework within which to consider options for the long-term evolution of Amherst’s built environment in response to changing programmatic needs. The president said that Jim Brassord, chief of campus operations, provided a list of needed building projects that include a new music building, library, and museum. President Martin shared her view that additional faculty offices and classrooms and a new student center are currently her top priorities for the near term, adding that faculty, staff, and students will be consulted this spring. President Martin noted that the responses of students and alumni to surveys about their Amherst experience make clear that, while they are enthusiastic about their academic experiences, their social experience often did not meet their expectations. When comparing survey results among peer institutions, Amherst is well below the median when it comes to satisfaction with the social experience, she added. The president commented on students’ positive response to the new science center’s “living room” and their heavy use of this common space. She said that adding more gathering spaces will help to improve social life on campus and should be a priority, along with other steps that need to be taken. Some trustees offered that they are hearing from alumni about the need to enhance student social life and to create spaces that meet the needs of today’s students. The president emphasized that plans call for engaging campus constituencies in a discussion of the proposal to focus building efforts over the next four or five years on faculty offices, classrooms, and a new student center.

Conversation turned to the news that the president of Hampshire College had shared recently that Hampshire’s current operations cannot be sustained over the long term. Hampshire’s president had announced that Hampshire might not admit a new first-year class this spring and is seeking a partner that could help make the college financially viable. President Martin said that she was informed of this decision very recently, and was not provided with many details. She explained that the decision had emerged from the Hampshire administration’s review and analysis of the institution’s current financial circumstances and future outlook. President Martin, pointing to Hampshire’s long-standing relationship with Amherst and the special place that Hampshire, by virtue of its mission and accomplishments, occupies within higher education, expressed great sadness about this situation, and also noted that there are students, faculty, and staff at Amherst who will be affected by these decisions, some directly, some indirectly. The president stressed that Hampshire, while created by the four other institutions that now comprise the Five College Consortium, has governed itself independently for the past fifty years. Hampshire is not looking for a short-term solution to its challenges, she noted.

The members expressed feelings of great sadness about what is happening at Hampshire. In addition, they wondered about the consequences for Amherst, should Hampshire close its doors. Professor Basu asked about enrollments of Hampshire students at Amherst, and Amherst students at Hampshire. The dean commented that a great loss would be felt in Amherst’s classrooms, which are enriched in significant ways by the contributions of Hampshire students, should Hampshire close. During the 2017–2018 academic year, she understands that there were 312 enrollments, representing 223 individuals on the Hampshire-to-Amherst side, and thirty-six course enrollments, representing thirty individuals from Amherst to Hampshire. Discussing other implications, it was noted that many members

of the Amherst community rely on Hampshire's childcare facility. The members discussed how best to share information about Hampshire with Amherst faculty, students, and staff, and when it might be best to bring the community together for purposes of doing so. After considering a number of factors, it was agreed that, while there might not be any information beyond the official announcement to share, it would be helpful to have a community gathering soon—if nothing else, to develop more of a sense of the questions people have and the ways in which the community might be affected if Hampshire were to close.

President Martin and Dean Epstein agreed to host a community meeting at 3:00 P.M. on Friday, February 1, in Stirn Auditorium. President Martin said that she would make clear in her invitation to the event that she does not know anything new about Hampshire or the decisions it will make. She said that she would be happy to provide information about programs and appointments that Amherst shares with Hampshire. In addition, she and Dean Epstein would welcome the opportunity to hear and discuss the concerns that the community has about the impact of Hampshire's possible decisions.

Under "Questions from Committee Members," Professor Jaswal asked, on behalf of a colleague who appreciates that students can receive funding for presenting at professional conferences, whether the college can help students pay for travel and accommodation expenses in advance, as students can find it challenging to pay what can be significant costs up front, even if they will be reimbursed. In many cases, faculty "front" hundreds of dollars themselves for student conference registration, travel, hotels, and meals. Dean Epstein said that Steven Hegarty, director of academic finance in her office, is available to book travel and accommodations so that students and faculty do not have to pay costs up front. Professor Jaswal added that it would help immensely if student and faculty meals could be handled per diem, ideally also through an advance. Professor Schmalzbauer said that it is her understanding that a student who has received \$1,000 in funding through the Gregory S. Call program to support undergraduate research cannot receive additional funds to support participation in a conference. The dean said that she will consult with colleagues in her office to consider how best to support students who are giving presentations about their research at professional conferences.

Professor Jaswal thanked the dean. In another matter, she asked whether it might be possible for Schwemm's Pub to open at 5 P.M. one day a week so that faculty and staff might have conversation over a drink and snacks at the end of the work day. The dean said that she would ask Jim Brassord, chief of campus operations, whether this schedule might be possible. (The dean later learned that plans were already under way to open the pub on Thursday, January 31, from 3:30 P.M. to 6:30 P.M., and to continue with pub hours on Thursdays from 5 to 7 P.M. thereafter.) The members then discussed a small number of committee nominations.

Turning to the calendar for faculty meetings in the spring semester, the members decided that the following dates should be held for possible meetings: February 19, March 5, March 19, April 2, April 16, May 7, and May 23. The committee then discussed constituting a memorial minute committee for Professor of Biology Emeritus, William Hexter, who passed away on December 20.

The dean informed the members that the Ad Hoc Committee for the Development of a Common Form to Evaluate Classroom Teaching has asked to meet with the Committee of Six. Professor Kingston, the ad hoc committee's chair, told the dean that the group has had several productive meetings, including one with the Consultative Group of Untenured Faculty, and is now working to develop a draft of a set of questions. Consulting with the Committee of Six is part of the ad hoc committee's charge, the dean noted. Professor Kingston has informed her that the ad hoc committee wants to update the Committee of Six on its efforts and seeks the members' input. The members agreed to meet with the ad hoc committee on February 14.

Dean Epstein next consulted with the members about providing the minutes of the committee's discussions of reappointment cases to candidates and chairs, when the dean meets with each of these colleagues separately, following a positive reappointment decision. While the practice has been that the dean reads the minutes to candidates and chairs, the dean has learned that there is no barrier to providing the minutes instead. In this way, chairs and candidates will have a record of the committee's deliberations to which they can refer in the years before the tenure-track professor stands for tenure. Dean Epstein emphasized that the guidance offered in the minutes cannot be seen as a contract for tenure,

but can serve as a vehicle for providing advice about a candidate's trajectory as a scholar, teacher, and citizen of the college that can be useful to candidates and departments. The members discussed whether a vote of the faculty would be needed to effect this change and decided that providing the minutes seems permissible under the current language of the [Faculty Handbook \(III., D., 4.\)](#) which requires the dean of the faculty meet with candidates soon after the reappointment process is completed to discuss the Committee of Six's reading of the candidate's case and to discuss the committee's view with the department chair. The committee turned to a personnel matter.

Conversation turned to [a proposal from the Committee on Educational Policy \(CEP\) that the pre-registration process first endorsed by the faculty in 2015 continue](#). In preparation for this discussion, Associate Dean Tobin and Jesse Barba, director of institutional research and registrar services, developed the following succinct summary of the process:

Under the current system, pre-registration occurs over four weeks, as described below. The old system was identical to weeks one and two.

#### **Week One**

##### **Advising Week**

Students and their advisors agree upon a schedule of courses.

#### **Week Two**

##### **First Round of Pre-Registration**

Students are responsible for registering for their advisor-approved courses for the upcoming semester. Seats are not guaranteed during the first round of pre-registration. All students who pre-register for a limited-enrollment course have the course appear on their registration record. During this period, prerequisites and instructor permissions are enforced.

#### **Week Three**

##### **Roster Management**

Faculty with over-enrolled courses may cut their rosters to the approved cap. While reducing the class roster is not mandatory, students remaining on the roster at the end of the second registration period are guaranteed a seat in the course unless they fail to meet a prerequisite or do not attend the first session of the course. Faculty members may wish to exceed the cap with the expectation that some enrollments may be lost during the add/drop period. Those who take this approach must be prepared to have enrollments that may exceed the cap (see below).

#### **Week Four**

##### **Second Round of Pre-Registration**

Students are able to register for new courses during this second round of pre-registration on a first-come-first-served basis. Enrollment caps are enforced. Faculty with courses that have reached their cap may convert the course to *instructor permission* if they wish. Again, students who are enrolled in a course at the end of the second round of pre-registration are guaranteed a seat in the course unless they fail to meet a prerequisite or do not attend the first session of the course.

#### ***A Note on Reserving Seats for First-Year and Other New Students: Two Approaches***

There are two methods of reserving seats for new students who enter in the fall: instructor permission (which requires the faculty member to monitor requests from students), or the use of course caps to reserve a number of seats, approved by the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP), between pre-registration and the add-drop period. These two approaches are described in more detail below.

Faculty members with capped courses who wish to hold seats beyond the second round of pre-registration (e.g., for first-year students) may do so by converting their course to *instructor*



*permission.* The CEP (Committee on Educational Policy) must approve this designation before the first day of advising week.

Alternatively, faculty members teaching fall courses with an enrollment cap may elect to designate a lower cap during the spring pre-registration period. The higher cap will automatically go into effect for fall orientation and add-drop, allowing first-years and other new students to register for available seats. Faculty wishing to use this method of saving seats for new students may do so using the CEP course proposal and editing tool.

Professor Horton commented that the pre-registration system that has been used under the pilot, in his experience, represents an enormous improvement over the prior system. Fewer students are now being dropped from courses in September or January, at the end of add/drop period, which presents a significant hardship and can result in course decisions being made in haste. Professor Schmalzbauer agreed, while noting that the only challenge has been reserving slots for first-year students, and especially for transfer and readmitted students, who arrive on campus in January. Professor Horton noted that he has taken the approaches for doing so that are described in the summary, and has found them to be effective.

The committee turned to its annual review of senior sabbatical fellowship proposals and voted to forward them to the board of trustees for approval.

The members next reviewed the theses and transcripts of students in the class of 2019E who had been recommended by their departments for a summa cum laude degree and have an overall grade point average in the top 25 percent of the graduating class. The committee also reviewed the thesis of a student who had received a summa cum laude recommendation from the student's department and whose overall grade point average was likely to land below the top 25 percent, but within the top 40 percent of the class; students with this profile qualify for a magna cum laude degree. The members voted unanimously to forward these recommendations to the faculty and offered high praise for the quality of the work done by this accomplished group of students. The committee then turned to personnel matters.

The meeting ended with a follow-up conversation about the proposal for a [Five College Reproductive Health, Rights, and Justice Certificate Program](#) (RHRJ). At its last meeting, the members had agreed that, in order for Amherst to offer the certificate, language would need to be added to the certificate that would make clear the requirements surrounding the special project, and the academic context in which it would take place, at Amherst specifically. Professor Basu said that she had forwarded the committee's questions about the certificate to Jennifer Nye, co-chair of its steering committee. In regard to course credit for the special project, Ms. Nye had said that it is her understanding that the special project is very flexible and that it can be either credit or non-credit bearing. Many of her students have completed a project through a summer internship or volunteer work, for which they did not earn credit. Students are asked to develop a project with their RHRJ advisor that is focused on reproductive health, rights, and justice; the form and content of that project is left up to the student and advisor. The program encourages students to develop a project that will enhance the "real-world grounding" of the curriculum, because collaborations with community members working in reproductive health, rights, and justice deepen students' understanding of what they are learning in the classroom, and potentially generate community-based research projects for faculty members and students, according to Ms. Nye. She said that it is her sense that the RHRJ special project is no different than special projects required by other Five College certificates. On the question of an emphasis on advocacy, Ms. Nye said that she does not feel that the certificate promotes a particular political position or requires this of students. She noted the certificate provides students with an opportunity to do in-depth critical study of the field of reproduction, which by necessity implicates political and legal issues, but that the certificate doesn't require any sort of political litmus test. In answer to the question of whether it would be possible for Amherst to submit a description of program requirements for its students, Ms. Nye said that she would not be opposed to the college doing so, but said that the steering committee would need to approve this language. The members agreed that, for Amherst students, the expectation should be that the special project, which is experiential in nature, should only receive credit if it is part of a course or an independent studies project. The members also

agreed that, while advocacy should not receive academic credit, students should be permitted to engage with advocacy groups as part of their special projects. Noting that the certificate is based at Hampshire, the members wondered what the impact on the program would be if Hampshire were to close. Professor Basu agreed to incorporate the members' views into a draft of certificate requirements for Amherst students, which she would submit to the steering committee and bring back to the Committee of Six.

The meeting adjourned at 5:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein  
Dean of the Faculty

The nineteenth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2018–2019 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:00 P.M. on Thursday, February 7, 2019. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Basu, Heim, Horton, Jaswal, and Schmalzbauer; Dean Epstein; and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder. Professor Engelhardt was absent (all votes noted in these minutes include his votes, which were provided following the meeting).

The meeting began with the dean informing the members about a request she had received to extend an invitation to emeritus professors to attend faculty meetings when memorial minutes are going to be read. She noted that emeriti have often spent their careers with colleagues who are being honored with memorial minutes; she understands that retired faculty would welcome the opportunity to be present for these tributes. The members agreed that the practice of inviting emeriti to faculty meetings, as described by the dean, should be adopted.

Under “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Jaswal noted that the “pub night” that had been held at Schwemm’s Pub on January 31 had been a great success, with many faculty and staff members enjoying time together. Commenting on plans to continue pub night on a weekly basis, she suggested that the pub open at 4 P.M. The dean agreed to ask Jim Brassord, chief of campus operations, if moving to this schedule is feasible.

Turning to another topic, Professor Heim commended Dean Epstein for her efforts to build international partnerships, in particular longer term exchanges that will take Amherst faculty and students to Asia for a semester or a year. The other members also praised the dean for the emphasis that she is placing on “opening Amherst up to the world,” as Professor Heim had described the dean’s initiative. (During the first two weeks of Interterm, Dean Epstein, joined by Amherst colleagues in each country, traveled to Japan [Doshisha University in Kyoto], South Korea [Yonsei and Seoul National Universities in Seoul], and India [ISSER and FLAME University in Pune] to explore and strengthen relationships with educational institutions in these countries.) The dean thanked the committee for recognizing this work, which she believes should be a priority for the college. On a related note, Dean Epstein informed the members that she has been invited to give a keynote address at the tenth anniversary celebration of Seoul National University’s College of Liberal Studies.

With further information provided in letters that the committee had received from [Professors Barale](#) and [Professor Hall](#), the members returned to a discussion of the process that should be used to amend the college’s mission statement to reflect the change shown below in red.

*Terras irradiant*  
“Let them give light to the world.”  
1821

Amherst College educates ~~men and women~~ **STUDENTS** of exceptional potential from all backgrounds so that they may seek, value, and advance knowledge, engage the world around them, and lead principled lives of consequence.

Amherst brings together the most promising students, whatever their financial need, in order to promote diversity of experience and ideas within a purposefully small residential community. Working with faculty, staff, and administrators dedicated to intellectual freedom and the highest standards of instruction in the liberal arts, Amherst undergraduates assume substantial responsibility for undertaking inquiry and for shaping their education within and beyond the curriculum.

Amherst College is committed to learning through close colloquy and to expanding the realm of knowledge through scholarly research and artistic creation at the highest level. Its graduates link learning with leadership—in service to the college, to their communities, and to the world beyond.

The members discussed the issues that Professors Barale and Hall had raised. Dean Epstein encouraged the committee to offer the faculty the opportunity to vote on the proposed revision, anticipating that colleagues will want to endorse what they will view as an important change in the language. Professor Jaswal strongly discouraged having a vote, a step that she feels would be tantamount to voting to approve how people characterize their own identities and ignores the reality that non-binary students, staff, and faculty are already at Amherst, despite being specifically excluded in the mission statement. She noted that the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, the resource centers, residential life and other areas within student affairs, and campus operations have already taken many important actions to enhance inclusion around gender identity at the college. Professor Jaswal worries that the progress that the college is making in the area of inclusion could be eroded, if the faculty sends a signal that it prefers to focus on processes of governance, when it could be devoting its time and energy to education about issues of inclusion, and making a commitment to taking concrete steps to ensure that Amherst's classrooms and departments are inclusive for all. Professor Heim commented that a vote seems performative, given that the trustees will be making the decision to change the mission statement. Most members decided that the committee should bring forward a motion to the faculty to endorse the change to the mission statement language. The members then voted six in favor and zero opposed on the substance of the motion and five in favor and one opposed to forward the motion to the faculty.

The committee turned to [a written request from nine faculty members](#), and [a memo that the group had also sent to the committee](#), requesting that a special faculty meeting be held as “a useful next step for the faculty to achieve clarity about its responsibilities and options under these unusual circumstances [recent events at Hampshire College].” The dean noted that, soon after these communications had been received, her office had been in touch with Professor Frank to learn about the group's preferences regarding the timing of the special meeting. Professor Frank had asked that a special faculty meeting not be held until after a meeting of Five-College faculty had taken place on February 9, as more information might be known about matters at Hampshire following that meeting. The dean informed the members that she might also learn more about the situation after attending a meeting of the Five College deans on February 8, during which Hampshire would be discussed. With this information in mind, the members considered a number of possible dates and times for holding a special faculty meeting, but decided that it would be best to wait until after the other two meetings (for Five College faculty and deans) had taken place. The dean informed the members that, in the meantime, she would be discussing the situation at Hampshire with the chairs of academic departments and programs at the next chairs' meeting, which would take place on the afternoon of February 8 (following the Five College deans meeting). She noted that she has already been in touch with chairs of departments that are running searches for visitors to see if there are ways to help Hampshire faculty, as appropriate. There may be other open positions at Amherst to which Hampshire faculty and staff might be encouraged to apply, the dean said. It was agreed to return to the question of when the special faculty meeting should be held as soon as more information about Hampshire is known. Professor Heim agreed to attend the meeting of Five-College faculty and to share her impressions with the members.

The committee next discussed notification ([via the appended letter](#)) received from Professors Hall and Harms of their intention to make a motion to repeal the resolution to award half credits to laboratories that the faculty had approved at its meeting of May 1, 2018. With this notification in place, a majority vote will be required to pass the repeal motion, the members noted. The resolution that was approved at the May 1 faculty meeting reads as follows:

Beginning in the 2019–2020 academic year, science laboratories will be awarded a half credit. However, departments or programs may opt out of awarding a half credit for the laboratory component of any particular course. The department or program must inform the registrar of the credit to be awarded prior to pre-registration.

The committee agreed with Professors Hall and Harms that the language of the resolution is confusing, given the handling of the distinction between “courses” and “credits.” As is pointed out in the letter, the college catalog refers to degree requirements in terms of courses and half courses, not credits, which provides, as Professors Hall and Harms say, a way to distinguish between the two. The language reads as follows: “Standard full courses are equal to four semester credits each. Half courses are equal to two semester credits. Our course system considers all standard full courses to have equal weight toward completing degree requirements.” The committee concurred that the faculty should vote on revising the catalog language to use “half courses.” The members expressed support, however, for retaining the option of offering the laboratory component of science courses as separate half courses.

Professors Basu and Horton, who served on the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee that had recommended this change, noted that the curriculum committee had found students’ testimony about academic pressures at Amherst—commentary offered at a meeting held in November of 2015, following Amherst Uprising—to be compelling and illuminating. The idea of permitting labs to be considered half courses was one of a number of committee proposals that were made in response to what students had conveyed at the meeting, as a means of offering students (particularly those who arrive at Amherst with less preparation) greater flexibility, Professor Basu commented. Students would not be obligated to use the half course, but could continue to take the same courses as before.

Professor Jaswal said that, while learning may be enhanced when lectures and labs are integrated with ideal complementarity in the same course, this format may not always be workable for all courses. For the past two years, to accommodate more than 140 students in fall-semester chemistry courses, the chemistry department has had to combine students enrolled in chemistry 151 and 155 into the same seven lab sections. Professor Jaswal said that, though chemistry is the only science department that has chosen to experiment with offering half-course credit for labs in the fall of 2019, the biology department has indicated its interest in taking a close look at how this format works, and is considering offering this option. In the aftermath of the uprising and the workload meeting, the chemistry department has devoted a great deal of thought and effort to experimenting with how to better serve its students, especially in introductory courses—in which the variation in preparation due to differential access to AP courses is particularly acute. Professor Jaswal commented that she and her colleagues feel that half courses are worth trying as a way to help support more students—particularly those with less preparation—with the goal of enhancing success. She understands that other science departments do not teach as many students who are in their first two years at the college, when their workload challenges are especially significant, and she supports the decision of these departments not to offer labs as half courses. (Professor Jaswal noted that ~507 students are enrolled in the first four semesters of chemistry during the current academic year.) In regard to the potential of eroding the liberal arts, she pointed out that many of the students who may benefit the most are humanities and social science majors who may be pursuing the pre-medical curriculum. At the workload meeting, these students were among those testifying so eloquently to the need for more flexibility. In regard to STEM students who are struggling, the possibility of taking a maximum of fewer (by two) humanities and social science courses in order to take a lab as a half course should be weighed against the possibility that an overburdened student may find it necessary to withdraw from a course, or even from the college. Professor Horton noted that the CEP has not yet had a more general conversation about the rules for matching half courses, a related matter. The members agreed that it would be desirable to gather additional reliable data before making any decisions about whether the option of taking a lab as a half course should be available to students.

In anticipation of holding a faculty meeting on February 19, the members then voted unanimously on the content of the motions below and to forward the motions to the faculty.

#### **MOTION**

To adopt clickers as a voting mechanism, the Committee of Six proposes the following revision (as indicated in red) to the current language in the [\*Faculty Handbook, IV. R.,1\*](#)

1. Attendance and Voting

Questions before the faculty may be decided by **USE OF CLICKERS**, a voice vote, ~~or by~~ **A** show of hands, or by written ballot if requested by a faculty member (voted by the faculty, May 1990).

**MOTION**

As recommended by the Committee on Educational Policy ([see letter of January 17, 2019](#)), the Committee of Six proposes that the pre-registration process first endorsed by the faculty in 2015 continue. If the faculty approves the continuation of the process, [a description of the procedures will be posted on the web page of the Office of the Registrar](#).

The members reviewed a draft faculty meeting agenda for a possible meeting on February 19 and voted six in favor and zero opposed to forward the agenda to the faculty.

The meeting concluded with the committee reviewing drafts of the dean's letters to department chairs and candidates concerning tenure that are sent to department chairs and candidates each spring. Some members made suggestions for modest revisions, and the members agreed to continue the review at the committee's next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 5:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein  
Dean of the Faculty

The twentieth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2018–2019 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:00 P.M. on Thursday, February 14, 2019. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Basu, Engelhardt, Heim, Horton, Jaswal, and Schmalzbauer; Dean Epstein; and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with the president providing an update on steps being taken to determine the causes of the ongoing disruption of Amherst’s network, and to find solutions to this problem. President Martin said that it is her understanding that no personal information has been compromised during the outage, and that the risk is very low that criminal activity is causing the network problems. She thanked the community for its understanding, patience, and flexibility during this difficult time. The president praised the staff in the division of information technology for its dedication and extraordinary efforts, and she offered her appreciation to these colleagues, on behalf of the entire campus community.

President Martin informed the members that, within hours, WiFi, delivered by mobile Verizon equipment, would be available in Frost Library, as would additional “hot spots” in the science center and library. It is expected that WiFi will be more broadly available on campus soon, she noted. The president said that, after consultation with the Faculty Computing Committee, the college has decided to expedite plans to move to a new email system, a step that will now be taken within twenty-four hours. Before the outage, Amherst had been nearing a decision to move to a secure, cloud-based email system. Based on deliberations over many months by the Faculty Computing Committee and a group composed of students, faculty, and staff, the college was already very close to selecting Google as the system. The outage led to a need to make the transition immediately, President Martin explained. Professor Horton expressed support for making the switch to the new email system. The president explained that the Amherst email addresses and passwords of faculty, students, and staff will not change with the adoption of the new system. President Martin also reported on the progress being made in moving Moodle and the college website to the cloud, and she said that staff in IT are confident that these important tools will be available within the next few days.

Continuing the discussion of the outage, President Martin noted that efforts are being made across the college to be as flexible as possible about internal deadlines, as it has been impossible to use essential IT tools that are required to complete application and registration processes during this time. In addition, she noted that the Loeb Center for Career Exploration and Planning is reaching out to employers and internship hosts to explain the situation, and to try to reschedule interviews that have been affected by the outage, and to ask if job application deadlines might be relaxed, as needed.

Professor Horton commented that the outage has highlighted just how dependent the college is on technology. He expressed appreciation for the regular updates about the situation that have been sent via the college’s emergency system and praised the professionalism of the IT staff. The other members concurred. Professor Jaswal noted that the outage has caused some problems with the card “swipe” system for closing doors in some labs in the science center. President Martin said that the situation has been addressed by having staff members check during the evening to make sure that all lab doors are locked. Professor Engelhardt commented that some students are worried about the combination of a backlog of coursework due to class time that was lost during the recent snow storm, on top of the inability to access course materials because Moodle has not been available. It was noted that make-up days at the end of the semester are available to recover class time lost to bad weather, and the president commented that many students have expressed their appreciation for their professors’ willingness to be flexible in the face of the challenges that the college is experiencing.

Conversation turned to the agenda for the faculty meeting set for February 19. Given the technological issues that are interfering with the regular procedures and timeline for posting Committee of Six minutes and the faculty meeting agenda to the college website, the members discussed whether to move forward with the faculty meeting. It was agreed that it would be best to have the meeting, particularly due to the urgency of the crisis at Hampshire College. (Plans call for this matter to be the subject of a committee-of-the-whole conversation at the meeting.) The question of whether to adjust the agenda was also discussed, and the members decided to try to get through as much of the business as possible. It was agreed that it is

likely that another faculty meeting will be needed on March 5. For example, course proposals could not be provided for consideration for the February 19 faculty meeting because of technology problems, and the proposals will need to be approved on March 5. It was agreed that, at the February 19 meeting, it would be helpful if David Hamilton, chief information officer, provided more information about the network situation and answered questions from the floor.

Conversation turned briefly to the crisis at Hampshire. Professor Engelhardt asked about the implications for the other members of the Five College Consortium, including Amherst, if Hampshire decides to form a partnership with a for-profit entity. President Martin and Dean Epstein noted that the other members could withdraw from the consortium, if necessary. Professor Heim, who had attended a meeting about the situation at Hampshire that had been organized and attended by Five-College faculty members on the previous Saturday, recounted the conversation that had taken place. She discussed the position of vulnerability that faculty and staff now find themselves in, and the lack of transparency of Hampshire's administration. She is glad that the dean is encouraging Amherst departments to see if Hampshire faculty might fill the college's visiting positions. At the same time, there is concern that, if Hampshire faculty accept visiting positions at other institutions, including Amherst, they may give up the possibility of receiving a severance package from Hampshire, though it is not clear at all that Hampshire will be offering one, Professor Heim noted. It would be regrettable if Amherst's efforts to provide some cushion to Hampshire faculty were seen by Hampshire administrators as absolving their obligations to their faculty. Professor Heim noted that it was suggested at the meeting that CVs of Hampshire faculty could perhaps be placed in a clearing house online, perhaps facilitated by Five Colleges, so that Hampshire faculty across the board could easily make their credentials available and so that those conducting visitor searches could view the information in a centralized location.

At 3:40 P.M., the Committee of Six was joined by the members of the Ad Hoc Committee for the Development of a Common Form to Evaluate Classroom Teaching (Professors Brenneis, Hastie, Kingston [chair], and Trapani); Riley Caldwell-O'Keefe, director of the Center for Teaching and Learning, and Sarah Bunnell, the center's associate director, who were asked to be of counsel to the ad hoc committee; and Nancy Ratner, director of academic projects, who is assisting the ad hoc committee.

In the fall of 2018, the Committee of Six charged the ad hoc committee as follows:

The Committee of Six charges the Ad Hoc Committee for the Development of a Common Form to Evaluate Classroom Teaching with creating a form that will be used by all Amherst College departments as one of several means of evaluating the classroom teaching of tenure-track faculty. The majority of the questions on the form should be standardized or uniform and suitable for use across departments. The form should also allow departments the option of including additional questions, in order to evaluate aspects of teaching they consider to be specific to their disciplines. After considering best practices at Amherst and other institutions, the ad hoc committee should offer general guidance on the development of such customized questions. In so doing, and as part of its general charge, the ad hoc committee should consider issues surrounding implicit bias—in regard to the design of questions and the interpretation of results.

In addition to developing an evaluation form, the ad hoc committee should make recommendations regarding procedures for its administration. It should be made explicit that responsibility for providing the form to students, and explaining the process of evaluation, lies with the tenured members of departments. The committee is also asked to identify appropriate approaches to increase student response rates.



In conducting their work, the four faculty members who will serve on the committee should draw on the expertise of the director and assistant director of the Center for Teaching and Learning, who will attend the committee's meetings.

The Committee of Six requests that the ad hoc committee consult broadly with academic departments and programs; department chairs and other tenured faculty members; the Consultative Group for Untenured Faculty and other tenure-track faculty members; former and current members of the Committee of Six; the Center for Teaching and Learning (as noted above); the Office of Diversity and Inclusion; the director of Institutional Research and Registrar Services; and other colleagues on campus.

The ad hoc committee is asked to submit recommendations to the Committee of Six in the spring of 2019. The relevant section of the *Faculty Handbook* is included below.

[Faculty Handbook III., E., 4., a., \(5\)](#)

(5) (Note that in October 1998, the faculty voted that evaluations of teaching are to be requested of all students from every course, including every honors and special topics course taught by an untenured faculty member. These evaluations are to be signed and are normally to be solicited in essay format in all classes in the final week of each semester on a form to be devised by the instructor in collaboration with the department. After the submission of grades, they will be made available to the instructor without the names of the respondents.) All written evidence used to evaluate teaching effectiveness including the semester-end evaluations solicited from students in all courses, the retrospective letters solicited at the time of reappointment review, and the retrospective letters solicited at the time of tenure review from all current and former students taught since the time of reappointment. The department letters soliciting letters from students should be included with their responses. Solicitation of retrospective letters must include all students from every course, including every honors and special topics course taught by the candidate (voted by the faculty, October 1998). Each person asked to write such a letter should be informed that his or her response will be treated as confidential by the college. (Reviews from Scrutiny or other anonymous materials are inadmissible as evidence.)

The discussion began with the Committee of Six thanking the members of the ad hoc committee for the important work that they have undertaken, and expressing appreciation for the information that the ad hoc committee had provided in advance of meeting with the committee. Prior to the meeting, the ad hoc committee offered the Committee of Six the following summary. The group noted that it began its work in mid-October 2018. To inform its efforts, the ad hoc committee reviewed current Amherst College practice; research on course evaluations; and practices at other institutions that have recently reformed their evaluation processes. Early in the process, R. Caldwell-O'Keefe and S. Bunnell shared with the ad hoc committee information on the scholarly literature on teaching evaluations, which encompasses how to craft questions that are likely to elicit informative, reliable, and consistent feedback from students, and how to choose questions to mitigate bias. The ad hoc committee provided the Committee of Six with [a two-page summary of some of the most relevant literature on these issues](#), and pointed to [a fall 2016 report from Peter Lindsay of Georgia State University and R. Caldwell-O'Keefe](#), who evaluated many of Amherst's current course evaluation questions and identified what they view as areas of strength, as well as some less productive or potentially problematic questions.

The ad hoc committee described its goal as developing a standardized form to support an equitable process to evaluate teaching effectiveness for all tenure-track faculty at Amherst; to decrease bias in

responses; to improve the quality of the data gathered; and to offer recommendations for standardizing the administration of the form. The importance of asking students questions that they are qualified to answer, based on their own experiences and perceptions, was stressed. The ad hoc committee noted that Amherst departments use many different kinds of questions in their evaluations, which elicit different forms of information from students across courses and departments. Professor Jaswal commented that, in her time on the Committee of Six, she has been struck by the variety of the evaluations used and the different kinds of responses that questions may prompt. Professor Kingston noted that the ad hoc committee is reviewing the teaching evaluation forms used by different Amherst departments and has noted that there are many excellent examples among them.

Continuing, the ad hoc committee noted that it had held a meeting with the Consultative Group for Untenured Faculty in December. The conversation that ensued helped the ad hoc committee gain insight into the sense of anxiety and inequity that some tenure-track faculty members experience in relation to the evaluation system, and the ways in which the system may result in disadvantages for faculty members who are most likely to experience bias. Concurrently, R. Caldwell-O'Keefe and S. Bunnell held a number of student focus groups, which drew responses that suggest that a lack of consistency among evaluation forms can create confusion as to the purpose of the evaluation system, and students' role in it, and may reduce the quality of student feedback.

The members of the ad hoc committee explained that they have begun the process of drafting a common evaluation form. A form with three sections is envisioned. The first would include questions about the student's own level of engagement and effort in the course. The second would have questions about the degree to which the course stimulated students' intellectual interest and imagination and about the knowledge and skills they gained. The third would contain questions about course structure and teaching practices. The ad hoc committee is also considering the inclusion of optional course-specific questions related to, for example, laboratories, seminars, and studio classes. In addition, an optional section that would provide space for formative feedback is being considered. This section would not be provided to the Committee of Six, it was noted. Professor Hastie expressed support for this model, as the responses could serve the dual purpose of helping faculty consider ways that they might improve their teaching, and contributing to an evaluation of the instructor's teaching. The Committee of Six concurred.

The ad hoc committee noted that its charge asks the group to consult with the Committee of Six, and expressed eagerness to do so. At this stage, rather than seeking specific feedback on possible evaluation questions, the ad hoc committee asked the members of the Committee of Six to share their views on the themes that they look for when reading student evaluations; whether the language "challenging and supportive" captures the most important themes; whether there are other important aspects of good teaching about which the ad hoc committee should seek commentary via the form; the kinds of comments that Committee of Six members found most helpful and least helpful when reading course evaluations; and what the Committee of Six feels should be the goals of conducting course evaluations and whom the evaluation should serve.

In the near future, the members of the ad hoc committee said that they plan to invite comments on a set of draft questions, seeking feedback from the Committee of Six, the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP), chairs of academic departments and programs, untenured faculty, a student focus group, and from the faculty at large, via open listening sessions. Finally, the ad hoc committee intends to bring a proposal to the Committee of Six to forward to the faculty for consideration, ideally this spring.

Professor Kingston asked the members of the Committee of Six if, as the committee was reading teaching evaluations, particular kinds of information from student evaluations were found to be especially valuable, and whether themes have emerged, based on the Committee of Six's experience reading teaching evaluations. Professor Basu said that, in reading evaluations, she is particularly interested in whether the professor stimulates students to think in new ways. The strongest student evaluations describe students' experiences in the classroom as transformative. Professor Schmalzbauer noted that a evaluations often reveal areas in which a professor may struggle while teaching a course, and showcase

the ways in which the individual responds to feedback and makes adjustments. Dean Epstein said that she finds it helpful when the evaluations elicit comments about faculty members' openness to different viewpoints and perspectives, including those that may be different than their own, an important area on which to seek students' views. Professor Basu recommended including questions on the evaluation form that draw out the ways in which of a faculty member may be integrating scholarship and teaching—that is, how professors' ideas about their research animate the classroom.

At the ad hoc committee's suggestion, the Committee of Six discussed whether some of the forms may ask that students respond to questions that they are not qualified to answer. The Committee of Six agreed with the ad hoc committee that it would be most helpful to have a form that prompts students to comment on aspects of teaching that students can evaluate based on their experience with a professor, and which are not focused on broader questions of pedagogical intent, for example. The two committees discussed the tension that can exist because of the dual purposes for which evaluation forms are used, i.e., for summative and formative feedback on teaching effectiveness. S. Bunnell commented that the ad hoc committee may make recommendations surrounding mid-term progress reports, which could be used to provide feedback for faculty members about their courses and teaching, and which would not be forwarded to the Committee of Six. The ad hoc committee agrees that it would be valuable to provide information to the chairs of academic departments and programs and other faculty about approaches to reading and interpreting teaching evaluations, including best practices.

In regard to the ad hoc committee's idea that the common teaching evaluation form should place emphasis on assessing the level of challenge and support of the faculty member, as primary themes, Professor Horton said that he feels these themes capture the desired attributes of faculty members at Amherst. President Martin commented that "supportive" brings to mind the quality of a person, while "challenging" seems to be tied more to the content of a course. By "supportive," the ad hoc committee means the ways in which a professor supports students' learning, such as availability outside of class through office hours and via email. Professor Engelhardt suggested that the ad hoc committee develop questions that prompt students to consider learning outcomes—folding this concept into how respondents think about the ways in which they were challenged and supported. He also commented that, while there are clearly patterns that emerge within a faculty member's teaching record based on the reading of course evaluations, there are also responses that are clearly outliers—at both ends of the spectrum—either offering effusive praise or very serious criticisms. Such evaluations demand a great deal of the committee's attention, though undue weight is not placed on them, in particular within a teaching record that has patterns and themes that are consistent otherwise. He commented that it would be useful for the ad hoc committee to consider how to construct questions that prompt student responses—which may include superlatives and criticisms—that are backed up with concrete evidence. Adjectives alone, for example, are not valuable.

The Committee of Six noted the effectiveness of having end-of-semester evaluations, as well as retrospective letters. The members agreed that retrospective letters provide a sense of a teacher's impact, after the passage of time, a perspective that is valuable—in combination with students' impressions at the time they take a course. Professor Basu stressed the value of the retrospective letters, commenting that they allow students to develop their thoughts and provide a sense of the faculty member in a way that often is hard to tease out in the end-of-semester forms, in which students' commentary is broken up by specific questions. It was noted that the consideration of retrospective letters is not part of the ad hoc committee's charge.

The two committees discussed the issue of developing a common approach to administering the evaluation form. It was agreed that the way in which the request is framed and provided can have an impact on the quality of the responses and the response rate. Some departments prepare students and explain the purpose of the form, and provide ample time, while others do not, it was noted. The ad hoc committee will make a recommendation regarding this issue, its members noted. In the context of the

conversation, R. Caldwell O'Keefe noted the drawbacks of the timing of the end-of-semester evaluations, which are solicited during a time of great stress for many students.

A good deal of conversation focused on the benefits and disadvantages of not having students identify themselves on teaching evaluations. R. Caldwell O'Keefe commented that some students have conveyed that they feel inhibited and may not always offer honest reflections when they have to sign their names, and the literature about the question of anonymous vs. signed teaching evaluations supports this view, she said.

In this regard, Professors Trapani and Schmalzbauer expressed concern that students from underrepresented backgrounds and first-generation students may feel uncomfortable being candid in evaluations when they must sign their names, while students from more privileged backgrounds may feel more comfortable doing so. Professor Schmalzbauer specified that sociological research finds that children from different class backgrounds are typically socialized differently in terms of how to address adults in positions of authority. Namely, middle and upper class children are socialized to have a sense of entitlement in challenging authority figures, whereas working class youth are socialized to give full respect to, and therefore not challenge, the authority of adults. She therefore intuitively feels that low-income students might feel more comfortable, and thus hopefully be more forthcoming, if their responses were anonymous. Professor Trapani remarked that the literature that the ad hoc committee had reviewed suggests that bias in student comments has the largest impact on faculty from underrepresented backgrounds. Some members of the Committee of Six said that they feel it is important that students are held accountable for what they are conveying in their evaluations, and that having students sign their names contributes to this sense. Some Committee of Six members have found that having names, particularly of students who take multiple classes with the same professor and submit both retrospective letters and end-of-semester evaluations, makes the evaluations more personal and vivid and provides a valuable context. They worry that the power of hearing distinctive student voices will be lost if the college moves to an anonymous evaluation system. Professor Jaswal expressed concerns about the possibility of bias in the reading and weighting of evaluations when some students are known to members of the department and the Committee of Six, while others are not. In her view, concerns about uneven bias introduced by this additional factor for consideration of some evaluations, but not others, and issues surrounding class and race, should outweigh speculation that students will not be accountable if they do not sign their evaluations. Professor Trapani agreed and expressed the view that Amherst students will take evaluations seriously, whether they sign their evaluations or not, particularly if the importance of the evaluation process is emphasized during the administration process.

Continuing the conversation, R. Caldwell-O'Keefe noted that Amherst is an outlier when it comes to having signed evaluations. Professor Brenneis commented that the ad hoc committee reviewed the current evaluation practices of a number of institutions and found that Amherst is the only school that is using signed evaluations. S. Bunnell suggested identifying students with a code, rather than using signatures, so that the committee could recognize when students have taken multiple courses with a faculty member, if having this information is helpful to the Committee of Six. Professors Hastie and Schmalzbauer said that, at their previous institutions, anonymous evaluations had worked well and had generated valuable feedback from students. They were surprised when they came to Amherst and learned that departments' knowledge of individual students could have an impact in how student's feedback is weighed. Professor Horton said that his experience at two other institutions has been that anonymous teaching evaluations carry less weight. He feels that having students identify themselves is valuable, agreeing with the argument that they are held accountable for their views in this way. Professor Basu said that it is also her impression that students feel more of a sense of responsibility if they must sign their names. She also feels that it is sometimes useful to read these evaluations knowing about the racial, class, and gender composition of the class as a whole and of the students writing evaluations. On a related note, Professor Trapani argued that seeing student responses by question, rather than by student, places more

emphasis on the evaluation of the teaching and patterns within a record, and less emphasis on the experiences of individual students. The Committee of Six expressed the view that it would be valuable to have the responses to the end-of-semester evaluations for each course by question and by student, as it would be useful to consider the responses in both formats. The members thanked the ad hoc committee for the informative conversation, which concluded at 4:40 P.M.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein  
Dean of the Faculty

The twenty-first meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2018–2019 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:00 P.M. on Monday, February 18, 2019. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Basu, Engelhardt, Heim, Horton, Jaswal, and Schmalzbauer; Dean Epstein; and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

The dean informed the members that her office has completed research (consulting college archival records, *Robert’s Rules of Order*, and the parliamentarian) on the question of whether committee-of-the-whole notes should be shared as part of the minutes of faculty meetings, an issue raised at the faculty meeting of December 4. It seems clear that the notes should not be shared, though they should be kept as a record in the dean’s office, Dean Epstein said. The members agreed that this should be the process going forward.

Under “Questions from Committee Members,” several committee members noted that they had received a request from a faculty member to remove two motions (one regarding the pre-registration system and the other focusing on special topics courses) from the faculty meeting agenda for the February 19 meeting. The faculty member had expressed the view that, given that some colleagues may not have been able to gain access to the faculty meeting agenda because of the recent network outage, insufficient time has been provided for reflection regarding these matters. The members agreed to honor the request and to include the motions on a future faculty meeting agenda.

Professors Schmalzbauer next raised a question about the nomination process for exiled scholars who might be brought to Amherst through the [New University in Exile Consortium](#), in particular faculty who are known to Amherst faculty through their professional networks, rather than scholars who are listed on [the Scholar at Risk website](#) or [the website of the Scholar Rescue Fund](#). Professor Schmalzbauer wondered about the degree to which a faculty member who is making a nomination of scholar who is not part of the programs referenced above is responsible for vetting the individual. In particular, she asked whether it is necessary to gather documentation that will confirm that the proposed scholar has fled from severe and targeted threats to their lives and/or careers in their home countries or countries of residence (a requirement for participation in the consortium program). The dean said that it would be preferable to propose scholars who are on the lists, as they have been vetted already and because the Scholar Rescue Fund will provide an additional \$25,000 to support the scholar. If a faculty member nominates a scholar who is not on one of the lists, as much information as possible should be provided about the nominee.

Continuing with questions, Professor Engelhardt expressed appreciation to the staff members in the division of information technology for their extraordinary efforts during the recent network outage. He asked about the process for “migrating” years of accumulated email to the new Gmail system, which the college has now adopted, in particular whether emails will migrate within the electronic folders in which they resided in the old system. The dean said that the expectation is that emails from the last six months will migrate over the next several days. Older email will be moved in the coming weeks. It is her understanding that no email will be lost in the process. Professor Horton noted that IT’s management of the shift to Gmail has been remarkable. It was agreed that David Hamilton should answer questions about the network outage and the change to Gmail at the faculty meeting.

The committee turned to a review of possible agenda items for the spring term and agreed that consideration of the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee should be a priority—including proposals regarding college-wide learning goals, advising, and a required college seminar that students would take in their sophomore year. The dean noted that the

Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) has suggested some revisions to the proposed learning goals, and the Committee of Six agreed to review the CEP's iteration and to bring a proposal to the faculty this spring, if possible. Adopting the learning goals will be a helpful advising tool, it was noted. Dean Epstein informed the members that the CEP will be taking up the issue of advising, and the First-Year Seminar Committee is considering the proposal for the seminar. It was agreed that the dean should work with these committees to move the proposals forward. In regard to the college seminar, one possibility might be to have a committee-of-the-whole conversation about the proposal, it was noted.

The faculty members of the committee reported back on their conversation with tenure-track faculty about the draft proposal to clarify the *Faculty Handbook* language about the criteria for tenure, describing issues that had been raised. About a dozen tenure-track faculty had attended the open meeting, which took place on October 25, 2018. The members agreed that the proposal should be discussed once again with the chairs of academic departments and programs, as well as in an open meeting with associate professors.

The committee next reviewed drafts of the letters that the dean sends annually to candidates and chairs regarding tenure procedures and suggested some minor revisions to these documents.

The meeting concluded with the committee discussing the steps that should be taken to consider a proposal from the Committee on Education and Athletics to make changes to the role and responsibilities of the Faculty Athletic Representative (FAR) at Amherst. As [the letter from the committee](#) notes, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) mandates that every member institution appoint a FAR, but leaves it to each institution to determine the specific duties assigned to the position. The members agreed to meet with the Committee on Education and Athletics to discuss the proposal. The remainder of the meeting was devoted to personnel matters.

The meeting adjourned at 5:14 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein  
Dean of the Faculty

The twenty-second meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2018–2019 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:00 P.M. on Monday, February 25, 2019. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Basu, Engelhardt, Heim, Horton, Jaswal, and Schmalzbauer; Dean Epstein; and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

Under “Questions from Committee Members,” the committee discussed whether the practice of referring to staff members as *Mr.* or *Ms.* in the Committee of Six minutes should change. After considering a number of options, the members agreed that, after including the full name and position title of the staff member when the individual is mentioned for the first time in the minutes, the speaker should be referred to by first initial of the first name and last name. The committee also decided that the same practice should be put in place for faculty meetings, for both faculty and staff.

Continuing with questions, Professor Basu asked the dean about the process that departments should follow to learn if there are Hampshire College faculty who might be invited to become part of the candidate pools for visiting positions at Amherst. Dean Epstein said that Five Colleges, Inc., is working to create an online repository of CVs that should be available very soon. She commented that Amherst departments should consider Hampshire faculty for visiting positions as long as the Hampshire colleague is an appropriate fit for Amherst’s students and curriculum. Dean Epstein is discouraging the hiring of Hampshire faculty to teach single courses.

Professor Horton next inquired about the college’s plans to ensure that there are sufficient offices and classrooms on campus, in particular teaching spaces that are equipped for team-based pedagogy and/or state-of-the-art technology, moving forward. He noted that the high-quality spaces in the new science center appear to be a one-to-one “swap” for offices and classrooms in the Merrill Science Center and McGuire. Dean Epstein said that planning is under way to refurbish some classrooms over the summer, and that the college is continuing to consider other longer-term options for increasing the number of classrooms and offices.

Concluding the committee’s questions, Professor Heim noted that the Office of Student Affairs, in particular the class deans, appears to some at times to be advocating for faculty to be lenient in regard to failing students who come to the office’s attention. Dean Epstein said that it is her understanding the Karu Kozuma, chief student affairs office, intends to speak with the class deans about this trend, which she agrees is of concern, if faculty members feel pressured.

The members next reviewed a draft of a faculty meeting agenda for a possible March 5 meeting and voted six in favor and zero opposed to forward it to the faculty. The remainder of the meeting was devoted to personnel matters.

The meeting adjourned at 5:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein  
Dean of the Faculty



The twenty-third meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2018–2019 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:00 P.M. on Monday, March 4, 2019. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Basu, Engelhardt, Heim, Horton, Jaswal, and Schmalzbauer; Dean Epstein; and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

Under “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Basu asked the dean for further details about the process that departments should use to hire Hampshire faculty into Amherst visiting positions, and whether Hampshire will be providing severance packages to its faculty and staff. Dean Epstein responded that no new information is known about the situation at Hampshire, including whether severance packages will be offered. She noted that, so far, no Amherst departments have requested that she make an offer as part of regular visiting searches, which are ongoing at this point. It may also be possible for Amherst departments to use some of their restricted funds to hire some faculty. It is her hope that between five and ten Hampshire faculty might be hired into visiting positions at Amherst, including up to two of the fellow positions at the Center for Humanistic Inquiry, as long as Hampshire colleagues meet the needs of Amherst’s curriculum, programs, and students. It is also her hope that Hampshire will allow its faculty to be on unpaid leave if they are hired at Amherst, preserving these colleagues’ connection to Hampshire and eligibility for a severance packages, should packages be offered. The dean said that it is her understanding that there are many open positions at UMass, some of which might be good matches for Hampshire faculty. It is expected that about fifty Hampshire faculty may be laid off at the end of this academic year, Dean Epstein noted. She informed the members that she would be attending a meeting of Five-College deans on Wednesday, and that she would report on what she learns, if there are any new developments.

Continuing with questions, Professor Jaswal asked the dean if it is now possible for faculty to plan on making up—on a Monday or Tuesday at the end of the term—classes and labs that had to be cancelled because of inclement weather or power outages. Dean Epstein said that it is premature to do so, as details regarding make-up days will not be provided until later in the semester, when the winter weather is over.

Turning to another topic, Professor Horton expressed concern about the number of courses being offered that have course caps of fewer than twenty students, including fifteen or sixteen courses at the introductory level. While it is clear that courses such as first-year seminars, advanced seminars, and colloquia benefit from having a small number of students, he noted, limiting the number of students who can enroll in other courses has the effect of limiting students’ access to the curriculum. Professor Horton said that he is aware that the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) views this trend as troubling, as well. Dean Epstein, who agreed that the issue presents a problem, noted that the CEP has been asking departments to consider raising course caps, when appropriate, and is also seeking to ensure that all courses that are taught once a week meet for at least two-and-a-half hours a week. Professor Horton noted that the “balancing number” for enrollments is between twenty to twenty-four students (the “balancing number” represents the “fair share” of total enrollments. Anything under this balancing point means other classes will have to be commensurately larger to make up for the course with a small enrollment).

The members next discussed the time that should be allotted to Mr. Brassord’s presentation on the climate action plan and campus framework plan at the faculty meeting the next day. It was agreed that around thirty minutes would be appropriate, making it possible to have a discussion about building priorities, including remarks on the topic by President Martin, and to leave sufficient time to consider the other items on the agenda. In the interest of time, President Martin said that she would forgo speaking at the beginning of the meeting.

Conversation turned to nominations for Amherst’s first New University in Exile Scholar, whom, it is hoped, will come to the college for two years, beginning in fall 2019. After discussing the nominees, the committee selected a scholar, and the dean agreed to contact the individual and the department. Professor Basu suggested that it might be helpful for this scholar and future ones to have time for their own research and to have a two/one rather than a two/two teaching load, and the dean said that this structure should be possible. Professor Basu suggested that colleagues who nominate candidates should be given clearer guidelines about the criteria the Committee of Six will use to select candidates, particularly with respect to teaching. It would also be useful to know whether colleagues who nominate candidates have consulted with

their departments. It was agreed that in the letter inviting departments to nominate a scholar in the next round, evidence of teaching effectiveness should be requested, as should a description of the courses that the individual could teach. Professor Horton thanked Professor Basu for the efforts that she has made to encourage the college's participation in this important program, and the other members also expressed their appreciation. Dean Epstein noted that Professor Sitze has agreed to be the Amherst liaison to the New University in Exile Consortium. The remainder of the meeting was devoted to personnel matters.

The meeting adjourned at 5:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein  
Dean of the Faculty

The twenty-fourth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2018–2019 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:00 P.M. on Monday, March 18, 2019. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Basu, Engelhardt, Heim, Horton, Jaswal, and Schmalzbauer; Dean Epstein; and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with Dean Epstein informing the committee that the Faculty Lecture Committee has selected Kate Follette, assistant professor of astronomy, as the 2018–2019 Lazerowitz Lecturer. She will give her lecture, titled “Math for Real Life—The Role of Quantitative Skills in Educating the Next Generation of Voters, Consumers, and Citizens,” on April 10. A member of the Amherst faculty below the rank of full professor is selected annually for this appointment, the dean explained.

Under “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Horton expressed thanks to the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life and the Muslim Student Association for organizing a vigil, set to occur on March 19, for the victims of the shootings in Christchurch, New Zealand. Professor Horton next noted that the Big Sky Conference, an NCAA Division 1 athletic conference, has announced the adoption of a Serious Misconduct Rule for all of its member and affiliate institutions. The rule prevents individuals with a history of convicted violence from receiving athletics-related financial aid or participating in practices or competitions. Professor Horton asked the president if Amherst has considered adopting the rule. The president said that she is not familiar with the rule, but that Amherst, and the New England Small College Athletic Conference, have robust misconduct policies in place.

Continuing with questions, the committee asked the president to comment on the recent revelation, covered widely in the press, that some very wealthy individuals have engaged in significant fraudulent behavior surrounding the college admission process. President Martin said that behavior that has been uncovered is criminal in nature and shocking. When asked what controls Amherst has in place to prevent a similar situation arising at the college, President Martin said that there are controls in place, and she does not believe that criminal behavior of this kind has occurred at Amherst. That said, the college is taking a fresh look at the systems that Amherst has developed to prevent fraud in the area of admission and athletics and will determine if any processes should be refined. The members agreed that this scandal has brought a broad set of complex questions about higher education to the surface—in particular about elite institutions; it would be fruitful, the committee decided, to have a set of conversations on campus about these issues. It is important, all agreed, to defend the integrity and core mission of Amherst as an institution, and of higher education more broadly.

The committee next discussed possible revisions to its earlier proposal to revise the language in the *Faculty Handbook* ([Faculty Handbook, IV. R..1.](#)) regarding voting so as to include the option of voting on motions electronically. Professor Engelhardt commented that, since the pilot that had enabled clickers to be used had expired and clickers have not been used at recent faculty meetings, he has noticed that there has been a trend of unanimous voting, which was not the case when electronic ballots were used during the pilot period. Noting the past concerns expressed by some faculty members about the potential for inaccuracy when using clickers and the possibility that this method might be insecure, Professor Engelhardt also observed that the use of paper ballots seems to carry the potential for greater irregularity. He said that, when paper ballots had been used at the last faculty meeting, he ended up holding twenty-five ballots that had not been filled out. Other members agreed and also noted that having a vote by paper ballot is time-consuming. The members discussed possible language to replace the current handbook language. At the conclusion of the conversation, it was decided that Professor Horton should consult with Professor George, the parliamentarian, about the proposed language to see if there might be parliamentary concerns.

As a follow-up to the March 5 faculty meeting, conversation turned to the topic of the distribution of committee-of-the-whole notes. At the December 4 faculty meeting, Professor Hall posed the question of whether the notes on committee-of-the-whole discussions at faculty meetings should be posted online for faculty and staff, along with the formal minutes of faculty meetings. Professor Hall had expressed concern that doing so could be having an impact on faculty members’ ability to talk among themselves. He had asked whether this approach is correct. Subsequently, the dean’s office had researched this question, consulting college archival records, *Robert’s Rules of Order*, and the parliamentarian. This work revealed that the notes

should not be shared, though they should be kept as a record in the dean's office. The Committee of Six had agreed that this should be the process going forward. Professor Hall raised the issue again at the March 5 faculty meeting, wondering if the notes should be posted for faculty only. Several other faculty members at the meeting agreed that doing so would be desirable. The members discussed this issue once again, including the question of whether, in addition to posting the notes for faculty, staff members who attend faculty meetings should have access. After considering the issues involved, the committee stood by its original view, that it would be best to follow *Robert's Rules of Order*, and to allow space for conversation that might be less constrained because remarks would be documented in a less formal way, and shared less widely. Faculty members can request the notes if they wish to have them.

The members then reviewed drafts of the dean's letters to department chairs and candidates concerning reappointment and promotion to full professor that are sent to department chairs and candidates each spring. Several modest revisions to the letters were suggested, and the committee agreed that these changes should be incorporated. The members then discussed a personnel matter.

Conversation returned to the proposal that Amherst participate in the Five College Certificate in Reproductive Health, Rights and Justice, including whether there should be some requirements that are specific to Amherst students. Professor Jaswal asked about the ramifications for the certificate if Hampshire were no longer involved. Professor Basu said that the other four institutions would have no problem mounting the certificate, commenting that the necessary resources would be in place and no new resources would be needed. She also provided the members with [some statistics about the number of courses offered by each institution in fall 2018 in the broad categories/fields required for the certificate](#). She noted that Amherst offers a significant number of courses that meet the certificate's criteria. Professor Basu agreed to finalize the documents that would be needed to bring the certificate before the faculty and to share the documents with the committee at a future meeting. The committee expressed unanimous support for the certificate and for bringing the proposal to the faculty for a vote.

The members next considered [a proposal from the Committee on Educational Policy \(CEP\)](#) and [an associated letter from Professor López, dean of new students](#). The CEP noted that Professor López, on behalf of the class deans, has urged that the faculty revise the wording in the *Amherst College Catalog* to clarify the extensions policy and end-of-semester work policy. He noted in his letter to the CEP that the current language requires students to get permission from a dean for any extension to submit work after the last day of classes, including extensions that allow work to be submitted during examination week. The deans' practice has been to require their permission *only* in cases of extension requests that go beyond the final day of exams, not for extensions beyond the last day of classes. The CEP noted that Professor López has explained that it is not possible for the deans to vet every request for an extension within the exam period and asked if the CEP would consider adjusting the catalog language so that it will conform with practice. It was also noted that the registrar has agreed that this change would fulfill the purpose of the requirement, which is to support students, track their progress, assure the timely submission of their grades, and make certain that students would be able to close out the current semester prior to the meeting of the Committee on Academic Standing, clearing students for the next semester. The committee agreed with the CEP that the arguments for clarifying the policy are compelling and voted six in favor on the content of the motion to revise the language on page seventy-three of the current printed catalog as noted below, and six in favor and zero opposed to forward the revision to the faculty.

## EXAMINATIONS AND EXTENSIONS

Examinations are held at the end of each semester and at intervals in the year in many courses. At the end of each semester, final grades are reported and the record for the semester is closed. In conformity with the practice established by the Faculty, no extension of time is allowed for ~~intra-term~~ papers, examinations, and incomplete laboratory or other course work beyond the date of the last scheduled ~~class period~~ **EXAMINATION** of the semester, unless an extension is granted in writing by both the instructor and the

class dean. Students will not be allowed to register or participate in add/drop for the subsequent term until all grades from their last semester are recorded by the Registrar.

A student who cannot attend a final examination may be granted the privilege of a make-up examination by the instructor in consultation with the class dean, who will arrange the date of the examination with the instructor.

A final examination may be postponed only by approval of the instructor and the class dean. Extensions may be granted beyond the final examination period with approval of the instructor and the class dean. In such cases the instructor must submit a request for extension to the Office of Student Affairs by the end-of-semester grading deadline. The request shall indicate the extension deadline and a default grade, which the Registrar records only if the instructor does not submit a final grade by the extension deadline. The Registrar shall record the incomplete notation "I" during the extension.

The committee turned to [a revised proposal from the CEP for the establishment of a Flexible Grading Option \(FGO\)](#), which has been designed to replace the current pass/fail option that appears on page seventy-three of the current printed catalog, and which reads as follows:

### **PASS/FAIL OPTION**

Amherst College students may choose, with the permission of the instructor, a pass/fail arrangement in two of the 32 courses required for the degree, but not in more than one course in any one semester. The choice of a pass/fail alternative must be made by the **last day of add/drop** at the beginning of the semester and must have the approval of the student's instructor and all major advisors. No grade-point equivalent will be assigned to a "Pass," but courses taken on this basis will receive either a "P" or an "F" from the instructor, although in the regular evaluation of work done during the semester the instructor may choose to assign the usual grades for work submitted by students exercising this option.

The CEP, the dean explained, is proposing that, if approved by the faculty, the FGO take effect in the fall of 2019 and apply to all enrolled students.

The revised FGO proposal was prompted by the Committee of Six's request earlier this year that the CEP reconsider one aspect of the FGO proposal. Under the original proposal, a student would have to declare a course as an FGO during the add/drop period. While the proposal addressed one way to encourage greater exploration of the curriculum, it did not address the needs of students who experience unanticipated problems later in the semester. The CEP is now recommending, as highlighted below in yellow, that, "In exceptional circumstances, a student may, with the permission of the student's instructor, academic advisor, and class dean, convert a course to FGO after the end of add/drop." As before, the CEP noted that it prefers the first of the two possible revisions to the catalog language that it has developed, and the Committee of Six also preferred this iteration of the proposal, which appears below. As before, second-semester seniors would not be permitted to declare an FGO, but could select one course to be taken pass/fail if they have not exhausted their FGO options.

### **FLEXIBLE GRADE ~~PASS-FAIL~~-OPTION (FGO)**

**THE PURPOSE OF THE FLEXIBLE GRADE OPTION (FGO) IS TO ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO EXPLORE THE BREADTH OF AMHERST'S OPEN CURRICULUM AS THEY SEEK TO MEET THE COLLEGE'S STATED LEARNING GOALS.** Amherst College students **WHO ENTER AS FIRST-YEARS** may choose, with the permission of the instructor, a pass/fail

~~arrangement in two~~ **ELECT TO TAKE UP TO FOUR** of the ~~32~~-**TOTAL NUMBER OF** courses required for the degree **UNDER THE FGO; TRANSFER STUDENTS WHO ENTER AS**

**SOPHOMORES MAY ELECT TO TAKE UP TO THREE COURSES REQUIRED FOR THE DEGREE UNDER THE FGO; AND TRANSFER STUDENTS WHO ENTER AS JUNIORS MAY ELECT TO TAKE UP TO TWO COURSES REQUIRED FOR THE DEGREE UNDER THE FGO., but STUDENTS MAY** not take more than one **SUCH** course in any one semester. **COURSES TAKEN IN THE SECOND SEMESTER OF THE SENIOR YEAR ARE NOT ELIGIBLE FOR THE FGO.**

**TO ELECT A COURSE AS FGO, STUDENTS MUST FILE THE FGO FORM, SIGNED BY THEIR ADVISOR(S), WITH THE OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR BY THE END OF THE ADD-DROP PERIOD. INSTRUCTOR PERMISSION IS NOT REQUIRED ON THE FGO FORM, AND INSTRUCTORS ARE NOT INFORMED IF STUDENTS HAVE ELECTED THE FGO OPTION FOR THEIR COURSE. IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES, A STUDENT MAY, WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE STUDENT'S INSTRUCTOR, ACADEMIC ADVISOR, AND CLASS DEAN, CONVERT A COURSE TO FGO AFTER THE END OF ADD/DROP.**

**STUDENTS WILL HAVE FIVE DAYS AFTER THE DATE GRADES ARE DUE TO EITHER ACCEPT THE GRADE ASSIGNED BY THE INSTRUCTOR, OR IN THE CASE OF PASSING GRADES ("D" OR BETTER), ELECT TO HAVE A PASS ("P") DISPLAYED ON THEIR TRANSCRIPT FOR THE COURSE. (NO GRADE POINT EQUIVALENT WILL BE ASSIGNED TO A "PASS.") IF THE LETTER GRADE ASSIGNED BY THE INSTRUCTOR IS AN "F," AN "F" WILL BE RECORDED. IF THE STUDENT TAKES NO ACTION, THE ASSIGNED GRADE WILL REMAIN ON THE TRANSCRIPT.** ~~The choice of a pass/fail alternative must be made by the last day of add/drop at the beginning of the semester and must have the approval of the student's instructor and all major advisors. No grade point equivalent will be assigned to a "Pass," but courses taken on this basis will receive either a "P" or an "F" from the instructor, although in the regular evaluation of work done during the semester the instructor may choose to assign the usual grades for work submitted by students exercising this option.~~

**SECOND-SEMESTER SENIORS WHO HAVE NOT EXHAUSTED THEIR FGO OPTIONS MAY SELECT ONE COURSE TO BE TAKEN PASS/FAIL. TO DO THIS, SENIORS SUBMIT A PASS/FAIL FORM, SIGNED BY THEIR ADVISOR(S) AND THE COURSE INSTRUCTOR, TO THE REGISTRAR BY THE END OF THE ADD-DROP PERIOD. (NO GRADE POINT EQUIVALENT WILL BE ASSIGNED TO A "PASS."**

The members expressed support for the revised FGO proposal. Professor Horton asked if, under the revised proposal, second-semester seniors would be allowed to convert a course, under exceptional circumstances, to pass-fail after the end of the add-drop period. The dean said that she would consult with the CEP about this question.

Conversation turned to a proposal to revise the language concerning the learning goals of Amherst's liberal studies curriculum. The [proposed learning goals](#), which were forwarded by the CEP, represent revisions to the goals that the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee formulated and included in its report (see the Learning Goals Statement on pages five and six of [the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee report](#)). The Committee of Six felt that some of the richness of the proposed goals was lost in the process of trying to tighten the language

and decided to revise some of the language and to consider the goals again at the members' next meeting. The committee also agreed that it would be informative to have a committee-of-the-whole conversation about the learning goals at a faculty meeting, which will likely be held on April 16, in order to learn more about the faculty's views about the language that will be proposed.

At the conclusion of the meeting, President Martin informed the members that C.J. Menard has resigned his position as the college's chief advancement officer. The president said that she has not yet formulated plans for the position and said that she would keep the community informed as she makes decisions.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein  
Dean of the Faculty

The twenty-fifth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2018–2019 was called to order by President Martin in the president's office at 3:00 P.M. on Thursday, March 18, 2019. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Basu, Engelhardt, Heim, and Schmalzbauer; Dean Epstein; and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder. Professor Horton participated in the meeting via speaker phone, and Professor Jaswal was absent (following the meeting, she voted on the motions discussed in these minutes).

The meeting began with Professor Schmalzbauer commenting on the many positive responses to the visit to campus of Anthony Jack '07, assistant professor of education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and Shutzer Assistant Professor at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study. She thanked President Martin, as well as Norm Jones, chief diversity and inclusion officer, and other colleagues who helped make the event possible. Professor Schmalzbauer described Professor Jack's talk about his recently released book, titled *The Privileged Poor: How Elite Colleges Are Failing Poor Students*, as well as his more informal interactions during his time at the college, as inspirational to many students. The president, dean, and the committee noted Professor Jack's many impressive accomplishments.

Under "Questions from Committee Members," Professor Schmalzbauer asked if the college has considered ways to help students who plan to stay on campus to work and/or conduct research over the summer, and who don't have a place to stay during the period right after exams and before their summer experiences begin. It was noted that teams from Campus Operations begin to clean and repair rooms in residence halls right after commencement concludes and also immediately following, in anticipation of reunion. These are tight turnarounds, and it is challenging to find places for students to stay. The dean said that she would check with Chief Student Affairs Officer Karu Kozuma to see if there might be a way to support students who do not have housing during the period under discussion.

Professor Basu asked President Martin about the responses of members of the community in the aftermath of the release of the "common-language guide," noting that divisions on campus among some students seem to have surfaced. President Martin said that she, K. Kozuma, and N. Jones met with students on March 22 to discuss the situation and to answer questions, and that there may be more meetings. The president also informed the members that she, N. Jones, and other colleagues had met with the directors of the resource centers earlier in the day. During the conversation that ensued, President Martin said that she had expressed her unwavering support for the centers and for the work that they do, while also addressing the importance of taking new approaches. The committee, the president, and the dean agreed that having more faculty engagement with the centers is crucial. Professor Basu stressed the need to reduce alienation among students and for faculty to engage them in conversations about difficult issues, noting the structural challenges of finding spaces in which informal discussions can take place. Professor Basu said that members of the Committee of Six and a small number of other faculty had had a fruitful conversation with students soon after the guide was distributed. The members discussed some troubling incidents, reported recently, after which some students felt insulted, wounded, and marginalized. Some committee members said that they had encouraged their students to have conversations about the guide during class. The committee decided that it might be helpful to reserve some tables at Valentine during one lunch and dinner to provide an opportunity for faculty, staff, and students to discuss issues that have arisen surrounding the guide, and ways of talking across differences, more generally. The committee then planned to join these tables for a lunch and a dinner the following week. Dean Epstein commented that discussions about the guide with the staff of the college are also taking place within their divisions.

Continuing with questions, Professor Engelhardt asked about college policies and procedures governing students living off campus, as he wonders about the impact on the community when students do so. President Martin responded that, in order to live off campus, students must apply to residential life staff within the Office of Student Affairs. Up to fifty students are allowed to live off campus, though she has been informed that this maximum is typically not met. At present, forty students live off campus. The college does not restrict who can live with whom, but students are informed that there is a town ordinance that restricts groups of four or more unrelated people from living in the same housing unit, President Martin explained.

Turning to another topic, Professor Horton suggested that a pilot project be undertaken for the remainder of the academic year to encourage and facilitate occasional meetings that faculty and staff may wish to have with larger numbers of students (e.g., with small groups of advisees, members of student organizations, and



visiting speakers) over meals in Lewis-Sebring. Professor Horton noted that, under the current policy, faculty and staff may invite up to three student-guests to join them for meals at Lewis-Sebring. Under the pilot, faculty and staff who want to bring between four and eight students as guests to Lewis-Sebring can do so if they reserve a table for this purpose at least two business days in advance of the meal, and if Dining Services staff confirm that space is available. The number of guests allowed when reserving the Mullins Room, the Faerber Room, or both, to host students is limited by the rooms' seating capacity, and this will continue to be the case under the pilot. The committee agreed that the pilot should be launched, and the dean said she would send a note to faculty and staff with the details. Students may swipe their I.D.s at Lewis-Sebring instead of Valentine, and there will be no additional costs for equivalent meals. All students must be accompanied by a faculty or staff member when eating at Lewis-Sebring Dining Commons.

The members discussed the motion that the committee will bring to the faculty to regularize the option of voting by electronic ballot. After some conversation, the committee voted unanimously on the content of the following motion and to forward it to the faculty:

### **Motion**

The Committee of Six proposes the following revision (new language is indicated in red) to the current language in the [Faculty Handbook, IV, R.,1.](#), effective immediately.

#### 1. Attendance and Voting

Questions before the faculty may be decided by **UNANIMOUS CONSENT**, a voice vote, or by **ELECTRONIC BALLOT** ~~show of hands, or by written ballot~~ if requested by **THE CHAIR OR** a faculty member. **SHOULD AN ELECTRONIC BALLOT NOT BE POSSIBLE, A PAPER BALLOT MAY BE USED IN ITS PLACE.**

The committee next considered nominations for the Jeffrey B. Ferguson Memorial Teaching Prize, which has been created to honor the memory of Amherst Professor Jeffrey Ferguson. Current Amherst faculty and students, and alumni who graduated from the college within the last ten years were invited to make a nomination. The inaugural Karen and Brian Conway '80, P'18 Presidential Teaching Professor at the college, Jeff Ferguson taught in the Department of Black Studies for more than two decades, as well as in the Department of American Studies. The Ferguson Prize will now be awarded annually to two Amherst faculty members who see teaching as an art and vocation, engage in pedagogical innovation in their courses, have a significant impact in their department or program and on the broader curriculum, help students develop foundational skills in the finest liberal arts tradition, inspire students and colleagues alike to cultivate the life of the mind, and have a lasting impact on students' intellectual and personal development. Current tenured faculty members, senior lecturers, and senior resident artists who have been at the college for at least ten years are eligible for the prize, and the recipients will be announced at the commencement faculty meeting. The prize recipients will give public talks focusing on teaching at or around homecoming and receive an honorarium of \$5,000.

The members decided to consider possible refinements to the letter inviting students, faculty, and alumni to make nominations for the prize, with the goal of garnering rich and robust commentary to inform next year's deliberations. It was agreed that nominations submitted in previous years should be considered when making decisions in the current year, and the dean said that her office will maintain an archive of nominations for each faculty member. The Committee of Six will be provided with this information on annual basis as part of the decision-making process, it was agreed. The members selected the recipients. It was agreed that there should be a special event to honor the two faculty members soon after the public announcement at the commencement faculty meeting.

The committee considered the recommendation of the Faculty Committee on Student Fellowships that an Amherst graduate receive the Open Rufus B. Kellogg University Fellowship. The Committee of Six voted six in favor and zero opposed to approve the recommendation. The members then reviewed a draft for a charge to the Ad Hoc Faculty Committee on Student Learning, which will soon be constituted, and suggested some revisions to the document. It was agreed to finalize the charge at the members' next meeting and to appoint colleagues to serve when other committee assignments are discussed.

After reviewing a proposal for language to be added to the *Amherst College Catalog* about the Five-College Certificate in Reproductive Health, Rights and Justice, with some requirements that are specific to Amherst College, the members voted unanimously on the content of a motion that Amherst award the certificate, and unanimously to forward the motion (see below) to the faculty.

As recommended by the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP), the Committee of Six proposes that Amherst award the Five-College Certificate in Reproductive Health, Rights and Justice, with some requirements that are specific to Amherst College, beginning in the academic year 2019–2020.

**Motion**

That Amherst College award [the Five-College Certificate in Reproductive Health, Rights and Justice](#), under the requirements articulated in the proposed *Amherst College Catalog* language (see number one below), effective in the academic year 2019–2020.

Conversation returned to the proposal to revise the language concerning the learning goals of Amherst's liberal studies curriculum. The members, who had begun a discussion of the goals the previous week, made further modifications of the CEP's revisions of the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee document. The members agreed that the Committee of Six's iteration of the goals would be shared with the faculty, and that a committee-of-the-whole conversation would be included on the agenda of the April 16 faculty meeting. As a courtesy, the dean was asked to share the document with the CEP prior to the faculty meeting, and she agreed to do so.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein  
Dean of the Faculty

The twenty-sixth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2018–2019 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:00 P.M. on Monday, April 8, 2019. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Basu, Engelhardt, Heim, Horton, Jaswal, and Schmalzbauer; Dean Epstein; and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with President Martin asking the members about ways to engage the community in discussions about a possible new student center. One approach that she is considering is holding meetings with Mohsen Mostafavi, dean of Harvard University’s Graduate School of Design and Alexander and Victoria Wiley Professor of Design, to discuss the development of a vision and foundational principles for the project. M. Mostafavi was a consultant to and coordinator of the work of the three architects for the greenway dorms, the greenway itself, and the science center. A central priority for a new student center would be the creation of social and intellectual spaces that will help build community, the president noted. She commented on the contributions that M. Mostafavi made to the success of the science center when serving in an advisory role, and said that she is delighted to have the benefit of his talents and experience again. The president asked if the members are aware of questions that faculty have about the project. Professor Jaswal commented that some colleagues have expressed concern about the timeline for creating new classroom spaces in the current Keefe Campus Center, which she understands will be five to seven years from now, when a new student center would open, potentially. Professor Horton asked if plans would call for a new dining facility to be part of the project, if it moves forward. President Martin responded that food service would be a part of a new student center, but that it is not clear whether there would be a replacement for the Valentine facility located in the center, or whether, perhaps, additional forms of dining would be included that would augment what is available at Val. At the moment, all ideas are on the table, and the idea is to start from scratch when planning a new facility, including the possibility of having teaching spaces in the new center. The committee expressed support for this idea. Professor Engelhardt asked about the domino effect on other potential campus projects if the campus center is now the priority. It was agreed that it would be helpful to have Jim Brassord, chief of campus operations, discuss the campus framework plan in this context and also to have M. Mostafavi facilitate conversations about the foundational design principles and vision that would guide the shaping of the project.

The committee next discussed possible approaches to addressing divisions within the community that may underlie a series of deeply troubling incidents, and some responses to them, that have occurred on campus since December. These include the drawing of a swastika on the face of an unconscious student and responses surrounding the “common-language guide” document, including a series of derogatory GroupMe chat posts that occurred among some members of the Amherst College Republicans, and which became public. President Martin informed the members that it is her understanding that the Judiciary Council of the Association of Amherst Students (AAS), and/or the entire AAS, may impose sanctions on the College Republicans. The members expressed concern about fracturing within the community and the campus climate at this time. The committee recommended finding further ways to involve the faculty in efforts and college structures that encourage students to engage with one another across differences in informative, enriching, and respectful ways. This approach, which would support the efforts of the chief student affairs officer and his staff, has the potential to make a significant impact, the president and the dean agreed. President Martin noted that, while significant improvements have been made to the structures and systems within the student affairs area in recent years, a good deal of work remains to build a robust residential life program at the college. It is her hope that doing so will play a key role in addressing issues that are contributing to the challenges that the college faces in the area of student social life and campus climate. On a related note, Professor Jaswal asked about the status of a proposal for a community hour. Dean Epstein responded that it is her understanding that Jesse Barba, director of

institutional research and registrar services, and Ewa Nowicki, registrar, will bring a proposal forward soon.

The members reviewed a draft agenda for an April 16 faculty meeting and voted six in favor and zero opposed to forward the agenda to the faculty.

At 3:30 P.M. the members (Professors Marshall, Schulkind, and Courtright; Don Faulstick, director of athletics; coaches Carol Knerr and Nick Nichols; and Karu Kozuma, chief student affairs officer) of the Committee on Education and Athletics (CEA) joined the meeting to discuss [their proposal to reimagine the role and expand the responsibilities of Amherst's faculty athletics representative \(FAR\)](#). The committee has suggested providing faculty who assume the role, the term of which the CEA believes should be for at least three years, with a course release during each year in which they serve as the FAR. It was noted that the NCAA (National Collegiate Athletics Association) mandates that a FAR be appointed at every member institution, but leaves it to each school to determine the responsibilities of the position on its campus. The CEA commented in its proposal that, at Amherst, the FAR "has not been given a clear set of responsibilities and, therefore, has not played a significant role in college governance." Building on the findings of the [2018 report of the Ad Hoc Faculty Committee on Athletics](#), the CEA believes that it is time to "formalize the role of the FAR at Amherst College and to use this position to help better integrate the athletics program into the academic and social culture of the college." The CEA has suggested that "the primary responsibility of the new FAR position should be to coordinate efforts to implement the recommendations of Diver, and the ad hoc report, with the goal of more fully integrating athletics into campus life." Specifically, the CEA has proposed that the FAR be an ex officio member, and perhaps the ex officio chair, of the CEA; consult with other faculty committees about issues relating to athletics; serve as a contact person for faculty members who have concerns about athletics; be charged with examining such concerns and, when appropriate, with reporting the findings to the faculty; be asked to work on finding ways to enhance communication between faculty members and the athletics department, for example, by assuming formal responsibility for the faculty liaison program; work with students, staff, and administrative offices on issues relating to athletics; and represent the college at NESCAC (New England Small College Athletic Conference) and NCAA meetings.

The conversation began with Professor Horton asking about the ways in which the responsibilities envisioned for the FAR would be tailored to meet the needs of Amherst specifically, commenting that he imagines that serving in the FAR role at an NCAA Division 1 institution would likely be radically different than doing so at a small liberal arts college such as Amherst. D. Faulstick responded that it would be beneficial if the individual occupying the FAR role would be regular communication with the faculty liaisons and served on the CEA, as the committee has proposed. He sees the FAR building close ties to the athletics department and working to address issues of concern that may come up; communicating regularly with faculty, students, and coaches; and offering leadership and support. In D. Faulstick's view, it would be valuable for the FAR to attend department meetings in athletics and meet with him regularly as part of the responsibilities of the role. Some Committee of Six members expressed the view that a job description for the FAR should be created so that the duties are articulated in a formal way. Professor Marshall said that the CEA takes seriously the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Faculty Committee on Athletics and feels that the current portfolio of the FAR should be expanded, and that there is a need for more attention to be given to the further integration of athletics into the life of the college. Professor Schulkind commented that it would be important for the FAR to learn about the ways in which admission, student life, advancement, and recruitment intersect with athletics, and how these pieces come together.

Professor Engelhardt said that, while recognizing that there would be benefits to expanding the role of the FAR, what is gained might come at too great a cost, if the new structure would necessitate that a

faculty member be taken out of the classroom to assume the position. He, like other members of the committee, and the president and dean, suggested that an administrator could perform some of the duties that have been proposed. Professor Schulkind said that, while a course release would be helpful, since the time demands of the FAR position, as reimagined, would be significant, the decision to authorize a course release would of course fall to the administration. If a course release is not an option, it would be necessary to determine what features of the position are the most important and to find ways to move forward with the aspects of the role that are deemed to be most important, and the projects that can be accomplished. Dean Epstein expressed hesitation about expanding a position that she feels few faculty members would be willing to assume. The members wondered to whom the FAR reports. It was noted that athletics reports both to the dean and the president, and that it would make sense for the dean to work most closely with the FAR, if it becomes necessary to have administrative oversight.

Continuing the discussion, Professor Horton commented that there seem to be elements of the envisioned responsibilities for the FAR—for example, gathering data—that should fall instead to administrative areas such as the Office of Institutional Research, or, in other instances, to the Office of Student Affairs. Professor Courtright expressed the view that it is essential for a faculty member to take on the responsibilities being envisioned. Professor Basu said that she supports enhancing the ways in which faculty members are involved with athletics. She favors authorizing one or two course releases for the FAR position, which would involve a good deal of time-consuming work, perhaps on a pilot basis. Some members commented that the FAR could work collaboratively with administrative offices and with the CEA. Professor Schmalzbauer wondered if Amherst could look to other NESCAC schools for successful models for the FAR position.

Professor Heim wondered if the CEA might undertake some of the work that has been envisioned as part of the reimagined FAR role, and whether such work is already part of the CEA's charge. She asked Professor Marshall how often the CEA has been meeting this year. Professor Marshall noted that it has been impossible to find a common meeting time this semester. As a result, the committee has met only once this spring. He could not attend that meeting because of a scheduling conflict. Last semester, the committee met on a biweekly basis. It was noted that Professor Schulkind, the former chair of the CEA (he is on leave this semester) has devoted a great deal of time to developing a survey instrument, which was administered to coaches, to gain a better sense of how often students miss all or part of practices. Plans call for him to analyze the data that were gathered.

Conversation turned to the faculty liaison program, which all agreed has been successful. Professor Horton asked how the liaisons are selected, sustained, and evaluated. D. Faulstick said that, when a transition occurs in the role, (for example when the liaison goes on leave), team members and coaches propose faculty members to assume the role. Professor Jaswal, who feels that it would be beneficial if the FAR could help to enhance communication within the community about athletics, said that it would be a good idea for the FAR to coordinate and support the efforts of the liaisons as a group. D. Faulstick said that this would be a helpful structure. He noted that he meets with a variety of student groups that focus on athletics; he said that including the FAR in these meetings, and having greater faculty involvement with these groups, would provide faculty with greater knowledge of the student-athlete experience.

As the meeting concluded, Professor Marshall asked the dean if progress is being made on gathering data across the NESCAC schools on athletes' choices of majors, to determine if there is clustering, and the rate at which they undertake honors work, information that the CEA has requested. Dean Epstein said that the Office of Institutional Research has reached out to Amherst's peers to assemble these data. The Committee of Six thanked the members of the CEA, who left the meeting at 4:00 P.M.

Professors Engelhardt and Heim said that they favor making the FAR an ex officio member of the CEA and possibly the ex officio chair. They and the other members expressed the view that many of the responsibilities being proposed for the FAR position are part of the charge of the CEA. They recommended that, in collaboration with administrative offices, the CEA undertake some of this work. It was suggested that the CEA develop a list of activities and agenda items to define its work more specifically. Meeting on a weekly basis, and becoming more active, should be a goal for the CEA, it was agreed, even if all members cannot attend all meetings. Professor Engelhardt commented that he is not convinced that the FAR should be provided with a course release and that it would be desirable for the CEA and/or the FAR to leverage in formalized ways the energy and enthusiasm of the faculty liaisons. The other members agreed. Professor Basu expressed the view that more sustained faculty involvement with athletics could help to mitigate some of the tensions surrounding athletics at Amherst, while at the same time raising concern that the FAR proposal should better specify the responsibilities the position would entail. Professor Jaswal agreed and suggested that the members of the CEA be asked to create a list of responsibilities for the position, specifically prioritizing which of the recommendations of the Special Committee on the Place of Athletics at Amherst and the Ad Hoc Faculty Committee on Athletics they feel are the most important to be addressed through the efforts of the FAR. Professor Horton concurred, noting that the CEA should clarify what work would most effectively be done by faculty.

President Martin commented that it is important to think about the ways in which student groups are being supported more broadly, including the involvement of faculty members. For example, it has been agreed that strengthening the level of engagement of the faculty with the resource centers is important, and some new faculty have added to the number of faculty who spend time in the centers. The president suggested that developing a faculty liaison program that extends beyond athletics might be considered. The members felt that student groups would benefit from such a program.

The dean thanked the members for their feedback and suggested that she and the associate deans in her office consider approaches to the issues raised during this discussion. She will then report back to the committee. The members turned briefly to a personnel matter.

Under "Questions from Committee Members, Professor Heim asked, on behalf of a colleague, who expressed concern about a film and media studies course that will be taught once a week from 9 A.M. to 4 P.M. this fall. The dean said that she is looking into this matter, which has been brought to her attention, and noted that it is possible that an error may have occurred in the approval process, which resulted in the authorization to teach this course one day a week for seven hours. This is clearly not an approved time slot, she noted.

The members reviewed a draft charge for the Ad Hoc Committee on Student Learning and agreed to the following language:

The Ad Hoc Faculty Committee on Student Learning seeks to understand and enhance students' education at the college. Its activities include identifying effective methods of assessing student learning, pedagogical approaches that appreciate diverse learning styles, and best practices at Amherst and other institutions. The ad hoc committee supports the work of college departments and programs and other faculty committees, especially the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP). It is charged with undertaking this work for up to three years. At the conclusion of the ad hoc committee's term, the members will make a recommendation to the Committee of Six about whether a proposal to create a standing faculty committee on student learning should be brought to the faculty. The ad hoc committee consists of three members of the faculty

distributed across the arts, humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences, who are appointed by the Committee of Six; the chair of the CEP or the chair's designee (another faculty member of the CEP); and the following ex officio members, who serve without vote—the dean of the faculty, the director of Institutional Research and Registrar Services, the director of the Center for Teaching and Learning, the chief diversity and inclusion officer (or that individual's designee), and the chief student affairs officer (or that individual's designee). A faculty member, who is selected by the ad hoc committee, serves as its chair. The dean of the faculty appoints a researcher, normally the director of academic projects, to inform and support the work of the ad hoc committee and to serve as its secretary.

In the time remaining, the members discussed nominations for faculty committees.

The meeting adjourned at 5:20 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein  
Dean of the Faculty

The twenty-seventh meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2018–2019 was called to order by President Martin in the president's office at 3:00 P.M. on Monday, April 15, 2019. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Basu, Engelhardt, Heim, Horton, Jaswal, and Schmalzbauer; Dean Epstein; and Lisa Stoffer, director of the Grants office, substitute recorder.

The meeting began with President Martin sharing the list of seven distinguished guests who will receive honorary degrees in 2019. She plans to announce the honorees at the April 16 faculty meeting, she said. They are David Corey '73, Bertarelli Professor of Translational Medical Science in the Department of Neurobiology, Harvard University; photographer Annie Leibovitz; Tahbo Makgoba, Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, South Africa; science journalist and author Charles C. Mann '76; Nergis Mavalvala, Curtis and Kathleen Marble Professor of Astrophysics and Associate Head of Physics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Cullen Murphy '74, editor-at-large for *The Atlantic*, author, and former chairman of Amherst's board of trustees; and Darren Walker, president of the Ford Foundation. The members remarked on the many accomplishments of the recipients.

Under "Questions from Committee Members," Professor Basu asked for an update on the possible visit to campus by Jeff Sessions. President Martin responded that the college is working with those who seek to sponsor such a visit to ensure that any events that take place adhere to Amherst's policies governing campus speakers. She explained that the administration had asked the Amherst College Republicans to communicate with John Carter, the college's chief of police and director of public safety, to ensure a safe and appropriately organized event. Attendance at the Sessions talk would be limited to Amherst College students, faculty, and staff only, and advance ticketing would be required. President Martin noted that the resource centers will be holding a social event that evening. The committee discussed ways to support students of many political views. Professor Schmalzbauer commented that a number of students who are deeply opposed to Mr. Sessions's views on immigration and civil rights shared with her their intention to protest the talk. President Martin affirmed the right of students to protest so long as they do not prevent Mr. Sessions from speaking or being heard. Several members observed that the planned Sessions talk will coincide with a busy moment in the semester.

Noting that student interest in STEM continues to grow, with student-faculty ratios in STEM well above those in other fields at the college, Professor Jaswal asked whether additional consideration could be given to increasing the number of STEM faculty, strengthening STEM career and internship advising, and increasing capacity to support student research by hiring more lab technicians. Dean Epstein replied that the college has made a commitment to seek external resources to support these and other goals and is already making progress. Professor Basu next asked about searches that will be conducted during the next academic year for tenure-line faculty positions. The dean said that she anticipates that there will be seven searches—one of which is a carry-over from a failed search that was undertaken this year—in the Departments of Computer Science, Biology (two positions), Psychology, Religion, Environmental Studies, and Political Science. Professor Schmalzbauer then inquired about the availability of on-campus summer housing for research assistants during the gap between commencement and the June 3 summer start date. She noted that some low-income students have difficulty going home or leaving campus during this time. Dean Epstein referred her to Chief Student Affairs Officer Kozuma.

Continuing with questions, Professor Horton next asked whether the committee would discuss [Professor Wagaman's letter of January 2, 2018](#), regarding the importance of having a faculty discussion about intellectual responsibility. He said such conversations are especially important for pre-tenure colleagues, who might be unsure how to respond to apparent student misconduct. In particular, he cited the need to address Professor Wagaman's proposal that teaching evaluations from students who had been disciplined for academic misconduct be flagged in some way when departments and the Committee of Six evaluate the evidence of teaching, as part of tenure reviews. Dean Epstein agreed that intellectual responsibility is an important topic for departments to discuss, and she proposed to raise the issue with department chairs at an upcoming chairs' meeting.

Turning to another topic, the dean informed the members about a fund that has been established, with a donor's support, to honor Professor Stanley Rabinowitz, who retired from the college in December. The distinguished teaching fund for emeritus faculty that will bear Professor Rabinowitz's name will provide



support for faculty members' involvement in the life of the college following their retirement, through teaching stipends and funding for research and travel.

The members next discussed topics raised during the committee's recent conversation with tenure-track faculty, a meeting that occurs annually. Dean Epstein reported that she and President Martin had had a good meeting with the Consultative Group for Untenured Faculty, and that she would be following up with the associate deans in her office about questions and concerns. These include a request for greater clarity about the role of the faculty diversity and inclusion officer. The dean proposed that Professors Hart and Parham, who hold this position, give a presentation at an upcoming faculty meeting. Assistant professors raised concerns about reimbursement, travel arrangements for speakers, and other administrative matters. Dean Epstein commented that the college is seeking to streamline procedures in many of these areas. New faculty expressed appreciation for the August orientation, she added, but asked for more faculty input into the topics for luncheons held throughout the academic year. Professors Horton and Jaswal commented that new faculty asked in particular for opportunities to learn about one another's research. Professor Engelhardt noted that pre-tenure faculty also requested meetings in which they could share experiences among themselves, without senior colleagues present, adding that some assistant professors asked that presentations be made by faculty at varying career stages, not only second-year or senior colleagues. Professor Basu suggested that thought be given to developing orientation sessions for international colleagues.

Continuing the conversation, the committee shared concerns voiced by assistant professors about the amount of student mentoring expected of new faculty, both in team-taught courses with senior colleagues and during summer research experiences. Assistant professors asked whether there could be greater recognition of these activities when evaluating teaching, and they expressed support for a proposed common teaching evaluation form. Professor Heim asked whether student-researchers mentored during the summer could be asked to submit evaluations. The committee endorsed this idea, suggesting that retrospective letters might be the best way to elicit such information. Dean Epstein noted that a vote of the faculty would be required to implement this change. Professors Heim and Horton proposed raising the idea during an upcoming meeting with associate professors. Professor Basu added that assistant professors want to know how departments evaluate the journals in which they publish, and that they wish to see the letters of solicitation that are sent to external reviewers. Dean Epstein replied that the ways in which departments weigh the importance of various journals is a complex issue, but that the letters that are sent to external reviewers certainly could be shared. Professor Basu said that pre-tenure colleagues commented that they have observed that there is considerable variability among departments in the observation of their classes by tenured faculty in their departments; they wish for more consistent practices across departments. Several members remarked on the anxiety that some assistant professors expressed about tenure criteria and processes. Professor Horton suggested that former Committee of Six members might speak with pre-tenure faculty to stress the holistic nature of tenure review and to clarify the role of external reviewers.

The committee turned to [revised proposals from the Committee on Educational Policy \(CEP\) for a Flexible Grading Option \(FGO\)](#). Earlier this year, the CEP forwarded to the Committee of Six its recommendations for a new Flexible Grading Option (FGO) to replace [the current Pass/Fail option](#). The Committee of Six had asked the CEP to reconsider one aspect of the FGO proposal. As it had been constituted, a student would have to declare a course as an FGO during the add/drop period, a proposal that did not address the needs of students who develop unanticipated problems later in the semester. The CEP formulated some revisions to this policy, but was divided as to whether, in exceptional circumstances, the college should allow a student to convert an additional course to Pass/Fail after add/drop. Reflecting its divided opinion, the CEP forwarded the Committee of Six three motions, [Motion 1, and Motions 2A, and 2B, for review](#).

After a brief discussion, the committee voted six in favor and zero opposed on substance, and six in favor and zero opposed to forward Motion 1 to the faculty. The members then discussed whether to send Motion 2A, 2B, neither, or both to the faculty. Professor Engelhardt expressed the view that the goal of encouraging students to take academic risks and explore the open curriculum, and the goal of supporting students who are struggling, are separate matters and ought to be decoupled. He suggested that Motion 2B best achieves this decoupling. Other committee members argued that Motion 2A would provide sufficient

flexibility both to encourage risk-taking and to help struggling students; advisors could encourage students to keep at least one FGO in reserve. Dean Epstein concurred. The committee then voted six in favor and zero opposed to forward both Motion 2A and Motion 2B to the faculty. On the substance of Motion 2A, the committee voted three in favor and three opposed. On the substance of Motion 2B, the committee also voted three in favor and three opposed. Professor Engelhardt remarked that the divided votes on the substance of Motions 2A and 2B should encourage debate. From a parliamentary perspective, the members agreed to consider how best to present the substance of the motions that had been considered. It was decided that the motions may be put in a different format when they are included on the faculty meeting agenda.

Turning to [a proposal from the College Council to revise its charge](#), Professor Heim asked for clarification about the proposed composition of the council. Would four of the student members have a vote? Dean Epstein explained that they would, with a fifth student, the Association of Amherst Students (AAS) president, serving ex officio, without vote. She noted that there would be four voting faculty members; two non-voting, ex officio staff members; and one voting staff member who would be appointed by the president. Committee members noted that the portion of the proposed charge describing the College Council's purpose would benefit from simpler and clearer language that affirms the advisory nature of the committee. The committee agreed upon additional revisions to the following section of the charge, with the current committee's changes indicated in red:

~~Subject to the reserved powers of the president and the Amherst College Board of Trustees, The College Council is the body to approve and determine policy in three two areas: extracurricular and co-curricular faculty student relations, interactions, and the~~ **PROPOSES, reviews, AND ADVISES ON THE of ENDORSES recommendations involving the Statement of Intellectual Responsibility HONOR CODE,** and social regulations for student residential and social life. ~~In addition, the College Council possesses power to~~ **REVIEWS AND** ~~makeS recommendations AND ASPECTS OF STUDENTS' concerning a wide range of subjects that touch the joint interests of students, faculty, and administration, INCLUDING THE ENHANCEMENT OF~~ residential and social life at the college.

The committee agreed to send the charge back to the College Council for further revision.

The committee next discussed [a proposal from the CEP for a Military Activation Policy](#). Noting that Amherst is enrolling U.S. veterans in increasing numbers, Dean Epstein explained that the policy is needed to clarify procedures for veterans who are called into obligatory military service, convey a sense of welcome, and bring Amherst into alignment with other colleges. Professor Engelhardt asked whether the proposed policy would apply to students from other countries where military service is obligatory. Professor Basu, citing the strict conscription policies in place in South Korea, Singapore, and Israel, suggested that the college look into policies in those countries to determine whether a military activation policy for international students is warranted. Dean Epstein noted that the policy is intended for U.S. students, such as reservists, who might be called to active duty in the middle of a semester. The members reviewed the proposed policy. They recommended adding "U.S." to indicate the students to whom the policy would apply. Several members remarked on an inconsistent tone in the policy, with some phrases sounding punitive. Such shifts in tone, they argue, might undermine the intention of conveying welcome and support to veterans. They agreed to send the proposed policy back to the CEP with recommended wording changes to improve clarity and consistency.

Discussion turned to [a proposal from Professor Hall, writing as chair of the Faculty Committee on Admission and Financial Aid \(FCAFA\) on behalf of the FCAFA, to change the selection of faculty members from appointment to a faculty vote, and to enhance the role of FCAFA in admission decisions](#). Professor Jaswal asked about the significance of changing the way in which FCAFA members are appointed. Dean Epstein explained that such a change would place FCAFA on par with the CEP and Committee on Priorities and Resources (CPR), underscoring its importance. The members discussed the

respective roles of the trustees, administration, and faculty to establish and implement admission policy. President Martin affirmed that the trustees and administration have ultimate oversight of the admission and financial aid process, while the faculty fixes the requirements and recommends broad policy. It is the Office of Admission and Financial Aid that makes individual admission and aid decisions. Such a division is necessary to maintain the holistic admission policy that the trustees have endorsed for the very large number of applications Amherst receives, she said. The committee agreed to invite the members of the FCAFA to discuss their proposal in greater detail at an upcoming Committee of Six meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein  
Dean of the Faculty

The twenty-eighth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2018–2019 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:00 P.M. on Monday, April 22, 2019. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Basu, Engelhardt, Heim, Horton, Jaswal, and Schmalzbauer; Dean Epstein; and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with Professor Basu thanking President Martin for the email that the president had sent to the community earlier in the day. In that communication, President Martin expressed the college’s sympathies to the families and friends of those who were killed or wounded in Sri Lanka in violence targeted against tourists and the Christian minority population there. The president had noted sources of support that are available at the college and plans to hold a vigil to honor the victims of the attack. (It was later announced that the vigil would take place on April 23.) The committee expressed great sorrow over the terrorist attack.

Under “Questions from committee members,” Professor Horton commented that he was pleased to learn that the number of first-year students who were reassigned to new advisors after orientation has dropped, because more faculty are participating in orientation advising. While in the past, about one-quarter of first-years were reassigned, it is now about 5 percent, he noted. Professor Horton stressed the desirability of continuity when it comes to having an advisor work with a student who is new to college and new to Amherst.

Continuing with questions, Professor Horton raised a concern about whether the policy governing matching half courses for full-course credit is clear. Dean Epstein commented that a department offering a half course will need to decide and declare whether the department will allow students to match the half course across departments for credit toward graduation, as well as toward the major. Professor Horton said that there is no requirement that departments do so, under the voted language. The dean noted that the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) recently discussed this matter and feels that the intention of the faculty is clear; most CEP members expressed the view that the faculty should not be asked to vote on this policy again so soon after approving new language. Professor Jaswal expressed some concern that one department (the offering department) could prevent a student from matching for graduation credit its half course with a half course offered by another department that has approved matching across departments. She noted that allowing pairing only within one’s own department seems counter to the goal of encouraging more students to explore the curriculum more broadly.

In anticipation of the committee’s meeting on April 29 with the Faculty Committee on Admission and Financial Aid (FCAFA), the members returned briefly to a conversation about that committee’s [proposal to change the selection of faculty members from appointment to a faculty vote, and to enhance the role of the FCAFA in admission decisions](#). The members felt it would be fine to have the faculty members of the committee chosen in the same manner as other major committees, such as the CEP and the Committee on Priorities and Resources (CPR), that is, to have the faculty vote on a slate of candidates brought forward by the Committee of Six. The members also expressed support for keeping the faculty better informed about admission policies and practices and more engaged in this arena, including providing more data, as appropriate—goals of the proposal. The committee noted, however, that some of the suggested revisions to the charge of the FCAFA seem problematic, as the language does not reflect the respective roles of the trustees, administration, and faculty in regard to establishing and implementing admission policy. President Martin, who also expressed concern about some of the proposed changes to the FCAFA’s charge, reiterated the points that she had made during the committee’s previous conversation about this topic. She noted that the trustees and administration have ultimate oversight of the admission and financial aid process, while the faculty fixes the requirements and recommends broad policy. The responsibility is shared. It is the Office of Admission and Financial Aid that makes individual admission and aid decisions. Such a division is necessary to maintain the holistic admission policy that the trustees have endorsed for the very large number of applications Amherst receives. The Committee of Six expressed the view that the current language of the FCAFA charge seems to provide the flexibility needed for the committee to do its work effectively, and the members wondered what the FCAFA feels that it can’t do under the current charge. The committee agreed to discuss these issues with the FCAFA.

Under “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Basu expressed concern about the structure under which student organizations operate at the college, noting that the groups appear to have significant autonomy, and abundant financial resources that Amherst provides. She asked about the appropriate venue for discussing the oversight of student organizations. It was agreed that the College Council could be asked to consider this issue. President Martin said that the administration is also thinking about these questions.

Conversation turned to topic of college-wide learning goals. The committee reviewed [revisions to its proposed learning goals that were submitted by Professors George and Shah](#), who noted that they had focused on working from the proposed goals, rather than starting from scratch. The members found the George/Shah proposal to be compelling and agreed to work on further revisions to the goals, using these colleagues' changes as a foundation. The committee decided to have another conversation about the goals before forwarding a final proposal to the faculty.

The members discussed the committee's proposal to revise the language about the criteria for tenure and the procedures followed in tenure decisions that appears in the [Faculty Handbook \(III.E., 3. And 4.\)](#). The committee made some revisions to the proposal in response to feedback that the Consultative Group for Tenure-Track Faculty provided at the committee's meeting with the group on April 2. Plans call for the committee to discuss the proposal with associate professors at an open meeting on April 25, it was noted. It is hoped that there can be a committee-of-the-whole discussion about the proposal at a faculty meeting before the end of the spring term.

The meeting ended with a discussion of some remaining committee nominations.

The meeting adjourned at 5:29 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein  
Dean of the Faculty

The twenty-ninth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2018–2019 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:00 P.M. on Monday, April 29, 2019. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Basu, Engelhardt, Heim, Horton, and Schmalzbauer; Dean Epstein; and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder. Professor Jaswal participated in the discussions via speaker phone.

Under “Topics of the Day,” the president and dean noted that they had attended Amherst’s 3MT, a competition for honors students held on April 25. They expressed their admiration for the ways in which students had conveyed the significance of their honors work in talks that had lasted no more than three minutes, a requirement of the event.

Under “Questions from Committee Members, Professor Heim praised the beauty of the new trees on the greenway. She also informed the members that she has observed that a large number of trees have been lost on campus elsewhere over the past two decades, and that it seems that, in most cases, new trees are not being planted as replacements. She estimates that close to twenty trees have been lost along the path of her regular walk to campus from Woodside Avenue to Chapin Hall, for example. In her memory, only two of these trees have been replanted. She wonders if there is room for community input on the tree canopy. Professor Schmalzbauer also expressed concern about the campus’s tree canopy, commenting on its vital role in nurturing health and well-being. Professor Engelhardt, noting the success of the greenway project, commented that it makes sense to focus on the campus tree canopy as part of the Climate Action Plan. Dean Epstein agreed to contact Jim Brassord, chief of campus operations, to inquire about this issue.

As a follow-up to the committee’s open meetings with tenure-line faculty this year, during which a number of issues have been raised, Professor Basu proposed that research be undertaken to inform the Committee of Six about whether the distribution of service activities is equitable across such factors as faculty rank, departments/fields, gender, and race. She noted that, since service extends beyond participating in college committees, it would be helpful to know how much time colleagues are spending on college and major advising; informal mentoring of students; departmental activities such as searches, chairing, mentoring of pre-tenure colleagues, summer teaching, staff supervision, and personnel processes; office hours; and writing student recommendations. Perhaps a combination of faculty self-reporting via a survey and a review of the dean’s office’s records of faculty members’ service could generate some useful data, the members agreed. If such studies reveal that service burdens are not equitable, the Committee of Six could consider ways to address the problem, it was noted. The dean said that she would speak with Jesse Barba, director of institutional research and registrar services, about how best to approach this project, which could take place over the summer.

The committee next reviewed the nomination from the Department of Physical Education and Athletics for the Edward Hitchcock Fellowship and voted unanimously to support awarding of the fellowship to the nominee and to forward the nomination to the faculty.

Conversation turned to [a letter](#) and [proposal](#) forwarded by the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) that Amherst participate in the [Five College Program and Certificate in Biomathematical Sciences](#). Expressing support for the proposal, Professor Jaswal, informed the members that the certificate is an outgrowth of a \$1 million five-year National Science Foundation grant awarded to Amherst, Hampshire, Mount Holyoke, and Smith (known as the Four College Biomath Consortium, 4CBC) in 2011. The award was made to support cross-disciplinary training of students majoring in the experimental life sciences (broadly inclusive of biochemistry, biology, biophysics, chemistry, and neuroscience) and students majoring in the quantitative sciences (mathematics, statistics, computer science) and to catalyze research collaborations between faculty pairs who also span that divide. The long-term goal is to establish a cross-institutional biomathematics scholarly community that incorporates students and faculty

in the valley. Two centerpieces were proposed and developed in the grant-funded model. The first was the Frontiers in Biomathematics research course, which was to be taken jointly by life sciences and quantitative students, with modules covering relevant “bio” and the “math” concepts. The idea was for students to take the course before learning about an ongoing biomath research project, in which faculty from the “bio” and the “math” sides tackle research questions collaboratively, rather than splitting off the “bio” and the “math” pieces to work on in separate disciplinary silos. The success in piloting this model over the five years of the grant led the faculty participants of the resulting biomath community to propose a Five College biomathematics certificate—retaining the centerpiece course and cross-disciplinary student research experience as its core. Professor Jaswal noted that two of the faculty from Hampshire College who played a leading role in the development of the certificate (including the current Five College biomathematics director) will be on campus next year, as they have accepted visiting positions at Amherst. Professor Horton asked if efforts have been made to involve Amherst’s newest computer science faculty in the certificate, as it seems that these colleagues’ interests may align with its focus. Professor Jaswal responded that only faculty who participated in and benefited from in the grant-funded model were asked to take on the steering committee work at this point. She noted that all interested Amherst faculty would be enthusiastically welcomed if it is agreed that Amherst will participate. Dean Epstein expressed concern that there is a certificate requirement that students complete a research experience during a summer with a team of life and mathematical science mentors. She finds it problematic to require work outside the academic year. In addition, Professor Heim commented, the requirement that summer research take place would impose a burden of summer teaching on science and quantitative faculty at Amherst, who already are stretched to provide current summer research experiences for students. It would be preferable to have the research experience take place as part of a special topics course during the semester, the dean noted. Professor Jaswal said that this research experience was envisioned as being equally met by a summer experience or during the academic year as a special topics course, and that the requirement is already being filled by many students doing summer research through the Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) and Gregory S. Call Undergraduate Research programs and thesis projects in areas that grew out of faculty collaborations initiated during the grant period. She expressed the view that the certificate could offer a way to incorporate that research into a broader biomathematics program of study for many students, rather than imposing additional burdens. The dean also expressed the view that the four courses that are “expected to complement the student’s major” should instead be required. The members also suggested that the proposal address the extent to which courses that students take in relevant fields for their majors could also be credited toward the certificate, effectively “double-dipping.” The members agreed that it would be helpful for Professor Jaswal to bring these concerns back to the committee that oversees the certificate. She agreed to do so.

At 4:30 P.M., the members (Professors David Hall [chair of the committee], Chris Kingston, and Jen Manion; Gail Holt, dean of financial aid; Karu Kozuma, chief student affairs officer; Matt McGann, dean of admission and financial aid; and student-members Timothy Offei-Addo ’19 and Maeve McNamara ’19) of the Faculty Committee on Admission and Financial Aid (FCAFA) joined the meeting to discuss their [proposal to change the selection of faculty members from appointment to a faculty vote, and to enhance the role of the FCAFA in admission decisions](#).

Professor Hall began the conversation by thanking the Committee of Six for meeting with the FCAFA. He explained that the history of the faculty’s focus on admission and financial aid at Amherst has been characterized by a cycle of attention that is followed by inattention, which has repeated itself for decades. The FCAFA has been an active committee during times when there is tremendous interest in admission and financial aid, which has often been prompted by contemporary

events that result in a flurry of activity. Once a particular issue has been resolved, however, the FCAFA has often receded into passivity. The proposals that the FCAFA is bringing forward to revise its charge have been developed with the goal of ending this cycle, which is not in the best interest of the institution, Professor Hall commented. It is hoped that by elevating the stature of the committee and expanding its responsibilities, the governance role carried out by the FCAFA will become consistent, and the committee will be able to have more of an impact.

Continuing with his remarks, Professor Hall also stressed that structural challenges currently make it difficult for the FCAFA to discuss sensitive matters of admission policy with the faculty, including admission priorities, and that the committee is often hesitant to act because it has no formal authority of its own. He noted that the professionalization of the Office of Admission and Financial Aid, which took place years ago, has, over time, diminished the role of the faculty in admission matters. The proposal that the FCAFA is bringing forward is designed to bring the faculty and the Offices of Admission and Financial Aid together in a “newly empowered FCAFA,” Professor Hall said, with a status similar to that of the Committee on Educational Policy or the Committee on Priorities and Resources. To this end, the committee is proposing a “further delegation of the power and duty, from the faculty, to its own Faculty Committee on Admission and Financial Aid.” The goal of doing so, he noted, is to be responsive to the faculty, to serve as a bridge to the college as a whole, to be immersed in policy, to act expeditiously as needed, and to maintain confidentiality around sensitive issues. Keeping the faculty informed about its work, as confidentiality permits, would be a priority, Professor Hall noted. The proposal to revise the charge also places emphasis on the expectation that the FCAFA be in communication with all college constituencies, including meeting annually with the board of trustees. Professor Hall also pointed out that the proposal does not seek to give the FCAFA authority over financial-aid policy. Responsibility for financial aid policy has not been delegated to the faculty, he noted, while explaining that the FCAFA may wish to make recommendations to the board on matters of financial aid, at times, since admission and financial aid policies inform one another.

The ensuing conversation revealed that there was mutual support for the FCAFA’s proposal to have the faculty vote on FCAFA nominees—a change that itself would require a vote of the faculty to implement—and for keeping the faculty better informed about admission policies and practices. The members of the Committee of Six, the president, and the dean conveyed concerns, however, about aspects of the proposed revisions to the FCAFA’s charge that they feel do not reflect the shared responsibility of the trustees, administration, and faculty to establish and implement admission policy.

Professor Heim commented that the administrators who serve on the FCAFA represent the professionals at the college who are trained to do the work of admission and financial aid; faculty members and students, who are the only voting members on the committee, do not have this expertise, she noted. Professor Heim expressed some concern that the ex officio members of the FCAFA do not have a vote under the proposed charge, which seeks to enhance the role of this faculty committee, as this structure seems imbalanced. Professor Hall noted that the administrators on the committee do not currently have a vote, but said that the committee would be open to that possibility. Professor Heim expressed concern about the proposal to invest the committee with greater authority over financial-aid policy, noting that, again, the expertise of professionals is of central importance in this area; she noted that the FCAFA’s proposed handbook change clearly specifies “the faculty’s” responsibility to formulate standards and policy for admission *and* financial aid.” Professor Engelhardt concurred that the FCAFA’s proposal to amplify the faculty’s power in regard to financial aid raises concerns, since this is not an area of authority delegated to the faculty.



Complex policy decisions surrounding financial aid, in which trade-offs of various kinds must be weighed, may be better left with financial-aid professionals, in his view. The faculty, of course, should be kept informed.

Professor Hall continued by noting that the focus of the proposal is at the level of policy and not on details of implementation. At the level of policy, there should be greater collaboration and more communication, in his view. Professor Heim noted that, in the proposal, the FCAFA suggests striking the following language from its charge: “The primary function of the committee is to enhance communication between the faculty and appropriate administrative offices and in so doing to aid the faculty in carrying out its responsibility.” Removing this language does not seem to be in keeping with the idea of strengthening the interface among college constituencies. Professor Kingston commented that the administrators in the Office of Admission and Financial Aid are excellent at what they do, but their role should be to implement rather than create admission policy. He noted that, while the college is tremendously thoughtful about who is brought to Amherst to teach and about the curriculum, there is little intentional conversation about who is brought here to learn. Rather, admission policy appears to drift, receiving nudges from time to time in response to particular events or concerns. He noted that the faculty is not kept informed about what the criteria are and how they are being applied. The faculty on the FCAFA have found it difficult to understand what goals are being pursued and what trade-offs are being made in admission decisions.

President Martin commented that the 1983 admission statement seems clear and relevant still, as it emphasizes the goal of admitting students who show exceptional intellectual promise, who also have other interests and qualities that the college wishes to bring to its community. Amherst does not have absolute objective criteria and is dedicated to holistic admission, President Martin noted. The college relies on the expertise of admission staff, guided by the mission statement, to implement its policies. Professor Kingston commented that setting broad goals and implementing policies to achieve those goals are different. The intention here, he argued, is not a faculty takeover of admission policy, but to try to create a mechanism for a meaningful conversation in which the administration, faculty, and students would all have an informed voice.

Professor Horton commented that the existing language of the charge to the FCAFA appears to allow the committee to do its work effectively, that is, to uphold standards and make recommendations for change. The other members of the committee, the dean, and the president agreed. Professor Hall said that the current charge does not provide the faculty members of the FCAFA with representative authority within the committee, and there is not sufficient space for confidential conversations with the faculty about what may be happening in the admission office. President Martin commented that the language of the proposal suggests that the admission office should report to the FCAFA and that the FCAFA should report to the faculty. Structurally, the admission office cannot report to a faculty committee and simply carry out the policies of that committee. The dean of admission and financial aid reports to the president, who reports to the board of trustees, President Martin noted. Professor Hall noted that the proper name of the committee in the *Faculty Handbook* is merely “Committee on Admission and Financial Aid” and that this title might be used in the future to emphasize its role as one of the many shared governance structures of the college. He said that the intention of the proposal is to elevate collaboration and communication among faculty and administrators, in addition to enhancing the faculty’s level of investment and sense of ownership in admission policy at the college. He hoped that the faculty would feel that admission was not some distant process over which they have little say or responsibility, but one in which they have a consistent and clear voice through the committee. He praised Matt McGann, dean of admission and financial aid, for sharing information fully with the

faculty members of the FCAFA and for his commitment to transparency. The faculty and student members on the FCAFA have felt like equal and welcome partners in the admission process. But he also reminded the committee members that there have been times in the past when the Office of Admission has been perceived as being not particularly forthcoming with the faculty, which has led to the institutionally damaging cycle that the revised charge is intended to prevent. He suggested that, for these several reasons, it would be helpful for the faculty and student members of the committee to have meaningful seats at the table.

Both student-members of the FCAFA spoke eloquently to the importance of having the student perspective represented in conversations about admission policy.

Concluding the conversation, Professor Basu expressed support for the FCAFA's goals of enhancing communication with the faculty about admission policy and fostering greater knowledge and ongoing engagement in this area. She supports the proposal to elect faculty to the committee and believes that faculty would benefit from being better informed of how the admission process determines and implements its goals, as a first step. However, Professor Basu feels that the FCAFA'S proposal seems to call for greater faculty advocacy, and she wondered whether this is an appropriate role for a committee that is not just made up of the faculty but of multiple constituencies. Professor Hall said that this is not the intention of the proposal. The president said that the conversation suggests that there is a good deal of agreement about some of the issues under discussion. She believes that some wording changes in the proposal would help clarify some issues, and she said that she would think further about those changes. In regard to the suggestion that the FCAFA meet annually with the board of trustees, she said that she would bring the proposal to the trustees, while noting their full schedule during their quarterly meetings. On behalf of the FCAFA, Professor Hall expressed appreciation for President Martin's willingness to seek further clarity, and to the entire Committee of Six for the committee's constructive engagement with the proposal. On behalf of the Committee of Six, the dean thanked the members of the FCAFA, who left the meeting at 5:15 P.M.

Conversation returned to the [revised proposals from the Committee on Educational Policy \(CEP\) for a Flexible Grading Option \(FGO\)](#). In the course of reviewing the draft agenda for a May 7 faculty meeting, the members decided to revise, incrementally, the motions and parliamentary process on which they had agreed earlier. Given the importance of conveying with clarity the differences among the proposals being brought forward, the committee also decided that Professor Engelhardt should provide a summary of the implications of each proposal at the faculty meeting.

It was noted that the Flexible Grading Option (FGO) and pass/fail options being brought forward are intended to replace the current option of electing two pass/fail courses over an Amherst student's career at the college. The proposal described in Motion One is meant to enhance students' access to the open curriculum. Motions Two and Three, it was noted, focus on two ways of using the FGO and pass/fail options to support students in exceptional circumstances.

The committee recalled that the FGO proposal emerged in response to a number of student-, faculty-, and staff-driven concerns about making the curriculum more accessible and open to exploration; being in community within and beyond the classroom; the diverse kinds of preparation and experience Amherst students bring with them; and about student learning, workload, and well-being. Conversations in 2015 with students during the campus-wide workload meeting and within the CEP highlighted the urgency of these issues, which were subsequently taken up in the work of the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee. In 2017, that committee forwarded a proposal for non-recorded and pass/fail grading options to the CEP. After back and forth with the Committee of Six, the non-recorded and pass-fail grading options were discussed at a faculty meeting in October of 2018. At

that meeting, colleagues expressed support for the ways in which the proposed changes to the pass/fail policy might enhance the advising process and make the curriculum more open and accessible. There were a number of recommendations made about how to streamline the proposed options, however, and some colleagues expressed the view that the proposed changes did not go far enough in addressing the needs of students in exceptional circumstances after the end of the add/drop period. The CEP and the Committee of Six responded to this feedback and made extensive revisions to the proposals, the results of which are the FGO (Flexible Grading Option) and pass-fail policies proposed in Motions One, Two, and Three, as described below. The members voted unanimously on the substance of Motion One and to forward the motion to the faculty. The committee also decided that, if Motion One passes, the faculty should vote on Motion Two. The members voted six in favor and zero opposed on the content of the motion and to forward it to the faculty. The committee decided that, if Motion Two passes, the faculty should vote on Motion Three. The members voted six in favor and zero opposed on the substance of Motion Three and six in favor and zero opposed to forward Motion Three to the faculty.

#### Motion One

That the Flexible Grading and Pass/Fail Options be adopted.

As recommended by the Committee on Educational Policy, the Committee of Six proposes the following language to replace the [Pass/Fail Option](#) entry on page seventy-three of the current *Amherst College Catalog*, to become effective in the 2019–2020 academic year. The revised language would read as shown below. If the Flexible Grading Option (FGO) is approved, the registrar would be charged with keeping a record of students' unrecorded FGO grades. To recover their previously unrecorded grades, students would be required to petition their class dean and the registrar.

#### FLEXIBLE GRADING AND PASS/FAIL OPTIONS

The purpose of the Flexible Grading Option (FGO) is to encourage students to explore the breadth of Amherst's open curriculum as they seek to meet the college's stated learning goals. Students who enter Amherst College as first-years may elect to take up to four of the total number of courses required for the degree under the FGO; transfer students who enter as sophomores may elect to take up to three courses required for the degree under the FGO; and transfer students who enter as juniors may elect to take up to two courses required for the degree under the FGO. Students may not take more than one such course in any one semester. Courses taken in the second semester of the senior year are not eligible for the FGO.

To elect a course as FGO, students must file the FGO form, signed by their advisor(s), with the Office of the Registrar by the end of the add-drop period. Instructor permission is not required on the FGO form, and instructors are not informed if students have elected the FGO option for their course.

Students will have five days after the date grades are due to either accept the grade assigned by the instructor, or, in the case of passing grades ("D" or better), elect to have a pass ("P") displayed on their transcript for the course. (No grade-point equivalent will be assigned to a

“Pass.”) If the letter grade assigned by the instructor is an “F,” an “F” will be recorded. If the student takes no action, the assigned grade will remain on the transcript.

Second-semester seniors who have not exhausted their FGO options may select one course to be taken Pass/Fail. To do this, seniors submit a Pass/Fail form, signed by their advisor(s) and the course instructor, to the registrar by the end of the add-drop period. (No grade-point equivalent will be assigned to a “Pass.”)

**Motion Two** (to be moved by a member of the Committee of Six if Motion One passes)

That the policy that appears below be made part of the Flexible Grading and Pass/Fail Options.

(If this policy is approved, the language describing it will be added after the final paragraph of the language of Motion One.)

In exceptional circumstances, and only once during their career at Amherst College, students who have not previously exhausted their FGOs and have not elected an FGO in that semester may, with the permission of their instructor, academic advisor, and class dean, convert one course to an FGO after the end of the add/drop period.

**Motion Three** (to be moved by a member of the Committee of Six if Motion Two passes)

That the policy that appears below be made part of the Flexible Grading and Pass/Fail Options.

(If this policy is approved, the language describing it will be added after the language of Motion Two.)

In exceptional circumstances, and only once during their career at Amherst College, students who have exhausted their FGOs may, with the permission of their instructor, academic advisor, and class dean, convert one course to Pass/Fail after the end of the add/drop period.

The members reviewed draft agenda for a possible May 7 faculty meeting and voted six in favor and zero opposed to forward the agenda to the faculty.

The members next voted six in favor and zero opposed to forward the faculty meeting agenda to the faculty. The meeting adjourned at 5:40 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein  
Dean of the Faculty

The thirtieth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2018–2019 was called to order by President Martin in the president’s office at 3:00 P.M. on Monday, May 13, 2019. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Basu, Engelhardt, Heim (via speaker phone for the early portion of the meeting and then in-person after 5 P.M.), Horton, Jaswal, and Schmalzbauer; Dean Epstein; and Associate Dean Tobin, recorder.

Under “Topics of the Day,” Dean Epstein informed the members that Bryn Geffert, librarian of the college, has shared the news with her that he has accepted the position of dean of university libraries at the University of Vermont. The members commented on B. Geffert’s many contributions to the college over his ten years at Amherst and offered congratulations on this new opportunity. The dean informed the members that Susan Kimball, head of Access Services within the library, has agreed to serve as interim librarian. In the fall, a national search for a new librarian, which the dean will co-chair with a member of the faculty, will be launched.

Continuing with “Topics of the Day,” Dean Epstein reported back on the question that Professor Heim had posed earlier about the college’s tree canopy. Jim Brassord, chief of campus operations, informed the dean that many of the college’s trees were planted in 1938, in the aftermath of a hurricane, and are now nearing the end of their lives. Amherst has an arborist on retainer who performs an annual inspection of all key specimen trees on campus, he noted. J. Brassord said that the college also has a life-extension program for its trees; as needed, trees are “strategically de-limbed,” “intensely fertilized,” and/or “cabled.” He noted that, even with this proactive preservation program, there are some trees that pose too high a risk and must be taken down. For example, in the past two years, three trees on the main quad have needed to be removed. Whenever a tree is taken down, the college assesses the ways in which the tree has contributed to the campus landscape aesthetic, particularly if it is a specimen or canopy tree. In most cases, a direct replacement is planted, and this is what was done recently for three trees on the main quad and the canopy trees in front of Valentine, for example. Citing the overwhelming number of white pines at the War Memorial, which were crowding the view aperture, J. Brassord commented that, in some cases, the college doesn’t plant a one-for-one replacement. He wonders if some of the lost trees to which Professor Heim has referred might have been owned by the town, and he offered to speak with Professor Heim about this issue. The members then turned briefly to several committee assignments and to a personnel matter.

The dean informed the members that, in the fall, the Committee of Six will consider several recommendations that are outgrowths of the work of the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee. Prior to the meeting, the dean shared with the Committee of Six members two letters from the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP). One letter conveys [the CEP’s views about the curriculum committee’s proposal for “rejuvenating the college advising program.”](#) The other letter focuses on [the CEP’s views of the curriculum committee’s proposal for a new college seminar program, as well as commentary on a proposal from the First-Year Seminar Committee to pilot a slightly different sophomore seminar.](#) Dean Epstein said that appending these letters to the Committee of Six minutes will provide the faculty with an update on the status of these proposals. It is anticipated that these proposals will be brought to the faculty for consideration in the next academic year, she noted.

Commenting on the progress that the college is making in regard to developing and adopting new policies that should make the curriculum more open and accessible for students, provide students with greater academic flexibility, and offer enhancements to the advising process, Professor Jaswal noted the need to assess these initiatives to learn whether they are having the desired impact. Examples include half courses for labs and the flexible grading and pass-fail

options. Professor Jaswal commented that it will also be important to continue to make the origins of these initiatives, and the rationale for them, explicit. She suggested that a summary be created and maintained to demonstrate that the college is making progress in response to concerns raised, including those that students have brought forward. For example, as the committee noted earlier, the new flexible-grading and pass-fail options are an outgrowth of a number of student-, faculty- and staff-driven concerns about making the curriculum more accessible and open to exploration; the sense of community at the college; the diverse kinds of preparation and experience Amherst students bring with them; and questions surrounding student learning, workload, and well-being. Professor Jaswal commented on the importance of remembering that the Uprising and 2015 campus-wide workload meeting and discussions within the CEP highlighted the importance of these issues, which were subsequently taken up in the work of the Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee and the Committee of Six. Professor Jaswal, who said that she has been reflecting on the positive developments of late, noted that she authored an article, titled "[Being Human in STEM: Moving from Student Protest to Institutional Progress](#)," that was published in *Diversity & Democracy*, a quarterly periodical of the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AACU). (The piece appeared in the winter 2019, issue, which focused on students as agents of change on campus.)

Professor Engelhardt noted that the implementation and assessment of some of these initiatives may place a strain on the Office of Institutional Research and Registrar Services. It was agreed that policy implementation and assessment should be considered by relevant faculty governance bodies as part of proposals, and that it would be helpful if consultation could take place with the Office of Institutional Research and Registrar Services. Some members speculated that the improvements in capability that will result from the Business Improvement Group (BIG) could help with these efforts. Professor Horton commented that the cadence of faculty decision-making may not coincide with the timetable for the implementation of the BIG project.

Under "Questions from Committee Members," Professor Basu, returning to the letters from the CEP about the proposal from the curriculum committee, asked the dean if the Committee of Six will have the opportunity to consider the issues that the CEP has raised. The dean responded that doing so is the expectation. Professor Horton inquired as to whether the Ad Hoc Committee on Student Learning, when it begins its work in the fall, will take up the curriculum committee's proposals. The dean responded that the ad hoc committee's first task will be to consider the recommendations of the consultants who assessed the climate and culture of inclusivity and accessibility in the college's systems, practices, and digital and human interfaces, as well as physical accessibility across the campus. Noting on behalf of a colleague that the faculty had received an executive summary of the consultant's report only, Professor Jaswal asked if the faculty will be provided with the full report. President Martin responded that she does not believe that the consultants provided written information beyond what is included in the summary. She said that she would check to confirm her understanding and noted that a number of the consultants' recommendations are now under consideration or already being implemented. In some areas, the college is excelling, for example in the realm of digital accessibility, but there is much work to be done in other areas. The president said that she has asked that funds be set aside in the budget to move forward with needed projects. Professor Horton asked if there are plans in place to address the inaccessibility of some campus buildings. The president responded that J. Brassord and his team have been developing a plan that will set priorities for needed renovations

and a timetable for their completion. This work will be undertaken in a phased manner in the coming years, based on allocations that will be made through the college's capital budget process.

Continuing with questions, Professor Jaswal asked if it would be possible for the college to provide feminine hygiene products at no charge in the gender-inclusive restrooms in the science center. Commenting that Yale provides these products for no charge in all science departments as part of efforts to encourage women to feel welcome in the sciences, she noted that other essential items, such as toilet paper, are provided at no cost. Professor Jaswal commented that such an effort is already being piloted in Frost Library restrooms and added that there is no place to buy feminine hygiene products on campus. Dean Epstein, who wondered whether the college should take on the costs that would be associated with this effort, said that she would consult with J. Brassord about this issue.

Professor Basu next inquired whether the college has examined the high costs of subsidizing the printing of multilith packets of readings from e-reserves for course packs. She noted that Stephanie Orion, the academic department coordinator in the Department of Sexuality, Women's and Gender Studies, has done some back-of-the-envelope calculations that have revealed that the costs would be considerably less if the college subsidized the printing by the students themselves. Dean Epstein asked that S. Orion send her calculations to her and said she would look into this matter. Professor Basu next asked if there has been any follow-up on Professor George's question, posed at the May 7 faculty meeting, about whether other institutions ban student organizations from accepting outside funding to support speakers. The dean said that the administration is discussing this topic and that Chief Student Affairs Officer Karu Kozuma is doing research about practices at peer institutions.

Professor Engelhardt asked the president if she would provide a progress report on the comprehensive campaign, in particular how a new student center project may be incorporated into fundraising efforts that have been ongoing for some time. President Martin reported that the campaign continues to go very well, with just under \$10 million in new gifts received since April. The current total of funds raised is \$385.3 million, and President Martin said that she anticipates that the campaign will reach the \$400-million mark by July 1. The campaign's goal is \$625 million. The president informed the members that the college has been very successful in securing gifts and pledges of seven figures or more from donors in response to a \$50-million challenge offered by an anonymous donor as part of a \$100-million gift. At this point, the challenge has been met and exceeded, she was pleased to report. In regard to the campus center, the president said that the project fits squarely within the campaign's priorities, and that she expects that the facility will be very attractive to donors, including parents of current students and recent Amherst graduates. On a related note, Professor Engelhardt asked about the status of the position of chief advancement officer at the college, following the departure of C.J. Menard. President Martin responded that Betsy Cannon Smith, has been serving as a liaison to the senior staff regarding advancement matters, as the president considers plans for the position going forward. The members next turned to a personnel matter.

At 5:00 P.M. Lisa Rutherford, chief policy officer and general counsel; Bett Schumacher, chief of staff and secretary of the board of trustees; and Justin Smith, associate general counsel, joined the meeting to discuss two policy proposals that are under development, as well as reasons that the college may need to move to a system of performing background checks. Turning to the first policy, B. Schumacher said that its intent would be to promote responsible use of the college's facilities and grounds, to enable Amherst to gain more knowledge about events that are occurring across campus, to identify events that would necessitate logistical support (e.g., require more

security planning), and to limit unauthorized uses by individuals who are not affiliated with the college. Continuing, she noted that Amherst's facilities are primarily intended for the core instructional and administrative functions of the college, which take precedence over all other uses. The policy would make it clear that all uses of college facilities must be consistent with Amherst's educational mission, as determined by the college. It was noted that, while Amherst does not currently have a centralized procedure for reviewing requests to use college facilities, many such facilities are overseen by the Office of Student Activities or the Office of Conferences and Special Events (CASE). Oversight of other college facilities currently varies by facility, based on customary practice. Upon the approval of the policy, anyone who authorizes use of a college facility would be expected to gather stipulated information prior to authorizing the use—for example, the anticipated number of attendees and whether the use is sponsored or co-sponsored by any third party, B. Schumacher said. Under the policy, in the event of a third-party use of Amherst's facilities, under certain circumstances, the college might impose insurance requirements or contractual agreements.

Turning to the other proposed policy titled "Protests, Demonstrations, and Peaceful Dissent," B. Schumacher noted that the *Statement of Academic and Expressive Freedom* (voted by the faculty on May 3, 2016) serves as its foundation. She said that the college prizes and defends the ability of teachers and students to teach and learn, free from coercive force and intimidation and subject only to the constraints of reasoned discourse and peaceful conduct. Amherst also recognizes that such freedoms entail responsibility for one's actions. Thus the college encourages and facilitates the expression of views by its members so long as there is no use or threat of force, or interference with the opportunities of others to express their views. She said that the purpose of the proposed policy is to offer guidelines to promote the safe and peaceable exchange of ideas; to set forth transparently reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions that are contemplated under both the college's *Statement on Academic and Expressive Freedom* and the *Statement of Freedom of Expression and Dissent*; to limit the ability of people unaffiliated with Amherst to use the college as a stage for provocation; and to preserve the ability of the college to take action in situations that threaten the safety of members of the campus community or interfere with the core instructional and administrative functions of the college. The guidelines would apply to all Amherst College students, faculty, staff, alumni, visitors, contractors, and to any other person on college property. Outside speakers invited to speak by Amherst College students, faculty members, or staff members would be asked to complete college event-planning and approval processes and to agree to abide by college regulations and applicable laws. B. Schumacher noted that acts of peaceful protest and demonstration, such as marches, rallies, sit-ins, and picketing, would be permitted under the conditions noted, with the college reserving the right to restrict behavior that directly interferes with core instructional and administrative functions of the college.

Some members asked what the threshold would be for requiring faculty to follow some of the processes that had been noted, if they wish to bring a speaker to one of their classes, raising some concern about adding new levels of bureaucracy and stressing the need to ensure academic freedom. They also suggested that it might be best to have one office serve as a clearinghouse for notification that speakers would be coming to campus, rather than having the option of informing multiple offices—as was being proposed. The president and the dean commented that the policy needs to make it clear that professors would be encouraged, but not required, to let the college know that individuals would be speaking in classes. It was noted that they may wish to do so if they feel that speakers may be controversial, and extra measures to assure safety might be needed.



For example, the campus police, Office of the Dean of the Faculty and/or Office of Student Affairs might wish to offer support and/or advice, it was noted. Under the policy, it would be left to the faculty member's good judgment to decide if communicating about the speaker would be necessary. There should not be a vetting process for speakers being brought to campus for an academic purpose, it was agreed. At the level of logistics, Dean Epstein noted that it would be useful to have a mechanism for the college to be aware of all speakers who are coming to campus, and it would be ideal if a common calendar could be created. Doing so would be very helpful for planning events, it was agreed. B. Schumacher noted that automating the process for booking space is a goal, and that this project would intersect with developing a process to have a repository for speakers who are being brought to campus. The hope would be to simplify the space reservation process. B. Schumacher thanked the committee for its feedback and said that she would make some revisions to the policy and then share the policy with the members again. (She later did so.)

Conversation next turned to the prospect of the college conducting background checks on all job candidates for faculty and staff positions to whom offers of employment have been made. Reasons for doing so revolve around possible risks to students' safety, it was noted. J. Smith commented that that the matter may be moot at some point soon, as the college's insurance company will likely require background checks in the near future. Continuing, he emphasized that, if Amherst is proactive in developing a background-check policy, rather than waiting for the insurance company to require this step, the college will have more control over the process and will be better able to develop an approach that is in keeping with its institutional culture. If Amherst decides to perform background checks, they would likely be done to verify educational records and employment history, and to search criminal records and the sex offender registry, L. Rutherford explained. She said that it is possible that checks related to an individual's financial history might be conducted, but only for those who may be hired into positions that involve access to significant college resources. All offers of employment would be contingent upon the completion of a background check and satisfactory results. L. Rutherford noted that commonwealth and federal law stipulate a number of measures to protect candidates throughout the background-check process. Such protections include the following: criminal background checks may be conducted only with an applicant's prior written consent; if an employer intends not to hire an applicant based on information obtained from a criminal or financial background check, the applicant must be informed of the reason why the applicant is being disqualified, must be provided with a copy of the background check report, and must be given an opportunity to dispute the accuracy of the information in the report; and the employer may not have blanket exclusions for criminal conduct, but rather must evaluate whether particular criminal conduct is inconsistent with the core functions of the position for which the applicant has applied. There are certain time limits regarding which criminal convictions may be considered by an employer, L. Rutherford noted.

Dean Epstein informed the members that her office contacted some of Amherst's peer institutions to ask whether they conduct background checks on candidates for all faculty and staff positions. The dean provided the members with a list of the schools to inform the discussion. Most of Amherst's peer schools do conduct checks, it was noted—some for all faculty and staff, some for staff only, and a small number (including Amherst) for select staff only.

In answer to questions posed by the committee about the logistics of the process of conducting background checks, Ms. Rutherford discussed approaches that Amherst might take if the college were to do background checks. While the checking of records would likely be

outsourced to a company specializing in this area, the college would develop and put its own policies in place to govern the process. Every effort would be made to ensure that the college has accurate information to inform decision-making, and that the rights of candidates would be protected. Ms. Rutherford noted that some aspects of any policy on background checks would be governed by state law. For example, in Massachusetts, only criminal convictions, rather than arrests, can be considered when making a decision about whether to disqualify a candidate, based on the results of a criminal background check. If Amherst were to adopt a policy, the members asked what the criteria would be for disqualifying a person for a position and who would make such a determination. Ms. Rutherford said that the college would have to build criteria into its policy and decide on who should make decisions/judgments about these matters. The members stressed the need for confidentiality as part of this policy. Determining who will should know the results of background checks will be important. At present, background checks are conducted on some Amherst employees with access to residence halls, for example, custodial staff. In addition, some contractors are asked to ensure that checks are performed on their employees and on any subcontractors whom they may hire to work at the college. It was agreed that if background checks are performed on staff members, they should be performed on faculty as well. The committee asked if background checks would be done on current employees as well as new ones, if a background check policy is put in place. L. Rutherford said that she does not anticipate that the college will conduct background checks on current faculty and staff. The members wondered if it is possible to conduct background checks on international applicants for positions and for undocumented individuals. L. Rutherford said that it is challenging to gather information about individuals from other countries, unless they have documentation to work in this country, but that it is possible to gather some information about undocumented individuals, for example criminal convictions.

Concluding the conversation, the members stressed the need to have further conversation with faculty and staff about this issue to share information. It was agreed that a first step would be to give presentations at meetings of chairs of academic departments and programs and administrative department heads. L. Rutherford, J. Smith, and B. Schumacher thanked the members and left the meeting at 5:50 P.M.

The members discussed the next steps regarding the Flexible Grading and Pass/Fail Options. At the May 7 faculty meeting, the faculty approved the first two motions relating to this initiative, replacing the current option of electing two pass/fail courses over an Amherst student's career at the college. The substance of Motion One, which was approved, was meant to enhance students' access to the open curriculum. The substance of Motions Two and Three focused on two ways of using the Flexible Grading Option (FGO) and pass/fail options to support the needs of students in exceptional circumstances, after the end of the add/drop period. At the faculty meeting, Motion Two was approved. A motion to amend Motion Three was made and seconded, and then postponed to the May 23 faculty meeting. The proposed amendment and related motion appear below:

To amend the language below by striking the words, as indicated.

In exceptional circumstances, and only once during their career at Amherst College, students ~~who have exhausted their FGOs~~ may, with the permission of their instructor, academic advisor, and class dean, convert one course to Pass/Fail after the end of the add/drop period.

Some members of the committee expressed support for the amended language, while others, as well as the dean, felt that the amended language, and even the language of the original motion, might go too far in the flexibility that it would provide. The faculty will debate the issue and decide at the next faculty meeting, it was noted.

Conversation turned to [a letter from Professor Hall](#), who wrote to the committee to suggest an amendment to the FGO policy that he proposed be brought forward at the same time that the amendment noted above would be considered. He stressed the importance of having a “full statement of the grade recovery procedure” reside in the catalog. Professor Hall noted that, while the procedure was included in the introduction to Motion One at the last faculty meeting, it was not included in the catalog text. The language in the introduction read as follows: To recover their previously unrecorded grades, students would be required to petition their class dean and the registrar.” He said that he seeks clarity about where this language would reside. Dean Epstein said that the intention is that grades will not be added to students’ transcripts after graduation. At the request of a student, “recovered grades” would be sent to the student and/or to others via a separate letter from the registrar, with the FGO and pass-fail options policy attached. The dean said that she would announce this clarification at the next faculty meeting. The members were satisfied with this approach.

The members next discussed [the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee for the Development of a Common Form to Evaluate Classroom Teaching](#), commenting on the impressive level of accomplishment that has been achieved. Since the Committee of Six had met with the ad hoc committee in February and had discussed the draft report and recommendations at that time, the conversation was relatively brief. The members said that they are convinced that there is a need for a common teaching evaluation form, and that the form should be an active, living document. The committee agreed to bring forward motions to revise the *Faculty Handbook* in the relevant sections to legislate the use of a common evaluation form, and to forward to the faculty a proposal that the ad hoc committee’s proposed form be adopted as a four-year pilot. The committee decided that the question of whether student evaluations should be anonymous should be taken up by the faculty in the fall of 2019, beginning with a committee-of-the-whole conversation. If the common teaching evaluation form is adopted, students will continue to have to sign their evaluations until a vote of the faculty changes this procedure.

The dean said that Associate Dean Tobin would collaborate with Professor George to develop the appropriate parliamentary approach to bringing the recommendations forward to the faculty. It was later decided that the president should initiate seriatim (or “by paragraph”) consideration of a motion, as shown below. First, there would be discussion and possible amendments regarding part (A); then discussion and possible amendments regarding part (B); then discussion and possible amendments regarding part (C); then discussion and possible amendments regarding any part of the motion. Finally, a single vote on the now possibly amended motion would be taken. The committee later voted (electronically) on the motion (parts A., B., and C.), with the members voting six in favor and zero opposed on both the substance of the motion and to bring it forward to the faculty.

### **Motion**

- A. That the [Faculty Handbook \(III., D., 4.\)](#) be revised as indicated in red caps and strike-outs.

## **4. Reappointment Procedures**

In preparation for recommendations concerning reappointment, the department will gather evidence concerning teaching effectiveness, scholarly or creative growth, and other contributions to the life of the college (voted by the faculty, October 2004). Evaluations of teaching are to be requested of all students from every course, including every honors and special topics course taught by an untenured **A TENURE-TRACK** faculty member. These evaluations are to be signed and are normally to be solicited in essay format in all classes in the final week of each semester on a **COMMON EVALUATION FORM APPROVED BY THE FACULTY** ~~form to be devised by the instructor in collaboration with the department.~~ After the submission of grades, they will be made available to the instructor without the names of the respondents. In addition, all departments will be required to have solicited from all students confidential letters of evaluation at the time of reappointment review (voted by the faculty, October 1998). All student evaluations of teaching collected for purposes of reappointment are to be submitted to the Committee of Six with the department's recommendation. (voted by the faculty, May 1995). **(REVIEWS AND RATINGS FROM INFORMAL AND COMMERCIAL WEBSITES, OR ANY OTHER ANONYMOUS MATERIALS, ARE INADMISSIBLE AS EVIDENCE.)**

- B. That the *Faculty Handbook* ([III., E., 4., a. 5.](#)) be revised as indicated in red caps and strike-outs.

#### 4. Procedures Followed in Tenure Decisions

...Departmental recommendations will include the following (voted by the faculty, December 1991)...

(5) (Note that ~~in October 1998, the faculty voted that~~ **BY FACULTY VOTE**, evaluations of teaching are to be requested of all students from every course, including every honors and special topics course taught by an untenured **A TENURE-TRACK** faculty member. These evaluations are to be signed and are normally to be solicited in essay format in all classes in the final week of each semester on **A COMMON EVALUATION FORM APPROVED BY THE FACULTY** ~~a form to be devised by the instructor in collaboration with the department.~~ After the submission of grades they will be made available to the instructor without the names of the respondents.) All written evidence used to evaluate teaching effectiveness including the semester-end evaluations solicited from students in all courses, the retrospective letters solicited at the time of reappointment review, and the retrospective letters solicited at the time of tenure review from all current and former students taught since the time of reappointment. The department letters soliciting letters from students should be included with their responses. Solicitation of retrospective letters must include all students from every course, including every honors and special topics course taught by the candidate (voted by the faculty, October 1998). Each person asked to write such a letter should be informed that his or her response will be treated as confidential by the college. (Reviews **AND RATINGS** from ~~Scrutiny~~ **INFORMAL AND COMMERCIAL WEBSITES**, or **ANY** other anonymous materials, are inadmissible as evidence.)

- C. That the [attached form](#) be adopted as the common evaluation form to be used to evaluate tenure-track faculty members, beginning in 2019–2020, as a four-year pilot. If the form is approved, all tenure-track faculty members appointed prior to the approval of the form will have the option of

being evaluated using the common form, or by using another form devised by the instructor in collaboration with the department.

The members next considered how best to move forward with its proposal to revise the *Faculty Handbook* ([III., E., 3. and 4.](#)) to clarify the criteria for tenure. The members made a small number of suggestions about process and procedure, with an emphasis on aligning the *Faculty Handbook* language with current practice. It was agreed that, to garner feedback from the faculty, there should be a committee of the whole conversation at the May 23 faculty meeting. See [the proposal from the Committee of Six](#), with proposed changes to the current *Faculty Handbook* language, indicated in red.

The committee reviewed the theses and transcripts of students recommended by their departments for a summa cum laude degree and having an overall grade point average in the top 25 percent of the graduating class. The committee also reviewed the theses of students who had received summa cum laude recommendations from their departments and whose overall grade point average was likely to land below the top 25 percent but within the top 40 percent of the class, since these students would qualify for a magna cum laude degree. The members voted unanimously to forward these recommendations to the faculty and offered high praise for the quality of the work done by this accomplished group of students.

The members then discussed drafts of faculty meeting agendas for May 23 (the commencement meeting) and September 2 (the Labor Day meeting) and voted six in favor and zero opposed to forward the agendas to the faculty.

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein  
Dean of the Faculty