

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

The meeting began with Provost Epstein welcoming new and returning members and reviewing some of the ways in which the committee will work. She noted issues of confidentiality and attribution in the committee's minutes, informing the members that the public minutes should be used as a guide in regard to questions of whether matters that are discussed can be shared with others. It was agreed that email will not be used to communicate about personnel or other confidential matters, and that the use of email to address Committee of Six deliberations should be kept to a minimum as a general matter. The provost noted that the committee's regular meeting times will be 2:30 P.M. on Mondays this fall.

Continuing with her remarks, Provost Epstein reviewed the long-standing policy of appending letters to the committee's minutes when the members have discussed the matters contained within them. Letter-writers are informed by the provost'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. On a related note, Professor Umphrey suggested that the provost introduce the members of the Committee of Six at the next faculty meeting, in this way helping to ensure that new colleagues know to whom they should write if they have a question or concern. Provost Epstein agreed to do so.

Discussion turned to the schedule for faculty meetings this fall, and the members decided that the following dates should be held for possible faculty meetings: September 21, October 5, October 19, November 2, November 16, December 7, and December 21. The provost informed the committee that Associate Provost Janet Tobin will continue to serve as the recorder of the Committee of Six minutes, and that Nancy Ratner, director of academic projects, will continue to serve as the recorder of the faculty meeting minutes.

The members next discussed potential agenda items for the committee. Provost Epstein reviewed a list of topics and invited the members to propose additional items. It was agreed that major issues for discussion by the committee will include continuing the work of last year to clarify the criteria for tenure, aligning language with practice, and to facilitate a process to develop departmental expectations for tenure; clarifying some reappointment procedures; considering recommendations and proposals surrounding committee service and shared governance (including the related work of consultant Susan Pierce); and developing a charge to the Consultative Group for Tenure-Track Faculty. Professor Umphrey suggested that the committee also take up the idea of developing a new structure to carry out the work of the Committee of Six (e.g., creating two separate committees, one to focus on tenure, reappointment, and promotion, and another to serve as the executive committee of the faculty). In making this proposal—which has been brought forward on a number of occasions in the past, including by some Committee of Six members last year—she cited the increasing number of faculty personnel cases and the resultant challenges of having sufficient time to address other governance matters.

On a related note, Provost Epstein gave a short update on the work of S. Pierce. Pressing matters over the summer prevented a planned survey of the faculty from moving forward, the provost said; she informed the members that Jesse Barba, director of institutional research and registrar services, will soon be helping to develop an instrument to gather feedback on questions that the consultant has raised, which were discussed with the Committee of Six last year.

Continuing with the list of topics that the committee will address, Professor Manion suggested that the members consider the tenure procedure governing the participation of Committee of Six members in tenure deliberations when a member of their department is standing for tenure (see below).

[Faculty Handbook III., E., 4., e.](#)

e. Committee of Six Responsibilities in Tenure Recommendations. The Committee of Six annually reviews its procedures for the consideration of tenure cases. It then reviews each tenure case individually, all members of the Committee reading the documents submitted in each case. Its role in tenure cases is to make recommendations to the president. When a candidate for tenure is from the same department as a member of the committee, that member shall, though remaining present, neither participate in the committee's discussion of, nor vote in the case. Abstentions or absentions because of conflict of interest or other conscientious reasons are always acceptable when the vote is taken (voted by the faculty, October 1986). (This procedure is also referenced in the committee's charge; see [Faculty Handbook, IV., S., 1., a.](#))

Professor Manion commented that she had raised concern about this procedure at the end of the last academic year, as had some other members, wondering about its rationale and questioning its value. It was agreed that the committee should consider this matter; any changes that might be recommended would require a vote of the faculty to implement, it was noted. Associate Provost Tobin informed the committee that, with the support of Mike Kelly, head of archives and special collections, and Pam Korenewsky, academic administration/policy specialist, she has been gathering background information surrounding this procedure to inform the members' discussion.

Conversation turned to the approach that will be taken to minuting the committee's meetings this year. The returning members noted that last year's committee had agreed that the minutes should be less detailed than in the past, favoring a greater focus on summarizing salient points made during discussions, and the rationale for and impact of decisions. The new members agreed that it would be useful to continue this approach. Conversation focused on whether there should continue to be some individual attribution in the minutes, as a matter of sound faculty governance and transparency, and to offer consistency in the presentation of individual members' lines of argument (including when members change their minds about an issue over time). The committee agreed that there should be a presumption of attribution when the committee discusses significant matters of policy, notably when the members are presenting a range of viewpoints on a subject, in particular when there is disagreement regarding these ideas. Rather than adopting rigid rules under which attribution would be required, however, the members agreed, as had last year's committee, to navigate questions surrounding the need for attribution flexibly, as discussions unfold. The committee then turned briefly to a personnel matter.

Under "Questions from Committee Members," Professor Umphrey asked the president and provost for an update on two building projects: the Aliko Perroti and Seth Frank Lyceum and the new student center and dining commons. President Martin and Provost Epstein explained that the lyceum, which will bring together the Center for Humanistic Inquiry, the history department, and some other humanities faculty and create a number of new public spaces for the community, is now well into the design development stage and should open in fall 2023. It was agreed that Jim Brassord, chief of campus operations, should be asked to provide an update on the project to the college community this fall. Turning to the new student center and dining commons, President Martin said that the project has gone through a robust conceptual design phase, and that the design will continue to be refined during the schematic design stage, which is now under way. She explained that the student center architect, Herzog & de Meuron, is working with Sasaki, a planning, design, and engineering firm, on the schematic design, and will be consulting with students, as details are finalized. Students were also consulted at earlier stages of the project, the president commented. She said that she anticipates that the design for the student center and dining commons will be shared with the college community, as it takes shape. Professor Martini asked if plans call for the lyceum and student center to be net-zero buildings. President Martin explained that both buildings will become carbon neutral as part of the campus-wide climate action plan.

Continuing with questions, Professor Umphrey asked for an update on searches for the new chief equity and inclusion officer (CEIO), chief student affairs officer (CSAO), and chief financial officer (CFO). President Martin noted that Provost Epstein and Liz Agosto, dean of students and interim chief student affairs officer, are co-chairing the search for the CEIO. Provost Epstein said that there are a number of candidates that the search committee intends to interview, while commenting that many colleges and universities are engaged in searches for this position at this time; the competition for qualified candidates is significant. Nevertheless, the provost said that she is hopeful that the search will yield an excellent candidate. Turning to the CFO position, President Martin informed the members that Lisa Rutherford, general counsel and chief policy officer, will lead the search committee for this position. ([On September 1, the president sent a note to the community](#) about the search and the interim leadership structure that she has put in place for the finance division.) She also noted that the search firm of Isaacson Miller will assist with both the CEIO and the CFO searches. In regard to the position of CSAO, the president said that she has decided to think further about the leadership structure in the student affairs division, and to have an interim period in which Dean Agosto serves as dean of students and chief student affairs officer. President Martin said that she is considering whether to adopt a structure in which there is a dean of students, but not a CSAO, and to use the funding that had been allocated for the CSAO position to support positions at other levels in student affairs where there is the greatest need. On a related note, Professor Vaughan inquired about the status of the search for a chief human resources officer. The president noted that, after three candidates had come to campus for interviews, the college had made an offer to one of them. Unfortunately, that individual had to withdraw from consideration. The search is ongoing, and the pool of candidates is being expanded.

Discussion turned to the faculty meeting that had been held the previous evening, during which a number of faculty members had argued that the individual faculty should be given the flexibility to be able to teach remotely for a period of time, due to issues surrounding the pandemic. Some had also argued that remote teaching should be permitted at the college more broadly, beyond the COVID-19 era. At present, the policy is that all faculty must teach in person. The members, who emphasized that the Amherst faculty are in the best position to meet their students' educational needs, including during the pandemic, had a wide-ranging discussion about short-term remote teaching and other pedagogical approaches that faculty might take when faced with challenges caused by COVID-19. Informed by the committee's views that the faculty should be given additional flexibility in this matter, and the feedback that had been offered at the faculty meeting, Provost Epstein announced the following guidelines for the fall semester the next day: Faculty members who test positive for COVID-19 must isolate at home, or otherwise away from campus, for ten days, according to current Massachusetts regulations. During this period of isolation, faculty members who have tested positive for the virus may conduct their classes via Zoom or otherwise organize their teaching in ways they believe are best for their students. If faculty members believe they may have been exposed to COVID-19, they should be in touch with the Testing Center about receiving a same-day antigen test. If that is not possible, faculty members should proceed to class and be especially careful with masking and physical-distancing practices. As recommended by the committee, Provost Epstein agreed that faculty members who have a short-term need to teach remotely, but who have not tested positive for COVID-19, should first discuss possible departmental solutions with their chair. If a solution is found at the department level, the faculty member or the chair would be asked to share with the provost how the situation will be handled. In this way, she will be able to maintain a sense of practices across departments. If a departmental solution cannot be found, it was agreed that the faculty member or chair should contact the provost. She would then discuss the various options that are available for continued instruction in the class. These options may include having another professor teach the class, recorded lectures, or teaching virtually via Zoom.

In regard to approaches that faculty members might take to teaching their classes when a professor and/or students cannot attend class in person because of COVID-19, several committee members suggested that a colleague could set up a laptop in a classroom and turn Zoom on for the absent professor. In this way the colleague could teach the class remotely while the students are in the classroom together and/or a

student could attend the class remotely. Provost Epstein commented that, while this approach may be workable, staff in information technology (IT) have concerns that audio issues may emerge. She understands that, if IT is given enough lead time and is not overwhelmed, staff can provide some help, for example, providing the faculty members with microphones and offer advice.

Beyond the pandemic, the provost noted that any shift that would allow faculty members to change the mode of instruction at the college as a general matter will need to be decided through the college's shared governance processes, and an overall change would probably ultimately reach the level of the college's board of trustees. She agreed to initiate a conversation with the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) about how the college wishes to move forward with the modes of instruction that the faculty offer on a regular, ongoing basis. Following conversations with the CEP, she said that these matters will be brought to the Committee of Six and to the faculty more broadly. The members expressed support for this approach.

Turning to a different topic, President Martin asked the members for their views on the COVID-19 protocols that have been put in place for students, some of which the college hopes to relax after the first several weeks of the semester—depending on the course of the pandemic, including the number of positive COVID-19 cases that emerge on campus. She noted that many students view the protocols as too restrictive, and she wonders whether professors may agree, and whether individual faculty might favor having a system in which they would be able to decide on the COVID-19 protocols to put in place in their own classrooms. An example might be requirements surrounding double-masking. Recognizing the complexities involved, including the need for regular communication about the quickly changing landscape surrounding these matters, the members felt that it is probably best to continue to have college-wide protocols that can allow for exceptions, as needed, rather than leaving decisions up to individuals. On a related note, Professor Manion asked if the college will be sharing information about the COVID-19 vaccination rates within the community. Provost Epstein said that she believes that an announcement will be made very soon, after the compilation of some final numbers. (On September 1, it was announced that 99 percent of students and 97 percent of faculty and staff have been vaccinated.) The members then reviewed a proposal for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Summer Stipend competition and selected two nominees.

Discussion turned to [the Housing Committee Proposal to Revise the college's Home Purchase Program](#). Provost Epstein commented that the proposal, which the Housing Committee developed over the past three years, had been shared with last year's Committee of Six, for informational purposes, as is also the case this year; overall, last year's committee had expressed support for taking the steps outlined (see the committee's minutes of June 7, 2021). The Housing Committee also provided the proposal to the faculty as a whole as one of the committee reports shared for the June 8, 2021, faculty meeting, the provost noted. At present, outside legal counsel is reviewing aspects of the proposal to ensure that they meet legal requirements, Provost Epstein informed the committee. As part of this review, it has been determined that the houses cannot be offered for sale to Five-College faculty other than Amherst faculty, a change to current policy that is part of the proposal. Other refinements may be necessary, she said. Over the summer, [Professor Sims wrote two notes to the committee](#), expressing concerns about the Housing Committee's proposal. These concerns revolve chiefly around the proposal's provision that would allow those who currently own college houses to stay in them for life, rather than being required to sell them back to the college within two years of retiring (the current policy), and the governance process for adopting the proposal—in particular, that the faculty as a whole has not been given the opportunity to have a discussion or to vote on a recommendation to the board of trustees.

Professor Martini said that she shares Professor Sims's concerns, commenting that the proposed change regarding ownership of houses for a lifetime provides the greatest benefits to a segment of the community—tenured members of the faculty—who have the greatest resources. She suggested taking an incremental approach to implementing the proposal—for example, limiting initial steps to offering houses for purchase to include tenure-track faculty. While there is a provision in the proposal that the changes to

the program be evaluated after a decade, Professor Martini stressed that grandfathering those already in the program would mean that many houses would be unavailable to faculty and staff early in their Amherst careers, potentially for decades. Professors Martini and Schroeder Rodríguez emphasized the desirability of thinking more creatively about ways to provide housing to tenure-track faculty and others, including renovating larger houses to create spaces for multiple individuals and families that could be rented to members of the college community. Another option might be for the college to build a new “green” housing facility with some communal spaces, an approach that could serve more faculty and create a more equitable program, and which would be consistent with the priorities of Amherst’s climate action plan.

Agreeing with the views expressed by Professor Martini, Professor Manion commented that, if implemented, the proposed changes would lock down college housing to the point that it would be difficult for newer members of the community to have access to this benefit. Changes that would bring the greatest good would be those that allow more new faculty to live near campus, enabling them to be more engaged in campus life. As she had noted last year, Professor Manion expressed concern that the proposal is predicated on the understanding that faculty are not interested in buying college houses, which she knows not to be the case. She is aware of a number of colleagues who want to live close to campus and would welcome the opportunity to buy a college house, but have not been kept informed about the ones that are available for purchase. Provost Epstein explained that Jim Brassord, chief of campus operations, has reported that, due to the poor condition of the homes that had been available for sale, the home purchase program had been suspended three years ago until a proposal to improve the program was developed. It is for this reason that faculty no longer receive communications about college houses that are for sale. Professor Schroeder Rodríguez said that he had looked at an available college house a year after arriving at the college and had found it to be so run down that it would have been too costly and time-consuming to make a purchase viable. He was disappointed not to be able to live closer to campus and noted that the housing market is so competitive that buying a house near the college has become out of reach for many faculty members. At the conclusion of the conversation, the committee agreed that it would be useful to meet with the Housing Committee to learn more about the thinking underlying the proposal. The provost agreed to invite the members of the Housing Committee to do so.

Turning to another topic, Provost Epstein noted, for the benefit of the new members, that last year’s committee had developed a revision to the first paragraph of Amherst’s current *Faculty Handbook* language about the criteria for tenure ([Faculty Handbook, III., E., 3.](#)), with the goal of enhancing clarity and achieving greater alignment with practice. It had been agreed that this year’s Committee of Six would consider the proposal and share it with the faculty widely—perhaps, with suggestions provided by the new members. In addition, the provost said that last year’s committee had recommended that the college adopt a system that combines the articulation of a broad set of college-wide criteria for tenure—with that language continuing to be part of the *Faculty Handbook*—and complementary departmental expectations for tenure. The articulation of these expectations would be informed by departments’ knowledge of the expectations and standards of their fields.

The provost informed the members that she would like to move forward this semester with asking chairs to begin working with their departmental colleagues to develop departmental/discipline-specific standards for tenure—focusing on scholarship and creative work, teaching, and service. Once completed, these documents could be provided to tenure-track faculty and prospective faculty, and—at the time of tenure—to external reviewers and the Committee of Six. Last year’s committee had noted that, in regard to the Committee of Six, specifically, having more information about the expectations of departments and fields will be another helpful way of putting departmental recommendations and the evaluations of outside reviewers in context, and of ensuring consistency in the evaluation process over time and across different Committees of Six. Provost Epstein emphasized that it will be important to make it clear that, while any departmental expectations surrounding tenure will provide helpful information to all involved in faculty personnel processes, it is the institutional standards for tenure that will remain paramount. The committee

had agreed that communication between departments and the Committee of Six would be important, in order to align expectations between the two groups, and that, to ensure consistency with college-wide criteria, departmental tenure standards should be reviewed and approved by the Committee of Six prior to being posted. All had agreed that the emphasis of all of the work that will be undertaken surrounding clarifying tenure expectations and criteria will focus on codifying current standards and policy, rather than developing new policies and expectations.

The committee discussed the desirability of providing a template to departments to follow when developing departmental tenure expectations. A number of examples of such documents had been provided to the committee in advance of the meeting and could serve as models for the development of a template, it was agreed. It was agreed that the provost's office should draft a template for the committee's review.

Concluding the meeting, the members briefly discussed the need to consider the purpose and goals of the reappointment process, as well as procedural issues. The provost said this topic will be on the committee's agenda this fall.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Provost and Dean of the Faculty

The second meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2021–2022 was called to order by President Martin via Zoom at 2:30 P.M. on Monday, September 13, 2021. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Clotfelter, Manion, Martini, Schroeder Rodríguez, Umphrey, and Vaughan; Provost and Dean of the Faculty Epstein; and Associate Provost Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began several hours after President Martin sent [an email to the community](#) to announce that she would be stepping down from the position of president of the college at the end of this academic year. In turn, each member thanked President Martin for her extraordinary tenure as Amherst's president, praising her inspirational leadership—often in the face of unprecedented challenges in the world—and her accomplishments. The committee applauded the president's plans to return to the college to teach, following a sabbatic year. President Martin thanked the members for their kind words.

Discussion turned to the process that will be used to search for Amherst's next president, which was described in [an email to the community](#) sent by Andrew Nussbaum '85, chair of the board of trustees, shortly before the committee's meeting began. The president explained that the board will constitute a presidential search committee soon, but is still deciding on the exact make-up of this body. It is anticipated that the search committee will engage in conversation with the Amherst community for the remainder of this semester and will likely begin the stage of speaking with candidates in the spring. The goal will be to have a new president in place this summer, and a search firm will be hired to assist the search committee.

The provost discussed ways of structuring the ballot for the election of the faculty representatives to the search committee. She noted that a Committee of Six-style election, with some modifications, had been used to elect the faculty representatives to the most recent presidential search committee. The members agreed that, as was true during the last election, colleagues who are on leave this year should be asked whether they want to be included on the ballot and should not be included unless they indicate a desire to be; faculty who are serving in administrative roles should not be included; faculty in their first year at the college should not be included; and that current members of the Committee of Six, the College Council, and the Committee on Educational Policy should be included.

Turning to the president's request that Kate Salop, the college's chief strategy officer, attend faculty meetings as a guest, without vote, the members concurred.

Under "Questions from Committee Members," Professor Vaughan asked about the committee's practice when a colleague writes to one or more of the faculty members of the Committee of Six and does not share the correspondence with other members and/or President Martin, Provost Epstein, or Associate Provost Tobin. The provost said that it is helpful when members share such correspondence so that the matter can be placed on the committee's agenda, and questions can be researched ahead of time, if necessary. Members who receive questions are also welcome to share information during the committee's meetings under "Questions from Committee Members," without advance notification, if they prefer, the provost said.

Continuing with questions, Professor Manion asked Provost Epstein for more details about the status of the work of Susan Pierce, the consultant who was hired last year to help develop proposals surrounding committee service and shared governance. The provost noted that she and Jesse Barba, director of institutional research and registrar services, have now almost completed a draft of the survey that will be used to gather feedback on questions that the consultant has raised. These questions were discussed with the committee last year. Provost Epstein said that she plans to share the draft of the survey with S. Pierce by the end of the week, and also will discuss moving forward with the consultant's work this semester. Professor Manion thanked the provost and said that she was pleased to learn of these plans.

Professor Manion next inquired whether the college will be adopting technology that will make logistics surrounding advising and supporting students more efficient. Provost Epstein responded that, while it had been envisioned that Workday Student would be the tool through which improvements would be made on this front, much to the disappointment and frustration of those who are working on this project, Workday's advising tool is proving to be inadequate to the task. The college has made its concerns known to the company, and if a solution cannot be found, it might become necessary to engage a third-party provider to

supply this function, and to link it to Workday. Provost Epstein explained that, due to this unfortunate set of circumstances, changes to the advising process will be delayed. At this point, it does not make sense to invest in modifications to ACData, she noted. Professor Umphrey reported that some staff members have shared with her that the implementation of Workday has created a significant amount of distress, and that the product seems not to provide the functionality that the company advertises.

Professor Clotfelter next asked the provost for an update on [her email from July regarding the staffing of the Grants Office](#), to ensure that faculty are adequately supported pre- and post-award. The provost responded that the Grants Office is in a period of transition, with one staff member retiring in December and another having left at the end of the summer to pursue other endeavors. In the near term, the office will take on many of the responsibilities around the pre-submission review. The provost noted that Darlene Sliwa, research administrator in the Office of the Controller, has returned to Amherst on a part-time basis to focus on post-award administration. Any questions about newly awarded or continuing grants should be directed to her. In addition, a consultant has been engaged to assess which resources are needed most in the Grants Office, including the level of staffing, the provost said. It is recognized, for example, that a colleague is needed to focus on pre-award work. At the same time, it should be noted that there is significant competition for qualified individuals to fill these roles. The provost noted that, despite the frustrations some have experienced of late, a number of Amherst faculty have received highly competitive grants recently. ([A list of recent grant awards is available online.](#))

Conversation turned to [“The Faculty Statement on Virtual Teaching,”](#) a document that Professor Rangan forwarded to the committee on behalf of a group of faculty signatories. The members agreed that the provost’s guidance surrounding short-term remote teaching during the pandemic ([August 31](#) and [September 13](#)) (the latter in consultation with the Committee on Educational Policy [CEP]), addressed the near-term issues raised by the document. In regard to broader and more long-term questions of how the college might decide to incorporate remote teaching, the members reiterated their view that the CEP is the body that should consider this issue initially. If any changes are contemplated, the faculty as a whole would need to consider the matter. Some members suggested that the CEP consult with members of the faculty who focus on disability studies as part of their scholarship, considering the related intersections with remote teaching; that the CEP also consult with the Office of Accessibility Services; and that the Center for Teaching and Learning could also provide valuable input. Provost Epstein said that there are complexities involved in aspects of these matters, and that the CEP will deliberate about issues surrounding remote teaching that are within its purview, consulting with faculty and college offices, as needed.

The members next discussed [an email from the Ad Hoc Committee on Student Learning and Success](#). Since receiving the email on September 2, the Committee of Six had considered via email the ad hoc committee’s request that a faculty meeting be held; the purpose would be to have members of the Office of Student Affairs (OSA) present observations about the serious challenges that many students are facing as they make the transition back to campus, or arrive for the first time. (The members did not meet on Labor Day, and today’s meeting was the first since the email was received.) The ad hoc committee had noted that there was a 75 percent increase in calls to the Counseling Center by the fourth day of classes. The Committee of Six was very concerned by this report and had considered calling a faculty meeting. Ultimately, however, it was agreed that a conversation with the faculty might be premature, as students had been on campus for a short time and might begin to feel better after settling in. The provost later requested that the OSA and the Center for Teaching and Learning convey information about the resources that are available to faculty to help support students who are facing challenges. (The provost forwarded [the resultant communication](#) to the faculty on September 10.)

Continuing the conversation, Professor Martini asked what is known about the demographics of students who have contacted the Counseling Center—specifically, the proportion of students who are new to campus, (whether first-years, or others who are new due to delays caused by COVID-19) or returning juniors and seniors. President Martin said that she believes that a greater number of returning students have been

experiencing challenges, in particular, sophomores and juniors, though this information is anecdotal at this point and data are being gathered. Many students appear to be experiencing feelings of isolation and are struggling with how to form connections. It might be that, now that more time has passed, they are beginning to feel less anxious, and this is being monitored closely, the president said.

Professor Umphrey suggested that ways be found outside the counseling center model to address “issues of spirit.” For example, could the college explore rituals and other approaches to commemorating the experience of the last year and encouraging a sense of belonging among all members of the community? The president said that Dean of Students Liz Agosto is making the theme of well-being a priority, with a focus on preventative work. Dean Agosto has been highly effective in drawing on the resources within the Office of Student Activities and Conferences and Special Events to develop programming for students. In addition, the directors of the resource centers have been offering helpful pop-up sessions in tents, which have been well-received. There is, however, recognition that the OSA cannot be the only solution, the president said. Professor Umphrey commented that staff morale, in particular, also seems to be an issue. Professor Schroeder Rodríguez noted that the [Center for Restorative Practices](#) is also a valuable resource for fostering engagement within the community and could be helpful in addressing issues surrounding anxiety and personal safety.

On a related note, President Martin commented that many students seem to be enjoying being on campus and have expressed support for the decision to ease some of the health-and-safety protocols that were put in place for the first two weeks of the semester. On the other hand, some students would have preferred that these protocols remain, the president noted. (Effective Monday, September 13, Amherst shifted to operating at Level 1: Baseline COVID-19 Precautions.) Provost Epstein commented that [an email to students](#) about the updated COVID-19 protocols, which had been sent on September 11, had not been shared with the faculty. She has just learned about this oversight and has asked that the information be sent to faculty. (A link to the email appeared in [the September 16 community planning update](#).)

The committee turned to [an email from Professor Fong](#), in which she proposed that the college offer a summer semester, with the goal of de-densifying the campus this winter and enabling students and faculty to have “a safer option for in-person learning.” She noted that cases of COVID-19 are likely to be lower in the summer. The members noted a number of challenges with this idea, agreeing that the proposal is not feasible. Most prominently, the committee pointed to the fact that a substantial number of faculty already engage with the hundreds of students who participate in summer programs (e.g., the Gregory S. Call Academic Interns Program, the Summer Bridge Program, the STEM Incubator, and the Summer Research Institute, as well as individual research collaborations). In addition, Provost Epstein commented, work on phase I of the college’s ambitious [climate action plan](#) to decarbonize the campus infrastructure will require that the Greenway and King/Wieland residence halls be taken offline this summer. This is being done to support the interconnection with the new systems. This resultant significant decrease in bed capacity would prevent housing students during the summer. Finally, the provost commented that her experience has been that it is very challenging to find faculty members who are willing to teach over the summer.

The members next began a discussion of the purpose and goals of reappointment. While it was noted that it will be important to bring greater clarity to the language describing some of the procedures in the *Faculty Handbook* (III., D.), most of this initial discussion focused on the purpose of reappointment and the Committee of Six’s role in this process. The members agreed that reappointment provides an important opportunity for tenure-track faculty to receive feedback about their trajectory as scholars and teachers, both from their department(s) and the Committee of Six. While service is also considered at this time, efforts are made to protect colleagues from major service obligations during their pre-tenure years, the provost noted; a review of service is not a prominent feature of the reappointment review, she explained. Professor Umphrey noted that reappointment and tenure are not symmetrical processes; during reappointment, the Committee of Six has no access to a candidate’s research. She further noted that the language in the *Faculty Handbook* is vague and would be more helpful if it offered guidance on the relation

between departmental and Committee of Six assessments in reappointment decisions. The committee felt strongly that the Committee of Six should be provided with reappointment candidates' scholarship, as well as with the information that is already provided about teaching. Several members commented that a review of scholarship is part of the reappointment process at institutions where they had taught prior to coming to Amherst, and that this approach works well. The majority of members felt that it would be important for the Committee of Six to read the scholarship to offer its best advice to candidates. Taking this approach could also serve as a safeguard to candidates, in the members' view, providing faculty with a fuller range of perspectives on their past performance, current accomplishments, and future promise. Professor Clotfelter commented that, if a situation arose in which departments were creating barriers to a candidate's success, the committee could help address these issues, including advising the department to be clearer and/or more accurate in its assessment of their candidate in the future. The provost noted that concern about reappointment becoming a "mini tenure review" has been expressed in the past. The members agreed that this should not be the goal; they did not recommend making use of outside reviewers to evaluate scholarship at the time of reappointment. With time growing short, the members agreed to continue this discussion at their next meeting.

At 4:15 P.M. the current members of the Faculty Housing Committee, as well as last year's members, joined the meeting to discuss [the housing committee's proposal to revise the college's home purchase program](#). (Attending were Professors Greg Call, Adi Gordon, Sally Kim, Elizabeth Kneeland, and Caroline Theoharides and ex officio members Jim Brassord, chief of campus operations; Jack Cheney, associate provost and associate dean of the faculty; Jeff Davis, director of treasury operations and analysis; and Kim Eggleston, director of rental housing.) The provost welcomed these colleagues and the Committee of Six expressed appreciation to the members of the housing committee for their work on the proposal.

During a wide-ranging conversation, the members of the Committee of Six posed questions about the proposal. The members reiterated their concern that, if implemented, the proposed plan would provide the greatest benefits to tenured members of the faculty, and would mean that college houses might not be available to faculty and staff who are in earlier stages of their careers. In this regard, they pointed to the proposal that those who currently own college houses be allowed to stay in them for life, rather than being required to sell them back to the college within two years of retiring (the current rule). The committee expressed the view that changes contemplated in the home purchase program should have as a goal allowing more faculty to live near campus, facilitating their engagement in campus life. The committee suggested taking an incremental approach to implementing the housing committee's proposal—for example, limiting initial steps to offering houses for purchase to include tenure-track faculty—and seeing if doing so results in more interest in the houses. The committee also asked the housing committee about the possibility of renovating larger houses to create spaces for multiple individuals and families that could be rented to members of the college community or sold as condominiums.

Professor Call, chair of the housing committee first expressed thanks to President Martin, praising her for the thought, care, and heart that she has brought to her position, and noting that he had been privileged to see that firsthand while serving as dean of the faculty during the first three years of her presidency. The college has evolved during President Martin's tenure, he said, and the Amherst community has much to be grateful for. Professor Call noted that the housing committee's proposal had gone through a series of iterations over a number of years. He informed the members that the current housing committee had spent last spring going through all of the proposals that they had inherited from the prior committee. The 2020–2021 committee was in agreement with the provisions of the draft proposal they inherited, though the members had decided to adjust the matching grant program to make it more generous for the owners of college houses. The goal of this refinement was to provide a further incentive to the owners to maintain the houses; the hope would be that doing so would help retain the houses' value, making them more attractive for resale. Professor Martini suggested that the matching grant program could help meet priorities of the

climate action plan by supporting renovations that would make the houses more energy efficient, for example.

Continuing the conversation, J. Brassord commented that, since the beginning of the home purchase program, few owners have invested in the upkeep of the houses, and many have not availed themselves of the matching-grant program. As a result, the houses are often in very poor condition at the time they are sold back to the college, requiring extensive renovations. The housing committee believes that allowing owners to stay in the houses longer will be another incentive for them to maintain the properties. This change would allow owners to realize the full benefits of renovation projects, after going through what can be a very disruptive and expensive process. Professor Call said that he is aware that the current requirement that faculty leave their college house within two years after retirement can also function as a disincentive for faculty who are considering whether to retire. While faculty often decide to sell college houses prior to retirement, the committee believes that allowing owners to stay in their homes longer could also remove a psychological barrier to making the decision to retire.

Several Committee of Six members expressed the view that allowing faculty to stay in their houses for between five and seven years after retirement, rather than for life, would be preferable. The two committees also discussed the idea of renovating some of the larger vacant houses and turning them into rentals or condominiums. J. Brassord informed the members that, following a rigorous study of the college's housing inventory twelve years ago, a rental subsidy program was put in place. This program has helped meet the demand for college housing for tenure-track assistant professors. It is projected that the conversion of large homes into rental units would result in a surplus of rental housing. If this occurred, the college might be forced to rent units to individuals who are not part of the college community, or sell the houses. In regard to creating condominiums, J. Brassord noted that the college experimented with a condominium model in the early years of the home purchase program and had found it to be problematic on a number of fronts. Ultimately, the units were sold back to Amherst, and this program was discontinued.

Discussion turned to the idea of staggering the implementation of some of the housing committee's recommendations. Professor Call said that the proposals are interrelated and that he would not advise taking this approach. For example, making the houses more affordable is a priority. As is noted in the proposal, one way to achieve this goal is to reduce the purchaser's equity contribution and allow for their ownership stake to increase over time. The committee is confident that adjusting the equity split to 65 percent of the appraised value at the time of purchase, adjusting it to 70 percent after five years, and then increasing it by 1 percent for ten years until the equity split reaches a maximum of 80 percent after fifteen years of ownership would make the houses more affordable, and renew interest in home purchase—particularly if there is also an incentive to maintain the properties. Sustaining these college assets is in the best interest of the homeowner and the college, he noted. Since appreciation takes time, the hope is that owners would stay in their houses, and that there would be stability in the neighborhood adjacent to the college. Professor Umphrey worries that, given current economic trends in Amherst, the houses would still be unaffordable, particularly for pre-tenure colleagues; she noted that the taxes are too high, and the maintenance of large houses is too costly. Inquiring about the intent behind the proposal to increase the matching grant from 10 to 20 percent of a house's market value, she wondered whether, given the pressing needs for renovation, the college could instead simply offer grants of up to 10 percent (or some other appropriate amount) to jumpstart repair and maintenance, without requiring a match. Professor Martini wondered whether a solution might be for the college to build more affordable housing. J. Brassord said that the neighborhoods surrounding the college are so developed that it would be challenging to expand the housing stock. Professor Call noted that doing so would also be a very substantial investment. J. Brassord commented that there has not been significant interest among faculty in purchasing college houses over the past decade while noting that interest might increase if the houses are offered for sale to tenure-track faculty and staff. Professor Schroeder Rodríguez suggested that a survey be done to gauge the interest among faculty and staff in purchasing a college house.

Professor Manion expressed the view that some of the recommendations seem at odds with one another, and that there are too many moving parts. For example, allowing individuals to spend a lifetime in a college house would not support the goal of allowing a greater number of faculty to live closer to campus. Broadening the pool of those who can purchase the houses, while simultaneously locking down the houses by allowing individuals to stay in them for life, also doesn't make sense, she said. Professor Manion agreed with other members that it could be helpful to implement the housing committee's recommendations one at a time, rather than all at once. She finds the proposal to adjust the equity split to be compelling and wonders if that step might be enough to encourage faculty and staff to buy college houses. Perhaps, this idea could be tried first, she suggested. Professor Call stated that, to the housing committee these aspects do not seem at odds: the committee believes that allowing owners to stay in their homes for life will incentivize them to keep their houses in better shape, and thereby generate a larger pool of viable houses (for more faculty) in the long run. Professor Clotfelter raised the possibility of incentivizing retired faculty to sell their homes back to the college by gradually decreasing the equity split in the years following retirement.

The Committee of Six thanked the members of the housing committee for the informative conversation, and they left the meeting at 5:00 P.M. After a discussion of a number of committee nominations, the meeting adjourned at 5:05 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Provost and Dean of the Faculty

The third meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2021–2022 was called to order by President Martin via Zoom at 2:30 P.M. on Monday, September 20, 2021. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Clotfelter, Manion, Martini, Schroeder Rodríguez, Umphrey, and Vaughan; Provost and Dean of the Faculty Epstein; and Associate Provost Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with Provost Epstein noting that the first ballot for the election of the faculty members who will serve on the Presidential Search Committee had launched several hours before the Committee of Six meeting. Professor Umphrey asked about the process that will be used to select staff members and students to serve on the search committee. President Martin responded that it is her understanding that the dean of students will work with the leadership of the Association of Amherst Students to select two students to serve, and that the Employee Council will make a recommendation for a staff member to serve. In addition, the president will consult with the senior staff to select an administrator who is not a member of the senior staff to serve. The hope is that the committee will be constituted next week, President Martin said.

Discussion turned to [the housing committee's proposal to revise the college's Home Purchase Program](#). Professor Clotfelter began the conversation by asking what the Committee of Six's role is in the decision-making process surrounding the proposal. Provost Epstein responded that the committee's advice will be taken into account when considering next steps. The members continued to express the same concerns that they had articulated earlier ([see the committee's minutes of September 13, 2021](#)) and recommended that a broader and more holistic discussion take place about needs and goals surrounding college housing. The committee agreed that, as a first step, consideration should be given to Professor Schroeder Rodríguez's proposal that a survey be conducted to learn more about the faculty's aspirations for the college housing program. In the members' view, the goal of any changes that are implemented should be to make housing more affordable, and available to more members of the Amherst community. Noting that many of the houses that are unoccupied at this time are quite large, the members proposed exploring ideas such as converting some houses into faculty offices and/or renovating some houses to create spaces for multiple individuals and families that could be rented to members of the college community, or sold as condominiums.

Other suggestions included expanding the rental housing program to include tenured faculty for a more extended time period (faculty must leave rental housing within two years of receiving tenure, under the current rules). Professor Umphrey wondered whether the board of trustees would support changes of this kind. She asked whether the housing committee's proposal originated in response to a request by the board to reconsider the Home Purchase Program or whether the housing committee or rental housing department may have made a request. Provost Epstein said that it is her understanding that the proposal came out of the housing committee, when it was brought to that body's attention that some college houses are unoccupied and that, over the years, most have been sold back to the college in a state of disrepair. President Martin said that the board has not been involved in conversations about the housing committee's proposal.

Continuing the conversation, Provost Epstein said that she worries that sending a survey about the housing program might raise expectations. As a way of addressing this concern, Professor Schroeder Rodríguez suggested adding some questions about the housing program to the Faculty COACHE (Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education) survey that colleagues already complete. The provost said that this could certainly be done, since the college is permitted to add some custom questions to the COACHE survey, but that the next survey is not until 2023–2024. Speaking further about not raising the faculty's expectations, Provost Epstein noted that the college has only twenty-six houses in the Home Purchase Program (twenty-one are occupied, and five are vacant at this time). There are no plans to buy additional houses, she noted, commenting, as well, that the college is meeting the demand for rentals. Professor Martini asked about the criteria for eligibility to participate in Amherst's rental program. The provost said that the college rents houses and apartments, at rates approximately 25 percent below

market value for the town of Amherst, to tenure-track faculty, visiting faculty, lecturers who have not received senior lecturer status, and coaches who have not received senior-contract status. Faculty hired at the senior ranks with tenure are permitted to rent from the college for two years. Professor Martini suggested broadening the parameters of the rental program and offering smaller units to all faculty who want to live close to campus. Professor Manion wonders whether a system might be imagined in which some faculty would live in college housing near campus as part of a role that would be akin to that assumed by faculty who are part of a house system at other schools. Such a model could help build community through programming and broader faculty engagement/involvement with student residential and campus life, she believes. Professor Vaughan found the proposal that owners of houses be permitted to stay in them for life to be a problematic feature of the housing committee's proposal. He argued for finding a reasonable middle ground, such as requiring owners to sell their houses back to the college five to seven years after colleagues retire. He expressed support for the idea of converting some houses to offices.

Provost Epstein commented that the costs of converting the houses to offices would likely be significant, noting issues surrounding compliance in regard to accessibility and zoning regulations. In addition, many of the houses are a distance away from the center of campus, she pointed out. At present, most faculty offices are in departments and near seminar rooms, the provost commented. She is not sure if alternative models for office spaces might be welcome. One idea might be to move offices at the core of the campus that are not student-facing to the houses in question, and to put faculty offices in the spaces that have been vacated. The provost said that she could ask Jim Brassord, chief of campus operations, about these ideas. Some members of the committee suggested that the college consider implementing some parts of the housing committee's proposal—specifically, the changes to the equity split and the matching grant and offering houses for purchase to include tenure-track faculty—and seeing if doing so results in more interest in the houses—while also engaging in a more generative conversation about the housing program.

President Martin commented that the college must consider competing priorities and trade-offs, as this is a complex matter with implications in a number of areas. She agreed with the committee, however, that it would be helpful to examine what may be possible and desirable at the level of strategy, before turning to details, and to have faculty weigh in on their priorities for the housing program.

At 3:00 P.M., Lisa Rutherford, chief policy officer and general counsel, and Professor Allen Hart, interim chief equity and inclusion officer, joined the meeting. L. Rutherford offered general legal advice related to the tenure process and answered questions posed by the committee. Prior to the meeting, the committee had been provided with a document titled "[Practical Advice regarding Tenure](#)," which had been written by former attorneys for the college, and "[Good Practice in Tenure Evaluation](#)," a document prepared by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). In her remarks to the committee, L. Rutherford emphasized the importance of applying consistently the criteria for tenure and of limiting the committee's discussion and consideration to the defined criteria of scholarship and/or creative work, teaching, and service. She advised the members to strive for consistency and to follow established procedures and answered the members' questions. Professor Hart spoke with the committee about approaches to mitigating bias when reading teaching evaluations, and in the tenure process more generally, and offered a theoretical framework for considering inclusive practices in relation to the evaluation process. He then responded to the members' questions. The members thanked L. Rutherford and A. Hart and they left the meeting at 3:43 P.M.

Conversation returned to the topic of the purpose and goals of reappointment, with a focus on the role of the Committee of Six. The committee also discussed the need to better align the practices of many years with the procedures in the *Faculty Handbook* ([III., D.](#)). Much of the conversation focused on whether the Committee of Six should review some or all of candidates' scholarship and/or creative work as part of its review at the time of reappointment. It was noted that, historically, a great deal more emphasis has been placed on evaluating teaching effectiveness at the time of reappointment; the committee receives substantial evidence to consider in the form of student teaching evaluations and

retrospective letters and the department's assessment of candidates' teaching. The members felt that the review would be more valuable to candidates and departments if the committee is provided with more evidence to consider about candidates' scholarship and/or creative work and scholarly trajectory. The committee agreed that it would be helpful for the Committee of Six to review some of each candidate's work as part of the reappointment review, as doing so would put the department's views on the work in context. Some members noted the possibility that requiring the submission of scholarship and/or creative work could increase pressure on untenured faculty and make them more anxious. While recognizing that this might be the effect, the committee felt that it is paramount that the committee be in a position to offer the best possible feedback and guidance to candidates at the time of reappointment. Reviewing scholarship and/or creative work would serve this goal, the members concurred.

Continuing the discussion, Professor Clotfelter commented that, in some fields the committee would be reading work that the candidate had completed before coming to Amherst, due to the time it takes to get established at the college, complete research, and publish and/or exhibit or perform new work. The provost responded that, in her experience, some tenure-track faculty in some fields make progress on new work by the time they stand for reappointment, and that reviewing work created before the candidate was hired, and offering feedback on this material, would be useful as well. The committee noted the importance of instructing departments to provide the committee with as much information as possible about the candidate's trajectory as a teacher and scholar. In regard to the latter, it is essential that, in their recommendations, departments offer information about the standards and expectations of the candidate's field and the ways in which the untenured faculty member is progressing toward meeting these requirements, the members agreed. In this regard, Professor Schroeder Rodríguez offered the example of the usefulness of having departments describe the quality of the journals in which the tenure-track professor has published, and/or the venues in which creative work has appeared. Having such information, in combination with reviewing teaching evaluations and some scholarly and/or creative work, as well as information about candidates' service contributions, will help the committee provide candidates and departments with the most helpful feedback.

Concluding their conversation about reappointment, the members agreed that it is necessary to propose revisions to the *Faculty Handbook* language about reappointment. The goal will be to provide more clarity about the purpose and goals of this process, as well as to better align the handbook language about reappointment procedures with the committee's practices. The members decided that Provost Epstein and Associate Provost Tobin would draft some changes for the committee's review. Ultimately, the faculty will need to approve any changes to the *Faculty Handbook* language, it was noted.

The meeting ended with the members considering Professor Manion's suggestion that the committee bring to the faculty a proposal to revise the procedure that Committee of Six members must follow when the tenure cases of faculty members from their departments are considered. In accordance with the procedure voted by the faculty in 1986 (see [Faculty Handbook III., E., 4., e.](#) and [Faculty Handbook, IV., S., 1., a.](#)), members must remain present during all tenure deliberations, but cannot participate in the committee's discussion or vote in the case of a colleague from their department. Prior to the meeting, the committee was provided with the minutes of the Committee of Six and faculty meetings in which this matter was discussed. A range of views on this subject had been expressed by faculty members leading up to the vote on this question, with many differences of opinion expressed. One of the most prominent concerns brought forward at the time was that, if allowed to participate in deliberations for a departmental colleague, a Committee of Six member might advocate for that candidate. Another argument for adopting the procedure was to prevent a Committee of Six member from voting at both the department and Committee of Six levels when a departmental colleague is standing for tenure. Professors Manion and Umphrey noted that, in their experience, this procedure

does not offer any advantages, and, in fact, can create significant challenges. They noted, for example, that a Committee of Six member, having been present during the committee's deliberations, could not participate if the member's department were asked to have a discussion with the committee about the case. Such a Committee of Six member also could not contribute to the department's preparations for the discussion. In both cases, the Committee of Six member would be privy to information that could not be shared with departmental colleagues. The members agreed that, as a matter of equity, Committee of Six members should not participate in tenure deliberations for departmental colleagues at the Committee of Six level, including voting on these cases. At the same time, the committee did not see a purpose for having Committee of Six members remain present for these deliberations, while recognizing the disadvantages of requiring them to do so. The members agreed to bring forward a motion to put a requirement in place that Committee of Six members not be present when departmental colleagues' tenure cases are discussed individually by the Committee of Six. The members agreed that, as is true now, Committee of Six members, under these circumstances, should be present for the committee's final discussions of all of the tenure cases that the members had considered. These discussions take place prior to the members' final votes. It was further agreed that, as is also true now, during these final conversations, Committee of Six members should not be permitted to participate in the discussion of their departmental colleagues' cases and should not be permitted to vote on these cases.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Provost and Dean of the Faculty

The fourth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2021–2022 was called to order by President Martin via Zoom at 2:30 P.M. on Monday, October 4, 2021. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Clotfelter, Manion, Martini, Schroeder Rodríguez, Umphrey, and Vaughan; Provost and Dean of the Faculty Epstein; and Associate Provost Tobin, recorder.

Under “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Vaughan asked for an update on the search for the position of chief student affairs officer (CSAO). President Martin responded that a decision about the leadership structure in the student affairs division will likely be made by the end of the semester. For this interim period, Dean Agosto will continue to serve both as dean of students and interim chief student affairs officer. The president plans to consult with staff in the Office of Student Affairs, faculty, and others before making a final decision, she said. President Martin informed the committee that she is leaning toward adopting a structure in which there is a dean of students, but not a CSAO, and using the funding that had been allocated for the CSAO position to support positions at other levels in student affairs where there is the greatest need.

Continuing with questions, Professor Umphrey commented that, given what the provost said recently about the challenges of implementing Workday Student ([see the Committee of Six minutes of September 13, 2021](#), for these comments), Professor Umphrey was surprised to learn recently that the college has decided to launch a Workday Student pilot. Since the tools within Workday Student are important to the work of the faculty, she asked if colleagues have been consulted about decisions that are being made about moving forward with this module. Provost Epstein responded that the focus of her recent remarks had been on the advising tools within Workday Student, which are not adequate at this time. The Ad Hoc Faculty Committee on the Implementation of the Workday Student Module has talked at considerable length about this issue, and two members of that body (Professor Ishii and Jesse Barba, director of institutional research and registrar services) have spoken about the Workday Student advising tools with the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP). The CEP is considering the information that was provided and will discuss the matter again soon, the provost noted. The pilot will involve other features of Workday Student that are expected to be very helpful in time, for example the registration process, which will be run through Workday this spring. Provost Epstein also noted that Sarah Barr will give an update about Workday Student to the staff in the provost’s division on October 7, as part of the division’s all-staff meeting.

Professor Clotfelter next asked about the status of the Consultative Group for Tenure-Track Faculty, specifically, whether a process is under way to appoint members, and whether plans call for the group to become a standing committee of the faculty. Provost Epstein responded that, in the past, the members of the consultative group have worked to appoint the membership as transitions take place. She said she would reach out to Professor Edwards, who is now on leave and who was a member of the group last year, to ask for recommendations, learn if anyone has expressed interest, and to offer assistance, as needed. Last year’s Committee of Six considered a proposal from the group for a charge, the provost noted. Ultimately, it had been decided that the best approach would be to fold a discussion about this body into broader deliberations about service and governance, as part of the effort that consultant Susan Pierce is coordinating. Provost Epstein commented that a vote of the faculty is required to create a standing committee.

Conversation turned to a draft faculty meeting agenda for a possible October 19 meeting. The committee discussed reports by administrators that might be placed on the agenda. Suggestions included the faculty equity and inclusion officers, the dean of admission and financial aid, the dean of students and interim chief student affairs officer, and the director of the counseling center. In the end, the majority of members felt that it would be most important to have an update on student well-being at this time, given the concerns that [the Ad Hoc Committee on Student Success had shared with the committee on September 2](#). It was agreed that the provost should check in with Dean Agosto about giving a presentation on student well-being. Turning back to the agenda, the provost said, the class deans and J. Barba would like the opportunity to discuss with the faculty some concerns that they have surrounding advising, particularly for sophomores and juniors. The members concurred that this should be an agenda item as well. It was agreed that it would also be helpful for President Martin to offer brief remarks about the presidential search process as well. Professor Clotfelter asked if the CEP would be ready to share its views about remote teaching. Provost Epstein responded that the CEP is not yet

ready to do so. The members agreed that a meeting should be held and that the agenda should be finalized and approved via its shared drive, as the committee would not be meeting on October 11, due to fall break.

The members next reviewed [the Committee of Six's proposal](#) of last year to revise the first paragraph of the *Faculty Handbook* language about the criteria for tenure ([Faculty Handbook, III., E., 3.](#)), with the goal of enhancing clarity and achieving greater alignment with practice. Some members proposed some revisions, each of which was discussed in turn; it was agreed the committee would review another draft of the proposal at the members' next meeting. Ultimately, any changes to the *Faculty Handbook* will require a vote of the faculty, it was noted.

A conversation then ensued about a related issue brought forward by last year's Committee of Six. The members had proposed that the college adopt a tenure system that combines this broad set of college-wide criteria for tenure—with these criteria continuing to take precedence in the tenure process and being included in the *Faculty Handbook*—and complementary departmental expectations for tenure, the articulation of which could provide helpful context for the president, the provost and dean of the faculty, the Committee of Six, the department, outside reviewers, tenure-track faculty, and prospective hires. This year's committee had expressed support for this approach when the provost had described it at the beginning of the semester. It had been agreed then that it would be helpful to provide departments with a template to guide their efforts to articulate their expectations for tenure, drawing on the standards of excellence in their disciplines. The committee reviewed a draft template and offered some revisions, and the members agreed to consider another iteration of this document at their next meeting. Once the Committee of Six approves a final draft, the provost said that she would share the document with the chairs of academic departments. Once departments complete the templates, the Committee of Six will be asked to review them and to offer feedback, as needed, Provost Epstein noted. It will be important for departments to share what they value and what is given the greatest weight in their disciplines, while not being so specific that flexibility cannot be preserved.

The members next discussed a draft motion to revise the procedure that Committee of Six members must follow when the tenure cases of faculty members from their departments are considered. Currently, in accordance with the procedure voted by the faculty in 1986 (see [Faculty Handbook III., E., 4., e.](#) and [Faculty Handbook, IV., S., 1., a.](#)), under these circumstances, members must remain present during all tenure deliberations, but cannot participate in the committee's discussion or vote in the case of a colleague from their department. (See [the Committee of Six minutes of September 20, 2021](#), about the proposed revision, which, if approved, would result in members being absent when the committee considers the departmental colleague's case individually.) The members suggested some revisions to the draft and agreed to review the motion again at their next meeting. Once there is consensus on the language of the final motion, it will be brought forward to the faculty in the spring, the committee agreed.

The meeting ended with a very brief discussion about issues surrounding the college's academic calendar for the next academic year, including the alignment of Amherst's calendar with UMass. Provost Epstein said that UMass is planning to have a six-week January term session that will run from December 15 to January 31. It is her hope that Amherst will start next year on August 29, which will make it possible to end classes earlier in December, allowing students to finish exams and leave campus well before the holidays. Alignment with the university in the fall would be possible, the provost said, while noting that she will be learning more about whether the start date of the spring semester of 2023 will allow for alignment as well. The CEP will be considering these and other parameters of the calendar and will bring a proposal forward for a faculty vote, Provost Epstein noted.

The meeting adjourned at 4:35 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Provost and Dean of the Faculty

The fifth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2021–2022 was called to order by President Martin via Zoom at 10:30 A.M. on Wednesday, October 13, 2021. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Clotfelter, Manion, Martini, Schroeder Rodríguez, Umphrey, and Vaughan; Provost and Dean of the Faculty Epstein; and Associate Provost Tobin, recorder.

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

The college values faculty whose commitment to the life of the mind is demonstrated through **EXCELLENCE IN** teaching, scholarship, and **OR THE** creation of works of art, **AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO PROFESSIONAL SERVICE.** ~~and a concern for the general life of the college.~~ **AMHERST TENURES FACULTY WHO DEMONSTRATE GROWTH, ACHIEVEMENT, AND CONTINUING PROMISE IN BOTH SCHOLARSHIP AND TEACHING, EVINCED BY A NOTABLE RECORD OF SCHOLARLY AND/OR ARTISTIC ACCOMPLISHMENT AND A DEMONSTRATED ABILITY TO TEACH UNDERGRADUATES EFFECTIVELY. THESE TWO ASPECTS OF A CANDIDATE'S RECORD ARE OF PRIMARY CONSIDERATION IN THE TENURE DECISION. STRENGTH IN ONE WILL NOT COMPENSATE FOR SHORTCOMING IN THE OTHER. A RECORD OF SCHOLARLY EXCELLENCE MUST INCLUDE EVIDENCE OF ORIGINAL, PEER-REVIEWED RESEARCH AND/OR ITS EQUIVALENT IN THE CREATIVE ARTS. A RECORD OF TEACHING EXCELLENCE MUST INCLUDE EVIDENCE OF THE ABILITY TO CONVEY KNOWLEDGE AND ENGAGE STUDENTS IN RIGOROUS AND STIMULATING WAYS, AND A COMMITMENT TO THEIR INTELLECTUAL AND PERSONAL GROWTH AND ACADEMIC ACCOMPLISHMENT. ADDITIONALLY, FACULTY MEMBERS ARE EXPECTED TO CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR HOME DEPARTMENTS AND PROGRAMS, TO THE LIFE AND WORK OF THE COLLEGE, AND TO THEIR PROFESSIONAL FIELDS.**

~~Although distinguishing one quality from another—even for the purpose of discussion—separates what is inseparable in the life of a single individual, the distinctions which follow are an attempt to provide a clear description of the qualities the college seeks, especially among faculty who hold appointment without term. Effective teaching is regarded as a prime factor for reappointment and promotion. The college also gives great weight to the continued scholarly growth of faculty members. Research, publication and creative work are considered important indications of such growth. In addition, the college takes~~

~~account of a faculty member's general contribution to the life of the college community.~~

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

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

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

The meeting adjourned at 11:46 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Provost and Dean of the Faculty

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

The meeting began with a discussion of a personnel matter. Provost Epstein next noted that, after consultation with the Committee on Educational Policy, it has been agreed that Amherst will return to its usual policy regarding closing due to inclement weather, i.e., that, when the college closes, all classes will be cancelled. The policy was introduced in 2015, in order to ensure that students, faculty, and staff are not put at risk by venturing out on icy pathways or roads, Provost Epstein explained. In addition, she said that it is essential that facilities crews are able to work without interference to reopen the campus as safely and quickly as possible. Synchronous teaching via Zoom will not be allowed on snow days, the provost noted. The primary reason for this is that students' living situations can make it very challenging for them to participate in Zoom classes; on snow days, the library and other academic buildings will be closed, so students will not be able to find other spaces from which they can Zoom into class. The provost commented that the classroom is a privileged space in which open and honest conversation is expected; with non-participants potentially present, the classroom cannot function as intended. Provost Epstein explained that, while synchronous teaching on snow days will not be permitted, faculty may share recorded lectures or have students participate in Moodle or other asynchronous discussion formats.

Under "Questions from Committee Members," Professor Umphrey asked about the performance of Amherst's endowment and what the college's budgetary priorities are for the coming budget cycle. President Martin said that the endowment returns have been extraordinary. She then discussed her strategic priorities for the use of the increase to the payout to the budget from the endowment. Rather than waiting until spring when the budget process typically begins, she has decided to fund a number of strategic priorities now, she noted, so as to ensure that requests that are less strategic do not end up crowding out higher-priority investments. These are significant enhancements to the college's financial aid program that will benefit all aided students ([see the announcement that the president sent to the community on October 20](#)), beginning in 2022–2023; converting long-serving casual positions at the college that involve more than twenty hours of work a week into benefitted positions; expanding faculty research support via an increase in the number of research internships for students and a significant start on the commitment that was made earlier to provide lab technicians to faculty members in STEM fields. In addition, President Martin said that it is also her hope to add 1 percentage point to the regular faculty and staff wage pools that will be set in spring 2022, so that employees can make up some of the ground they have lost over time by virtue of not having received a wage increase during part of the pandemic. This last step will not be taken until the spring, when it will be determined whether it is possible. President Martin also informed the members, in confidence, that the college will end the practice of having a legacy admission preference, beginning with the next admission cycle. She noted that the Faculty Committee on Admission and Financial Aid, the leadership of the college, and the Amherst College Board of Trustees have endorsed doing so. The members expressed enthusiasm for all of these initiatives. (President Martin shared this information at the faculty meeting the next day.) [An article on the college's expanded financial aid program and ending the legacy preference appeared in the *Wall Street Journal* on October 20.](#)

Continuing with questions, Professor Clotfelter asked when the exam schedule will be shared. Provost Epstein said that she would check in with the registrar to find out. At the request of Professor Manion, the president next provided a brief update on the searches for the chief financial and administrative officer and the chief human resources officer, noting that the searches are moving forward. Provost Epstein informed the committee that a third candidate for the position of chief diversity, equity, and inclusion officer will come to campus on Friday of this week. A session will once again be offered for faculty to meet the candidate, she said.

Professor Schroeder Rodríguez next commented that he was looking forward to the discussion about student well-being that would take place at the faculty meeting the next day, in particular to learn more about how best to support students. He noted that a colleague had suggested that it would also be useful to provide venues in which faculty and staff could discuss the challenges that they have faced during the pandemic. Some members wondered if the Center for Restorative Practices might facilitate such conversations. On a related front, Professor Umphrey asked the provost if it might be possible to provide a space for colleagues to gather to share their experiences, perhaps over lunch. While this may not be possible at Lewis-Sebring, since that space has been needed during this time for student dining, perhaps another location could be found. Faculty could bring their own lunches, since dining services is so stretched, she noted. Provost Epstein said that she would explore the possibilities with Jim Brassord, chief of campus operations. Concluding the conversation and returning to the issue of student mental health, Professor Vaughan suggested that it would be helpful for faculty to receive more information about what to do when their students are in distress. Provost Epstein said that faculty should reach out to the class deans, the dean of students, and/or the Counseling Center. The meeting concluded with a discussion of a personnel matter.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Provost and Dean of the Faculty

The seventh meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2021–2022 was called to order by President Martin via Zoom at 2:30 p.m. on Monday, October 25, 2021. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Clotfelter, Manion, Martini, Schroeder Rodríguez, Umphrey, and Vaughan; Provost and Dean of the Faculty Epstein; and Associate Provost Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with a discussion of a personnel matter. Under “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Manion next asked when the committee would discuss [a note from Professor Grobe that she had shared with the committee](#). In his communication, Professor Grobe raised concern about the last paragraph of the tenure criteria language in the [Faculty Handbook III. E., 3.](#), which reads as follows:

Institutional considerations may play a role at the time of tenure, but if they are invoked, the president will give a full account of the reasons why. Institutional considerations include factors such as the tenure structure of the department, the rank structure of the department, and the fields of competence of the faculty member being considered for tenure in relation to those already represented in the department. Although the college has no formula for the percentage of faculty on tenure, or for the distribution of faculty by anticipated retirement or rank generally or within departments, a particular judgment may be made which takes such factors into account (adopted by trustee vote, April 4, 1992).

Provost Epstein, who commented that removing or shifting the location of this language would require a vote of the board of trustees, reminded the members that this topic will be on the committee’s agenda for the meeting of November 8. President Martin informed the committee that this type of clause, which allows the board to take extraordinary measures in the face of exigent circumstances, is fairly standard at colleges and universities. She finds the placement of the language in the tenure-criteria section of the handbook to be unusual, however. Some members agreed that the language is very problematic and said that it is their hope that it can be removed.

Continuing with questions, Professor Clotfelter asked for an updated response from the provost’s office to the letter sent by untenured STEM faculty in March, 2021. He particularly highlighted the need for tenure-track faculty to be adequately supported in the pre- and post-award stages of the grants process. Provost Epstein said that she would provide another update soon.

Professor Clotfelter next inquired about the status of appointing colleagues to serve on the Consultative Group for Tenure-Track Faculty. The provost said she had sent a note to tenure-track faculty to ask for volunteers to serve and that she was very pleased that Professors Bernard, Leydon-Hardy, and Riondato responded that they wish to do so. It would be helpful to have another colleague from the humanities or social sciences join the group to round out the membership, Provost Epstein added.

The members next reviewed a final iteration of the committee’s draft template for departmental expectations for tenure. The members approved the template and agreed that the provost should share the document at the November meeting of the chairs of academic departments and programs. Once departments complete their documents using the template, the Committee of Six will be asked to review them and to offer feedback, as needed, Provost Epstein noted. At the committee’s request, the provost agreed to provide a memo to the chairs to frame the conversation about the template for the chairs.

Discussion turned briefly to [a note from the Faculty Housing Committee](#), in which the committee responded to the Committee of Six’s feedback regarding the proposed house purchase program. The provost explained that she and the president agree that length of ownership of a college house beyond the owner’s retirement should not extend to the end of life, as proposed, but should instead be limited to five to seven years post retirement. They thanked those who have encouraged further thinking about this idea, including the Committee of Six. Provost Epstein noted that staff in Facilities have agreed to oversee a

feasibility study for creating more rental units in the large houses that don't sell, as well as for the development of additional housing units that could be put up for sale. Professor Martini expressed hope that the larger unoccupied college houses might not be offered for sale, but instead be used for these purposes from the outset; Professor Schroeder Rodríguez suggested that providing housing to support international faculty exchanges would be desirable as well. Responding to Professor Umphrey's question about next steps, Provost Epstein said that she and President Martin now have a better sense of the views of the community about housing needs and will explore opportunities and make decisions accordingly.

The members next considered [an email that Professor Frank had sent](#) about the possibility of turning on the chat function during faculty meetings, with the goal of providing a tool for enhancing engagement among faculty members during this time of virtual meetings. While the committee saw some benefits to trying this approach, and there was some support for the idea, perhaps as a trial, it was agreed that the president should not be put in the position of both chairing the meeting and moderating the chat. The possibility of side conversations in the chat becoming a distraction from the business of the faculty meeting was raised as a concern, as was the potential for circulating misinformation via the chat. The committee also discussed the idea of having a Slack channel for faculty to use during faculty meetings, and it was noted that there are already several cohort-specific Slack channels, including one for untenured STEM faculty that is active during faculty meetings. Some members expressed reservations about using the chat function, and the committee wondered what problem would be solved by doing so. The members agreed that many faculty members seem to be feeling the loss of community that has resulted from the pandemic, with faculty meetings taking place on Zoom and other opportunities to engage in person with colleagues diminished. Provost Epstein noted that there are challenges to having in-person faculty meetings at this time, as Cole Assembly Room would be too crowded and doesn't have the necessary ventilation. She said that she has found that many colleagues have enjoyed the in-person *On Amherst Plate* conversations that she has hosted, as well as the program for new chairs that is under way in person. The provost offered to create a social gathering for faculty this semester, and the president said that she is considering possible venues for a holiday party, with the ability to have such an event dependent on the course of the pandemic. The committee expressed enthusiasm for having more in-person events for faculty and asked the provost to proceed with plans for a gathering this semester.

The remainder of the meeting was devoted to personnel matters.

The meeting adjourned at 5:05 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Provost and Dean of the Faculty

The eighth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2021–2022 was called to order by President Martin via Zoom at 2:30 P.M. on Monday, November 8, 2021. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Clotfelter, Manion, Martini, Schroeder Rodríguez, Umphrey, and Vaughan; Provost and Dean of the Faculty Epstein; and Associate Provost Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with the committee agreeing, as suggested by Professor Hall, to share via its minutes an April 15, 2021, [letter that the Faculty Committee on Admission and Financial Aid \(FCAFA\) had sent to the Committee of Six](#) to encourage the faculty to consider the permanent elimination of admission preferences for children of alumni (“legacies”). President Martin and Provost Epstein had spoken with Professor Hall last spring and had agreed that the document should not be shared at that time because the board of trustees was still making its own determination about this matter (ultimately, the board voted to eliminate admission preferences for children of alumni at its most recent meeting, which took place in October).

Turning to another matter, the president and provost informed the members that, after considering the feedback of the Committee of Six and others about the housing committee’s proposal that owners of college houses be allowed to stay in their houses for life, they have decided that a limit of up to six years after retirement from Amherst seems best. With this change, the housing committee’s proposal will now be put in place.

Under “Questions from Committee Members,” the committee asked the provost to comment on the issues raised in a [November 6, 2021, letter sent by Professor Gentzler](#); in the document, Professor Gentzler, former faculty director of the Writing Center, expressed concern about plans (as described in recent articles in the *Amherst Student*) to focus the work of the center on one-on-one tutorials in which the staff work with students on academic writing. The members asked if resources for the writing center have been reduced, since some programs have apparently been eliminated. Provost Epstein reassured the committee that no cuts have been made, and shared her view that the core mission of the Writing Center should be to support students’ writing within the curriculum. The provost noted that, over the years, the center’s mission has become more diffuse, with staff dedicating time to other initiatives. While commenting that these other endeavors have been valuable and appreciated, the provost explained that there is high demand among students for services at the Writing Center, and she wants to be sure that appointments are available when students need them. Provost Epstein explained that the center tends to be used very heavily in the fall, when many instructors of first-year seminars encourage their students to make use of its services; the spring is less busy. She said that she has been working with Jessica Kem, director of the Writing Center, to streamline processes and better align staff time with student demand.

Continuing with the discussion, Provost Epstein expressed the view that support for writing outside the curriculum should be provided through other offices. Students should be seeking help with their non-academic writing—e.g., writing relating to applications for internships and jobs or fellowships—through offices such as the Loeb Center for Career Exploration and Planning and the Office of Fellowships, in her view. She has also been in conversation with Liz Agosto, dean of students and interim chief student affairs officer, about providing opportunities for students to focus on study skills and metacognitive approaches, as there is currently an unmet need for these services. The members suggested that it would be helpful for the provost to work with the Writing Center on ways to share information with students about its services, as well as finding ways to communicate about services to support writing that are available through other offices for students. Provost Epstein agreed to discuss the concerns that have been raised with J. Kem and to engage in conversation with Professor Gentzler as well. The members suggested that the provost work with J. Kem to define the ways in which the Writing Center’s plans intersect with and support anti-racism efforts, as they found the current framing in need of refinement. Concluding the discussion, the committee noted the important impact that Professor Gentzler has had through her work to support and enhance writing at that college and expressed thanks to her for sharing her views.

Professor Schroeder Rodríguez next shared that he and Professor del Moral had met with Provost Epstein recently about the possibility of allocating FTE lines for a cluster hire to staff the Latinx and Latin American studies program and an envisioned program in Asian American studies. Given that the five FTE lines provided by the board of trustees previously for the purpose of bringing Black and Latinx senior hires to the college are expected to be allocated by the end of this academic year, he inquired whether it might be possible for the board to allocate more lines for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and other people of color) faculty as part of the envisioned cluster hire. President Martin asked how many faculty members are teaching in the Latinx and Latin American studies program at this time. Professor Schroeder Rodríguez responded that there are five faculty members who serve as the core of the program and a number of additional colleagues who teach courses that can be applied toward the major. The president explained that the faculty FTE cap has already been breached as part of the priorities that were set for the Promise comprehensive campaign, which include expanding the faculty through the allocation of additional FTE lines in STEM and other disciplines. These lines cannot be filled, however, until the funds that must be raised to support them are in place, the president noted. In order to provide additional lines for the purposes that Professor Schroeder Rodríguez has outlined, more funds would need to be raised and be in place.

Continuing with questions, Professor Clotfelter, referencing the October 31 [email from Dean Agosto](#) about student testing compliance going below 90 percent, asked whether consequences have been put in place for students who are not adhering to the college's rules about COVID-19 testing. President Martin commented that the Office of Student Affairs is doing a good job of holding students accountable for not following testing protocols. There are two groups of students who are not following the rules, she noted, those who haven't been in compliance on a consistent basis (a little more than twenty students), and those who have missed a test here and there (about 50 percent of students). Those in the former group will be going through the college's judicial process, the president said. In addition, students who have not been following testing rules consistently are not being allowed access to a variety of college activities. For example, they are not permitted to host or attend parties. Varsity athletes who are in season and who do not follow testing protocols are not being permitted to attend practices and games. These measures seem to be having a positive effect, the provost noted, as student testing compliance has risen to about 90 percent. Faculty members are encouraged to remind students about the importance of testing, she noted. Professor Clotfelter also inquired as to whether students will be receiving COVID vaccine boosters this spring. Provost Epstein said that she would inquire about the college's plans. (She later said that plans are under way to have a booster clinic for students in early December [boosters would be available for faculty and staff as well], and that there are no plans to require boosters at this time.)

Professor Umphrey next asked for an update on the work of consultant Susan Pierce, who is helping the college think through issues surrounding shared governance and service at the college. Provost Epstein responded that she had just spoken with S. Pierce, who agreed to meet with the committee on November 29 to discuss responses to the survey that was conducted to learn more about the faculty's views on a number of questions, which last year's Committee of Six had helped to develop. The provost said that the committee will be asked to consider next steps, based on what has been learned. Having reviewed the survey results, the provost noted that the views expressed by the faculty vary widely on the issues that the survey raised.

Turning to another topic, Professor Umphrey thanked the provost for her responsiveness to the committee's suggestion that there be more in-person social events for faculty. She said that she is looking forward to the provost's party, which will be held in a tent next to the Inn on Boltwood, on November 12. Provost Epstein said that she is excited about the party, while apologizing that the event will take place at the same time as a [lecture by Geoffrey Stone](#), Edward H. Levi Distinguished Service Professor at the University of Chicago, which is part of the Point/Counterpart series. The provost said that she was not aware of this conflict when scheduling the party. The talk, which is open to all, will be

live-streamed. A recording of the event will be made available afterward. The members then turned briefly to a committee assignment

At the conclusion of the meeting, discussion returned to [a note from Professor Grobe](#). In his communication, Professor Grobe raised concern about the last paragraph of the tenure criteria language in the [Faculty Handbook III. E., 3.](#), which reads as follows:

Institutional considerations may play a role at the time of tenure, but if they are invoked, the president will give a full account of the reasons why. Institutional considerations include factors such as the tenure structure of the department, the rank structure of the department, and the fields of competence of the faculty member being considered for tenure in relation to those already represented in the department. Although the college has no formula for the percentage of faculty on tenure, or for the distribution of faculty by anticipated retirement or rank generally or within departments, a particular judgment may be made which takes such factors into account (adopted by trustee vote, April 4, 1992).

Ahead of the committee's meeting, the members were provided with minutes of the board of trustees' vote on this issue in 1992 and relevant faculty meeting and Committee of Six minutes. It was noted that many of the arguments that faculty members had made against adopting this language, at the time, hold true today. President Martin noted once again that this type of clause, which allows the board to take extraordinary measures in the face of exigent circumstances, is fairly standard at colleges and universities. At the same time, she agrees with the committee that the placement of the language in the tenure criteria section of the *Faculty Handbook*, and some of the substance that is conveyed, is problematic. Professor Clotfelter asked if "institutional considerations" must continue to encompass both financial factors, as well as others such as departmental structure, as these are very different things. Professor Martini said that she found the examples of factors described in the language to be very odd, with the emphasis on fields and rank structure, for example.

President Martin commented that these contingencies do not make sense in the current context, noting that it is not the role of the board to intervene in tenure decisions, or hiring, for that matter; the current language is out of sync with the ways in which Amherst's board operates, she said. At the time that the language was adopted, a requirement that faculty retire by age seventy was about to be lifted. It could be that some of the language was included to address fears that departments could become "top heavy" as a result of the change. It was agreed and noted that such considerations should be taken into account by the Committee on Educational Policy and the president and provost when FTEs are allocated, but not at the time of tenure. All this being said, the president noted that the trustees, in the event of a financial crisis, must have the ability to take whatever steps that are necessary to preserve the institution, and language to this effect needs to be in the *Faculty Handbook*. It must be recognized that, in the case of a dire set of circumstances, such actions could encompass decisions surrounding the number of faculty lines that could continue to be supported. It was agreed that the president and provost should draft language surrounding financial exigency and board decisions and bring a proposal to the trustees to revise the current language. In addition, it was agreed that they should make a recommendation as to where the new language should be placed in the *Faculty Handbook*, removing it from the tenure criteria section. The committee thanked the president and the provost for their willingness to move this issue forward. The remainder of the meeting was devoted to personnel matters.

The meeting adjourned at 4:20 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Provost and Dean of the Faculty

The ninth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2021–2022 was called to order by President Martin via Zoom at 9:30 A.M. on Thursday, November 11, 2021. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Clotfelter, Manion, Martini, Schroeder Rodríguez, Umphrey, and Vaughan; Provost and Dean of the Faculty Epstein; and Associate Provost Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with Provost Epstein noting that she had recently sent an email to all tenured faculty announcing *Pathways Post Tenure*, a new program that her office has designed to help mid- to late-career faculty make the most of the post-tenure years. As noted in the announcement, the results of the 2020 COACHE (Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education) faculty job satisfaction survey and ensuing conversations revealed a range of challenges that associate professors, in particular, along with full professors, can face. The goal of the program will be to help address some of these issues.

Under “Questions from Committee Members, Professor Clotfelter asked if a decision has been made about whether January term will continue beyond this academic year. Provost Epstein said that, while no decision has been made yet, it is clear that there are challenges with offering a robust January term. Only a handful of faculty who taught a January term last year want to do so again, which was unexpected, and it has been difficult to find other faculty who are interested as well. In addition, registrars at the Five-College institutions have been unable to develop a system that will allow Five-College students to register for Amherst’s January term, despite repeated efforts. A decision about the future of January term will be made after the upcoming one is completed and an evaluation can be done of the 2021 and 2022 iterations, the provost said.

Conversation turned to a proposal from the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) for the 2022–2023 academic calendar ([see the letter from the CEP and the details of the proposed calendar](#)). Provost Epstein reviewed the proposal briefly, noting that the fall semester would begin on August 31, 2022, and end on December 16, 2022, under the plan. These dates balance the need to keep Amherst’s start date closely coordinated with those of the other Five-College institutions with the desire not to have exams during the fourth week of December. This end time would allow students to travel home for winter break without running into the busy holiday season, she commented. The provost noted that the final exam period in December would be reduced to four days, instead of the usual five, under the plan—preserving two weekdays (and a weekend) for reading period, while ending exams on a Friday. Some members expressed some concern that a shorter exam period could lead to exam conflicts for students. It was noted that such conflicts have been a problem this year. Provost Epstein commented that, at present, the college does not have sufficient staffing to offer self-scheduled exams. It is hoped that in the 2022–2023 academic year, the option of self-scheduled exams will be reinstated, alleviating exam-scheduling conflicts on the order of what has been experienced this fall. Professor Umphrey commented that meeting the needs of students who qualify for accommodations has presented serious challenges, and she suggested that it would be very helpful to have a testing center where exams are proctored, particularly during a four-day exam period.

Turning to the proposal for the spring semester, Provost Epstein noted that it would begin on January 30, 2023, and end on May 19, 2023, under the proposal. The provost said that, to address the long period of time during the spring without a break, the plan includes a two-day break in April, in addition to the usual week-long break in March that is coordinated with the other colleges. There would be one make-up day, two weekdays (and a weekend) for reading period, and the standard five-day final exam period. Reducing the number of make-up days would mean that the semester would not be extended to accomplish the plan, and that commencement would take place after the typical number of weeks in the term. Professor Schroeder Rodríguez asked what percentage of classes have exams. The provost said that she would find out. (It was later confirmed that 18 percent of humanities courses, 12 percent of social sciences courses, and 71 percent of STEM courses make use of exams). A member commented that January term is not built into the proposal and wondered why. The provost responded that the faculty only approved a January term for the last academic year and for the current one. There

is no legislation enabling the practice to continue, which is why the proposed calendar doesn't have a January term. There is also not sufficient time to debate adopting January term on an ongoing basis, and have a calendar approved soon (which is a very urgent need at this point). The college would need to amend policy and make decisions on how a permanent January term should work, which is not a small task. The committee agreed that the calendar that has been proposed is worth trying, despite some lingering concern about the four-day exam period; the committee then voted unanimously to approve the calendar and forward it to the faculty.

The meeting concluded with a brief discussion of whether another faculty meeting is needed this semester. After some discussion, the members agreed that, after a challenging fall semester, many would welcome not having a meeting, unless there is some business to conduct. Since it appears that there is not, it was agreed that, unless something comes up, there will not be another faculty meeting, and that the academic calendar should be approved by electronic vote. Professor Vaughan once again thanked the provost for organizing a faculty party on November 12, commenting that this will be a time when faculty can engage with one another socially, which is always a welcome experience after faculty meetings. The remainder of the meeting was devoted to personnel matters.

The meeting adjourned at 11:14 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Provost and Dean of the Faculty

The tenth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2021–2022 was called to order by President Martin via Zoom at 2:30 P.M. on Monday, November 15, 2021. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Clotfelter, Manion, Martini, Schroeder Rodríguez, Umphrey, and Vaughan; Provost and Dean of the Faculty Epstein; and Associate Provost Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with “Questions from Committee Members.” Professor Martini commented that she had been disheartened to learn at the meeting of the Science Faculty Steering Committee earlier in the day that the implementation of the climate action plan has been put on hold. She asked if the pause is primarily due to increases in cost, delays in obtaining materials, or both factors. President Martin responded that it is the combination. It was learned recently that the costs of the plan would be almost 50 percent more than originally estimated by engineers. The college is evaluating the cost estimate and discussing how best to move forward. There is a possibility that advances in technology may make it possible to move to air-sourced heat pumps, without needing to drill wells on campus, a step that is expensive and disruptive, the president said. This is not certain at this time, she noted, while informing the members that it is still anticipated that the plan will be completed by 2030. President Martin said that a letter about the climate action plan will be sent to the community soon. ([See the letter that was later sent.](#))

Continuing with questions, Professor Vaughan, after first commenting on the extraordinary efforts of the staff in Information Technology to meet the community’s needs during the pandemic, while dealing with staffing shortages, noted the challenges of obtaining some IT support services. He asked whether vacant positions in IT are being filled at this time, stressing the importance of technology to the educational mission of the college. Provost Epstein noted that some very experienced staff in IT took advantage of the college’s voluntary retirement program, while others left Amherst to pursue career opportunities elsewhere. Professionals with IT skills are very much in demand and have many options, the provost commented. She said that it is her understanding that David Hamilton, chief information officer, has made some hires recently, and she agreed to ask him for an update on progress in this area, and to report back to the committee.

Professor Umphrey next asked the provost about plans for the committee to discuss some questions that had been raised at the meeting of the chairs of departments and programs that had been held the previous Friday. During the meeting, the committee’s draft of a template for departmental tenure expectations had been discussed. Provost Epstein informed the members who had not been present at the chairs’ meeting that the primary issue that had been raised was whether tenure-track faculty members should be included in discussions about documenting their department’s expectations for tenure, or whether the tenured members of a department should document these expectations without the input of tenure-track faculty, or some models in between. In addition, the question of whether current tenure-track faculty members should be grandfathered when it comes to these documents, or whether the expectations that will be articulated will simply document what pre-tenure colleagues have been told by the department since the time of hiring—in which case the expectations should apply to current and future tenure-track faculty. The remainder of the meeting was devoted to personnel matters.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Provost and Dean of the Faculty

The eleventh meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2021–2022 was called to order by President Martin via Zoom at 2:30 P.M. on Monday, November 29, 2021. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Clotfelter, Manion, Martini, Schroeder Rodríguez, Umphrey, and Vaughan; Provost and Dean of the Faculty Epstein; and Associate Provost Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with Provost Epstein, as a follow up to a question posed previously by Professor Vaughan, reporting back about what she has learned about progress on hiring staff within information technology (IT) at the college. David Hamilton, chief information officer (CIO), has informed her that, after a number of vacancies emerged in his area—due to staff members taking advantage of the voluntary retirement program and also leaving for positions elsewhere—IT reorganized several areas, including its leadership team and the service desk. As a result, one-to-one replacements will not be hired to fill all of the roles of IT staff who have left Amherst. In terms of raw numbers, D. Hamilton reported that, in the last year, IT has had eleven departures and now has four open searches (for the positions of associate chief information officer, IT specialist, high performance computing [HPC] administrator, and tech service operations manager). The two searches for the service desk positions (an additional IT specialist and tech services operations manager) should conclude in December. The associate chief information officer search is just starting and, given the role, is not expected to conclude until late spring. Four hires have already been made (for the positions of director of the service desk, multimedia services manager, IT specialist, and telecom specialist). In addition, the new position of chief information security officer has been filled. Approval of another new position (research computing specialist) is expected soon, as is a search for the assistant to the CIO position, which became vacant in December. In addition, IT is rethinking two positions and will then fill them. D. Hamilton also noted that vacancy dollars have been allocated to help fund the new positions. The committee thanked Provost Epstein for providing this information.

At 2:45 P.M., Susan Resneck Pierce, the consultant who is helping to develop proposals surrounding committee service and shared governance, joined the meeting, and the members welcomed her. S. Pierce discussed the results of the survey of the faculty that was conducted in October to gather feedback about matters related to service and faculty and shared governance. Ahead of the meeting, the consultant had provided the committee with [a memo about the survey findings and her recommendations going forward](#). In addition, Jesse Barba, director of institutional research and registrar services, had shared [a summary of the faculty's responses to the survey](#). Given the lack of consensus among survey respondents about many of the issues that the survey has raised, S. Pierce recommended that the committee focus on considering the following three areas: the college's committee structure, the question of whether the Committee of Six should become two separate committees (one focusing on reappointment, tenure, and promotion and the other functioning as an executive committee of the faculty), and issues surrounding faculty meetings. As a general matter, when trying to interpret the results of the survey, the members wondered whether an analysis that considered factors such as length of time at the college and career stage, discipline, gender, and ethnicity, for example, might reveal further insights into the divergent views of the faculty on a range of matters. Provost Epstein and S. Pierce said it is their hope that J. Barba will be able to conduct such an analysis, as time permits. It was agreed that it would be helpful to study the survey results further.

Continuing the conversation, S. Pierce asked the members for their views on the recommendations she had outlined in her memo, and about next steps. Discussion focused on whether the current committee structure—both standing and ad hoc—seems to be an effective and meaningful mode of governance and decision-making at the college, and whether service on committees appears to be the most productive use of faculty and staff time and expertise. The members commented that it is clear from the survey responses that some faculty are dissatisfied with the current committee structure. It was agreed that the members should consider whether the structure can be streamlined and whether committee charges should be refined. Many of these charges seem unclear in regard to the articulation

of purpose and areas of focus, and/or are dated, the members noted. They also concurred that the benefits of moving to a governance model that places greater reliance on staff expertise in domains that fall outside the academic mission should be considered, with a continuing emphasis on the importance of faculty consultation. In this vein, it was agreed that gaining greater clarity about the responsibilities for decision-making that are delegated to different constituencies at the college is an important goal. The members decided that it would be informative for the committee to engage in the “zero-based committee exercise,” described by S. Pierce in her memo, with her assistance, in December, and to develop some proposals surrounding committees that could be brought to the faculty in the spring. Professor Clotfelter wondered whether it might be optimal to adopt a structure in which there would be two or three standing committees that have broad charges, or perhaps one in which ad hoc committees with very specific charges would be constituted as issues arose. S. Pierce responded that she has seen ad hoc committees used effectively, particularly in recent years, as long as these bodies do not usurp the work of standing committees.

Some members suggested that it would be useful to explore alternatives to committee service that would allow faculty to continue to stay informed and to engage fully in all areas of college life in important and fruitful ways, without the time commitment that committee service often requires. As an example, Professor Manion commented that, while service on the Faculty Committee on Admission and Financial Aid (FCAFA) serves a valuable educative function for faculty members, professors have no formal role in making admission decisions. Instead of having faculty serve on the FCAFA and attend regular meetings, the staff of the admission office could hold open meetings to discuss their work and answer questions. Several members also expressed the view that, while committee service has proven to be a valuable way for faculty to get to know colleagues outside their departments, other means of building community should be developed that would offer the same or greater satisfaction, but would require less time. Some members noted that faculty who are in the early stages of their career at the college, in particular, seem to want to focus on their teaching and scholarship, rather than spending their time deliberating about issues of administrative policy that are outside the academic mission.

The members decided that the committee should also consider and articulate the pros and cons of splitting the Committee of Six into two separate committees, and think carefully about the role of the executive committee that would result from doing so. S. Pierce was asked to weigh in on whether a faculty senate model might be a good alternative for Amherst to consider. She responded that, in her experience, faculty senates at small colleges often spend a great deal of time considering various issues, only to have proposals that they bring forward voted down by the full faculty. She would not recommend adopting this model at Amherst, as it could be demoralizing and generate many of the same complaints that have been raised about committee work, in her view. The members agreed to develop a proposal to bring to the faculty to split the Committee of Six on a pilot basis for three years.

Turning to the topic of faculty meetings, the committee also decided to think about possibilities for improving the ways in which the meetings are conducted, including the style and processes used for decision-making, and to bring a proposal to the faculty. Professor Umphrey said that she can imagine changes that would continue to support rigorous debate during faculty meetings, but would also encourage greater engagement across the faculty ranks. The members then thanked S. Pierce for the work she has undertaken and the progress that has been made thus far and expressed enthusiasm for the important work ahead. The consultant left the meeting at 3:50 P.M., after which the committee turned to personnel matters.

Following that discussion, President Martin informed the members of Jackie Alvarez’s plans to retire at the end of the semester as director of the counseling center. An announcement will be sent to the community soon, the president noted. ([See the announcement that was later sent.](#)) The committee thanked J. Alvarez for her service to the college, particularly during the pandemic, when issues surrounding mental health have expanded. Darien McFadden, associate director of diversity, equity,

and training, has agreed to serve as director of the center, the president said. President Martin next informed the members that the search for the next chief diversity, equity, and inclusion officer (CDEIO) has not yet yielded viable candidates for the position. She said that she is pleased that Angie Tissi-Gassoway, associate dean of students for diversity and inclusion, will assume the role of interim chief diversity, equity, and inclusion officer, beginning December 1, while the search for a permanent CDEIO continues ([see the announcement of Angie Tissi-Gassoway's appointment](#)). The president expressed gratitude to Professor Hart, who has served since early July as interim CDEIO and who is currently on leave, and the committee also expressed its appreciation. Professor Manion asked if the parameters of the position should be rethought, given the challenges of finding someone to take the position as it is currently structured. Provost Epstein, who is co-chairing the search for the CDEIO with Liz Agosto, dean of students and interim chief student affairs officer, expressed the view that the structure of the position is fine, but that there is very high demand at colleges and universities for people to fill this position, and that some candidates have been concerned about the transition in the presidency, given that the successful candidate will report to the new president. Under the new timeline for the search, the hope is that the new president will be named prior to the finalist accepting the position, though there is no guarantee. The committee discussed other possible models for the CDEIO position, including one in which a faculty member or someone with a faculty background would assume the role. The provost emphasized that the CDEIO will need also to have expertise in staff and student issues, and that the current thinking is that it would be best to hire a senior-level administrator with expertise and experience in this work. The work of faculty equity and inclusion officers and Associate Provost and Associate Dean of the Faculty Dhingra is centered on faculty issues, Provost Epstein said.

The meeting concluded with a discussion of student mental health, a topic raised by President Martin. The president commented on the nationwide trend of more and more young people experiencing serious mental health challenges during the pandemic and said that she wants to gain a greater understanding of the level of distress among students at Amherst at this time—and the best approaches to help. She has sought the advice of experts in the field on this subject and has been consulting with the staff of the Office of Student Affairs and others, as well as some faculty, including the class deans, to try to learn more. President Martin has heard reports of some students feeling that they cannot gain access to the care they want at the college, but it appears that many students may not be aware of all the services that are available and how to navigate the system that is in place to get the support they need. The president has the impression that the college—including the faculty—is making every effort to identify students who are at risk and to provide the level of support that is needed. It is hard to know, however, how many students may be in need, and she is glad that the college will be surveying the student body to get a better sense next semester. The committee suggested that it would be helpful to enhance communication to students about how to get help with the challenges they are facing—through the Office of Student Affairs and the counseling center, for example. On the academic side, it was agreed that the faculty seems very aware of issues surrounding student mental health and has been very flexible in regard to workload and alerting student affairs when students are struggling. The committee felt that it would be helpful to remind all students of the ability to convert a class to pass/fail as an option, as some members understood that communications about this option were sent only to first-year students this week; all students might benefit from receiving this information, it was noted. Professor Clotfelter commented that, in his experience as a class dean, in some cases, faculty may be too flexible with academics at times—and that some students benefit from having more structure and support, rather than having repeated extensions, for example. Given the challenges students are facing, Professor Umphrey wondered if thought might be given to restructuring the semesters so that students can take fewer than four courses at once, a change that many seem to feel would help. It was noted that students could take three courses in the spring if they take a course in January. Provost Epstein noted that January-term courses are undersubscribed. It is her understanding

that more than one hundred slots are still available. Some members noted that some students might not want to take advantage of the January-term option because doing so would mean that they would not have a break between semesters.

Concluding the conversation, the committee expressed the view that finding ways to build community at the college, including through expanding the number of joyful collective experiences, could help address feelings of isolation and loneliness, in addition to continuing to provide robust mental health services, of course. President Martin concurred that such experiences are important and noted that efforts are under way to provide more of them for students, including keeping the Powerhouse open later, as a student gathering space, and providing snacks. She noted her plans to hold two community-wide social events outside—one for students and another for faculty and staff, after classes end.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Provost and Dean of the Faculty

The twelfth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2021–2022 was called to order by President Martin via Zoom at 9:30 A.M. on Thursday, December 2, 2021. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Clotfelter, Manion, Martini, Schroeder Rodríguez, Umphrey, and Vaughan; Provost and Dean of the Faculty Epstein; and Associate Provost Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with President Martin asking the members for their thoughts about the possibility of the president holding some gatherings for faculty, staff, and students in which she would share updates and take questions. Basically, the sessions would be an opportunity for the president to offer an end-of-semester review, to look forward to the next semester, and to answer questions. The committee agreed that this would be a good idea and suggested that the meetings take place via Zoom. After discussing the timing of the conversation with the faculty, which it was agreed should be Tuesday, December 7, at 7:30 P.M., President Martin decided to move forward with these plans.

Under “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Clotfelter asked about plans to offer another COVID-19 vaccine booster clinic. Provost Epstein responded that the first clinic, which had just been held, was very popular, and that another clinic for students, faculty, and staff is slated for December 9. President Martin commented that the college is considering mandating boosters for all members of the college community for the spring semester.

Provost Epstein next informed the members that, at the November 12 meeting of the chairs of academic departments and programs, some chairs had raised concerns surrounding the process for articulating departmental tenure expectations. The focus had been on whether pre-tenure colleagues should play any role in this work, as participants and/or observers. Some chairs had also wondered if departmental expectations for tenure would apply to current tenure-track faculty, or just to future hires. Finally, some chairs had inquired if plans call for allowing departments to update departmental expectations periodically and, if doing so is allowed, how it is envisioned any resulting lack of consistency would be addressed.

Discussion turned first to the question of the role that tenure-track faculty might play in the process of articulating their department’s tenure expectations. The members agreed on the importance of making it clear to everyone that the goal of documenting these expectations is to provide greater clarity about existing standards, as requested by tenure-track faculty. These expectations would have been shared with colleagues at the time of appointment and in the years thereafter, it was noted. The committee stressed the importance of recognizing that creating new expectations for tenure is not the goal of this work. Most members, the president, and the provost concurred that tenure-track faculty should not be involved in articulating departmental expectations, with some differing views expressed on related issues. On the question of whether pre-tenure colleagues should be present during departmental conversations about tenure expectations, most members agreed that this would not be appropriate, and that taking this approach could possibly create anxiety for tenure-track faculty and contribute to a sense of division between tenured and untenured colleagues. While the intention might be to give pre-tenure colleagues a voice in this work, it was noted that the expectations for tenure are not open to negotiation—and that it is the responsibility of the tenured faculty to articulate the expectations and to judge whether they have been met. Professors Manion, Martini, and Umphrey shared this viewpoint. Professor Clotfelter, who also did not feel that pre-tenure faculty should weigh in on departmental tenure expectations, commented that he would not find it problematic to have tenure-track faculty observe departmental conversations about tenure expectations. Professor Martini suggested that, after the tenured faculty complete the departmental expectations document, it could perhaps be shared with tenure-track faculty, to assess whether the expectations were clear. Most members, the president, and the provost disagreed that this approach should be taken, emphasizing that defining what is clear and what is not clear should not be a negotiated process.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Schroeder Rodríguez said that he feels strongly that tenure-track faculty should be permitted to participate in these conversations, both to express their views

and to listen. He noted that, while the committee has worked to clarify the criteria for tenure at the college level, departments are now being asked to consider the evidence that they will use to decide whether these criteria are being met at the department level. In his view, pre-tenure colleagues should be allowed to weigh in, for example, on trends in the discipline (e.g., the place of community-engaged scholarship) that relate to their scholarship that should be considered as such evidence. Other members, the president, and the provost commented that the moment of articulating departmental tenure standards is not the time to engage in this kind of discussion. Professor Vaughan wondered if there might be constructive ways to communicate with tenure-track faculty during the process of developing departmental tenure expectations, while making it clear that this work is the responsibility of tenured faculty.

In regard to grandfathering, the members agreed that, since the expectations that departments will be documenting will be the same as those that they have been sharing with tenure-track faculty all along, the expectations should apply to all current and future tenure-track faculty at Amherst; grandfathering is not needed. In regard to creating inconsistency by revising departmental tenure expectations, the committee concurred that, since the standards of the discipline evolve slowly and because departments should focus on broad expectations rather than specifics when articulating these expectations, it should not be necessary to change the documents very often—perhaps reviewing the expectations every decade should be the aspiration, it was noted. Any substantive changes to departmental expectations would be reviewed by the Committee of Six, as will the first iterations of the tenure expectations documents, the provost commented. She suggested that departments complete their documents this spring, and that the Committee of Six review them in the fall. The committee suggested that a March 1, 2022, deadline to complete the documents would be best. If a department experiences difficulty in arriving at consensus around tenure expectations, they should contact the provost for assistance, it was agreed. At the conclusion of the discussion, Provost Epstein thanked the committee and said that she and Associate Provost Tobin would draft a note for the chairs about these issues and the committee's views. They would then share the document with the members to get their input. The remainder of the meeting was devoted to personnel matters.

The meeting adjourned at 11:13 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Provost and Dean of the Faculty

The thirteenth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2021–2022 was called to order by President Martin via Zoom at 9:30 A.M. on Thursday, December 9, 2021. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Clotfelter, Manion, Martini, Schroeder Rodríguez, Umphrey, and Vaughan; Provost and Dean of the Faculty Epstein; and Associate Provost Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with “Questions from Committee Members.” Professor Martini thanked the president for meeting with the faculty earlier in the week to provide information and answer questions about college matters. She asked President Martin for further details about [the Drake](#), a new performance space and bar that will open in Amherst this winter. President Martin had shared the news about plans for the Drake at the meeting. The president responded that, in honor of the college’s bicentennial and to help with several ongoing projects, including the Drake, Amherst will be making two monetary gifts to the town. The specifics will be announced soon.

Continuing with questions, Professor Clotfelter inquired about plans for meeting the responsibilities of the position of chief of campus operations, when Jim Brassord steps down from his day-to-day duties after his retirement at the end of March and makes the transition to serving in an advisory role for one year. President Martin informed the members that she had just met with J. Brassord’s leadership team to discuss ideas for the structure of the division going forward. One model under consideration is to have the leaders of the units that currently report to J. Brassord report instead to the chief financial and administrative officer, once Kevin Weinman’s successor is appointed. Most of Amherst’s peers take this approach to the administration of campus operations, President Martin noted. The president informed the members that she will be meeting with the members of the leadership team again soon to learn more about their views on the structure that they feel will be best to accomplish the work of the division in the near and long term. An announcement will be made to the community after decisions are finalized, the president said.

Discussion turned to the proposal that the Committee of Six be split into two separate committees—one that would serve as an executive committee of the faculty and the other that would focus on reappointment, tenure, and promotion. Ahead of the meeting, the provost had shared information that she had gathered from chief academic officers of twenty-five schools in the Northeast who had responded to a brief questionnaire she had sent to them about the governance structure of their institutions. Interestingly, among the schools represented by the respondents, only one institution has a structure that resembles Amherst’s—with a single committee serving as the executive committee and tenure and promotion committee. The rest have separate committees to carry out these functions.

Continuing the conversation, the members noted that responses to the recent survey about the committee structure at the college indicated that many colleagues—including those who have served on the Committee of Six in the past—favored splitting the Committee of Six. While recognizing the importance of Amherst’s traditions and the central role in faculty governance that the Committee of Six has played over many years, the members were unanimous in their view that the needs of the college and the faculty have changed—and that the current faculty governance structure is no longer the most effective. The committee agreed that a proposal to split the Committee of Six should be brought to the faculty. The members felt that shifting the time-consuming, burgeoning, and important work surrounding reappointment, tenure, and promotion to another committee would allow the executive committee to have more time to focus on central governance matters and to consider issues more thoroughly. The committee would also be able to take a more proactive approach, it was noted; at present, the Committee of Six tends to be reactive, advantaging the consideration of proposals brought forward by individuals and different constituencies, rather than having the time to set priorities based on an assessment of governance needs. President Martin commented that, in her experience, the need to focus on faculty personnel processes during much of the year leaves little time for the president to consult with the Committee of Six about important college matters. While the decision is up to the

faculty of course, in her view, faculty governance would be strengthened if the committee were split. Provost Epstein concurred.

The members discussed how best to move forward. The committee agreed that bringing a proposal to the faculty should be done as soon as possible, while also noting the complexities of developing the charge of the imagined executive committee in time to effect change before the next Committee of Six election; that election typically takes place prior to spring break. The charge of a tenure and promotion committee is clear, all agreed. Provost Epstein suggested that a proposal to establish a separate tenure and promotion committee, including details surrounding its membership and the selection process for this body, be brought forward this spring. If approved, the committee could begin work in the summer of 2022. With the exception of carrying out its work surrounding faculty personnel processes, the executive committee, which could be elected in the traditional manner this spring, could continue to function as the Committee of Six does now, while developing a proposal for a formal charge for itself over the course of the next academic year. The members agreed that this would be a reasonable way to move forward. Due to the importance of this matter, some members felt that any proposals that are brought forward could be imagined as three-year pilots.

Concluding the conversation, the members suggested that the possibility of changing the charge of the Committee of Six and establishing a separate tenure and promotion committee presents another reason for the faculty to consider the current committee structure as a whole, as the relative status of committees could become less clear. The members agreed that this should be a topic of conversation when the committee meets with consultant Susan Pierce to discuss the committee structure on December 15.

Provost Epstein next informed the members that there has been a delay in bringing a proposal for the calendar for the next academic year forward for a faculty vote because the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, has not yet set its start date. It is expected to do so next week. If the university decides to start after Labor Day, this will have an impact on Amherst's ability to start classes on August 31, as the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) and the Committee of Six are recommending. She said that she would keep the committee posted about how this issue unfolds. On a related note, the members considered briefly [a letter signed by eighteen faculty members](#) requesting that the issue of whether to continue to have a January term in future years be discussed in depth by the Committee of Six and brought to the faculty for discussion at a faculty meeting. Provost Epstein commented that there are a number of administrative/academic policy matters and curricular issues to consider regarding this matter, and she feels that it would be best to consider the issue after the 2022 January term concludes; there would then be two iterations of this model at Amherst to evaluate. The members referred the matter to the CEP, agreeing that the request falls within its purview. The remainder of the meeting was devoted to personnel matters.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Provost and Dean of the Faculty

The fourteenth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2021–2022 was called to order by President Martin via Zoom at 1:00 P.M. on Wednesday, December 15, 2021. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Clotfelter, Manion, Martini, Schroeder Rodríguez, Umphrey, and Vaughan; Provost and Dean of the Faculty Epstein; and Associate Provost Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with Provost Epstein informing the members that, given the rising number of COVID-19 cases at the college, in the local area, around the country, and around the world, Amherst plans to move to remote teaching and learning, including students conducting research for honors work, for the first two days of the January term. This will enable returning students to have additional testing upon arrival, while limiting in-person interactions. All students approved to return to campus during January term, regardless of whether or not they have registered for a course, must receive two negative PCR tests before they can participate in any in-person activities, including attending classes. For students returning to campus for in-person January-term classes, this means they must have a negative result from a PCR test taken on Sunday, January 2, and Tuesday, January 4, before they can attend class in-person or participate in any other in-person activities. An announcement of this change will be sent to the community soon, the provost noted. Professor Martini asked if the college is considering sending antigen-testing kits to students at home, so that they can test before they arrive on campus. President Martin said that, when she has inquired about this in the past, and that the Health Readiness Group has said that the college does not have self-administered antigen tests. The president said that she would ask again about the possibility of making use of such tests, under these circumstances. Of course, PCR testing at the testing center would also be required.

The committee asked if the college is considering other steps for January and, possibly, the spring semester, that might become necessary if there is considerable spread, potentially due to the Omicron variant. President Martin said that it is safe to assume that the Omicron variant will be present on campus. She noted that, while cases of this variant appear to be milder than previous ones, scientists are still learning more about Omicron, and much is uncertain. Even if cases are milder, the college would not have the resources in place to offer sufficient support to students who would need to be in isolation, if there were a major outbreak at Amherst. Professor Martini noted the worrisome indicator that hospitalizations are rising in the community and, along with others, emphasized the need for the college to make plans for more serious measures, in case such steps are needed. President Martin said that the college will not hesitate to take such measures again, should doing so become necessary. She informed the members that the situation is being monitored very closely, and it will be necessary to wait and see how things unfold. Professor Clotfelter asked if, as of now, students will still be allowed to study abroad next semester. Provost Epstein said that the college has trust in the programs in which students are set to participate and believes that these entities will make informed decisions with students' best interest in mind.

Conversation turned to the proposal for the academic calendar for the next academic year. Provost Epstein informed the members that the University of Massachusetts faculty senate has voted to start the next academic year at UMass on the Tuesday after Labor Day (September 6), which was unexpected. In order not to be out of sync with the start dates of the other institutions in the Five-College Consortium, Amherst will not be able to start its own academic year on August 31, as the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) and the Committee of Six recommended earlier. The CEP has now developed [an alternative calendar](#), the details of which its members described in [a letter to the Committee of Six](#). The CEP also provided [a second alternative calendar](#), which its members did not prefer, for consideration. It would require classes to begin on Labor Day, September 5. Under the committee's preferred proposal, the fall semester would begin on Thursday, September 1, 2022, and end on Sunday, December 19, 2022. Twelve of the weeks would have a full Monday-through-Friday schedule. Classes would be held on Labor Day, and the three days immediately following the Monday-through-Tuesday October break would be scheduled as Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday classes. There would be a four-day reading period and a five-day exam period, which the CEP feels is very important, as previous experimentation with a shorter exam period resulted in significant challenges. Other details about the rationale for the proposal are included in the CEP's letter. The members thanked the CEP for its excellent

work on the calendar and expressed appreciation to its members for considering issues surrounding the calendar with such great care.

The members wondered if the CEP's proposal would allow for a January term, should it be decided to have one in the next academic year. Provost Epstein said that it would be possible to mount a January term, as there are four weeks available in the proposal, while noting that there are a number of administrative and other barriers to doing so—among them budgetary concerns. Professor Umphrey asked if it would be possible to have a break after January term and before the spring semester if a January term were to be mounted, noting the fatigue level of students and faculty at the conclusion of such an intensive educational endeavor. Provost Epstein said that, without having January courses run later into the day so that they take place for a greater amount of time over a more abbreviated period, it would only be possible to have a weekend between the end of January term and the start of the spring semester. She noted that the spring semester might be somewhat less pressured for faculty and students who have participated in a January term, if faculty are teaching one course and students are taking three courses instead of a normal load. The CEP did not think it wise to extend the spring semester into summer to create such a break, which would affect the timing of commencement, for example. Professor Umphrey wondered if it might prove challenging to recruit faculty to teach during January without a longer break.

Professor Umphrey next expressed concern about having classes on Labor Day, stressing the impact that doing so would likely have on staff morale, since staff would need to be on campus—for example, some staff in information technology—to support faculty if classes were held. Professor Manion commented that issues surrounding the calendar seem to arise each time it is considered, and she wondered if there are core guiding principles that have been helpful in the past when considering the calendar that could continue to inform calendar discussions now and in the future. Provost Epstein said that such principles are in place, but that challenges occur regularly when Labor Day is late; it is difficult to create a calendar that both meets a set of academic requirements, and enables exams to conclude early enough in December that students are able to leave campus in time to arrive at their destinations before the holidays. Professor Martini, also expressing a preference for preserving Labor Day as a holiday, suggested that the college start the fall semester on August 31 and then not have classes on Labor Day. The members discussed the impact of this proposal on the number of class meetings a class would have if it falls on a Monday. Provost Epstein said that adopting a Monday class schedule on another day of the week would be necessary so that all classes meet for thirteen weeks. This would be possible, she noted. The committee agreed to consider this matter further at its meeting the next day, making a final decision on a proposal so that it could be brought to the faculty—hopefully, during the week of December 20.

Consultant Susan Pierce joined the meeting at 2:15 P.M. to facilitate what she calls the Zero-Based Committee exercise. She asked the committee to consider the following questions:

What does the faculty need to do to engage effectively in faculty governance?

What committees does the college need to enable the faculty to fulfill its primary albeit recommending responsibilities for academic matters?

What committees or processes does the college need to ensure that appropriate faculty are consulted about decisions that affect academic matters?

In what areas should the faculty serve in an advisory role to administrators who have primary responsibility for those areas?

Should the Committee of Six be split? If so, what should the process and timing be?

In a wide-ranging conversation, in the context of the committee structure and broader questions of governance at the college, the members discussed matters related to the areas of jurisdiction of the faculty, which center on the academic mission; areas in which staff have greater expertise and which the faculty should have a formal or informal advisory role; and areas in which the faculty should not have an advisory role, but should be informed. The members concurred that of central importance is gaining greater clarity about the realms in which the faculty has decision-making authority, and those in which it does not. Admission and financial aid is a good example, it was noted. While faculty play a role in setting policy, professors do not have the necessary expertise to make admissions decisions. Admissions staff, who have the background and expertise needed for this work, are charged with doing so. S. Pierce commented that she has learned that Amherst has a tradition of faculty involvement in operational areas of the college that is somewhat unusual in comparison to its peers. She noted that the current committee structure has evolved in this context, and, in her view, has led to an overabundance of committees and a sense among some faculty that service is a burden and that their time is not being used effectively.

S. Pierce encouraged the members to consider changes that could lead to more impactful, satisfying, and efficient uses of faculty time. She noted, for example, that she agreed with a point raised previously that faculty do not necessarily need to spend their time in regular committee meetings, in order to be consulted and/or informed about areas such as the admission, college budgetary matters, the library, or IT. Professor Clotfelter said that it is important to distinguish, from a faculty point of view, between being informed by being presented with information under the guise of being consulted, actually being consulted, and having the power to make a decision. He asked S. Pierce if she could provide an example of a matter of institutional importance that is not strictly within the faculty's purview, for which the faculty would have a formal consulting role. She offered the example of strategic planning. In regard to an informal advisory role, she suggested the scenario of the president asking for some faculty members' input about the hiring of a candidate for a senior-staff position.

Discussion turned to the definitions of faculty governance and shared governance, including distinctions between them and the critical role that the faculty plays in both realms. S. Pierce shared her understanding of the terms, which is informed by the definitions of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). *Faculty governance* pertains to how the faculty conducts its own business, e.g., through faculty committees and faculty meetings, S. Pierce noted. *Shared governance* pertains to the relationship of the board of trustees, the president, and the faculty, she said. Specifically, boards of trustees legally have fiduciary responsibility for the governance and welfare of the college or university they serve. They delegate operational responsibilities to the president, who in turn delegates administrative operations to senior staff and primary, albeit recommending, responsibility for academic matters such as the curriculum, academic standards, faculty hiring, and recommendations for tenure and promotion to the faculty. In healthy institutions, boards and presidents generally give deference to the collective wisdom of the faculty when it comes to academic matters, S. Pierce commented. Continuing, she noted that, in keeping with this practice of delegating academic matters to the faculty, many boards and presidents have over the years subscribed, sometimes formally and sometimes informally, to the *Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities (1966)*, which was jointly formulated by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), the American Council on Education (ACE), and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB). The 1966 statement calls for presidents and boards to approve faculty recommendations unless the institution's resources (human and financial) will not support what is being recommended, when the recommendation runs counter to the institution's mission, or when timing is a problem. In such instances, the AAUP asks that the president or board explain to the faculty the basis for their decision. The AAUP also argues that tenured faculty can only be let go for cause or in the event of financial exigency.

The committee found this information to be quite useful. The members stressed that, for faculty governance to function effectively, it is essential that colleagues trust and respect one another. It was agreed that a culture in which committees spend a great deal of time thinking through important matters deliberatively and thoroughly—only to have recommendations attacked and/or dismissed by the full faculty—can be frustrating

and demoralizing. The members suggested that offering faculty more time to reflect on the work of committees before proposals come to the faculty floor could help break this pattern, and they concurred that placing greater confidence in colleagues' work and having more respect for their efforts is essential. Finding ways to foster informal, iterative interactions among colleagues about committees' recommendations—prior to more formal consideration at faculty meetings—could also have a positive impact, it was noted.

Much of the remainder of the conversation involved brainstorming about ways to streamline the committee structure—with the points raised earlier in the meeting informing the members' initial thoughts. In regard to splitting the Committee of Six, the committee reiterated its support for constituting two separate committees—one that would serve as an executive committee of the faculty, and the other that would focus on reappointment, tenure, and promotion. (The minutes of [the committee's meeting of December 9, 2021](#) include a discussion of the members' views on this matter.) The committee agreed to bring a proposal to the faculty this spring to establish a separate tenure and promotion committee. If approved, that committee could begin work in the summer of 2022, it was noted. Its charge would be clear. In regard to the executive committee, which some felt should be called the governance committee, the members continued to believe that the body should function as the Committee of Six does now, with the exception of carrying out work surrounding faculty personnel processes. The central focus of this body's efforts in the next academic year, it was agreed, should be to bring forward a proposal for a charge for itself. The members continued to support the idea of these proposals being conceived as three-year pilots. Having the members of this year's Committee of Six who are eligible to continue their service next year join either the executive/governance committee or the tenure and promotion committee would be desirable for the sake of continuity, it was noted. All agreed that considering the process for selecting the tenure and promotion committee and its make-up will be important matters for this year's Committee of Six to consider and bring to the faculty.

To facilitate this work, the members concurred that S. Pierce should create a draft committee structure as a starting point for the Committee of Six's deliberations. S. Pierce agreed to do so and said that she would bring to this work a focus on committees that would advocate for the resources that faculty need, in order to continue to engage in research of the highest quality and excellence in teaching, advising, and mentoring students. President Martin expressed support for this approach, commenting on the need for faculty focus to be on important matters that are at the core of the academic mission, including those that touch on the most important issues facing higher education today—for example, creating equity across an increasingly diverse faculty and protecting academic freedom. She noted the threat posed by concentrating faculty time on potentially unnecessary and laborious processes that impinge on such work. A broad conversation followed about the ways in which some structural barriers, and a tendency toward incremental approaches, can limit the college's ability to effect significant change at Amherst—including in response to emerging issues. Most members concurred that a comprehensive review of the *Faculty Handbook*, with the goal of rethinking processes and procedures that can constrain flexibility and slow progress, could lead to important changes for the better in the realm of faculty and shared governance at the college.

Concluding the session with S. Pierce, the committee stressed the importance of bringing a positive framework to the work ahead—celebrating what works well, as well as engaging in critiques, and striving to bring constituencies together.

The members thanked S. Pierce and she left the meeting at 4:00 P.M. The remainder of the meeting was devoted to personnel matters.

The meeting adjourned at 4:12 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Provost and Dean of the Faculty

The fifteenth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2021–2022 was called to order by President Martin via Zoom at 10:00 A.M. on Thursday, December 16, 2021. Present, in addition to the president, were Professors Clotfelter, Manion, Martini, Schroeder Rodríguez, Umphrey, and Vaughan; Provost and Dean of the Faculty Epstein; and Associate Provost Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with the president informing the members that some peer schools, taking into account predictions that the highly transmissible Omicron variant of the COVID-19 virus may become prevalent by January, will be moving to remote teaching and learning during January. She noted the current troubling upward trend of COVID-19 cases on campus, in the state, nationally, and internationally. Depending on what happens with the virus, the Health Readiness Group and Senior Staff may need to consider doing the same, or taking other steps to de-densify the campus during January. As she had noted earlier, the college does not have sufficient staffing in Health Services or Student Affairs, or the isolation capacity, to meet the needs of the three hundred to five hundred students who will be on campus during January, should there be a major outbreak—such as that experienced by Cornell recently. The president informed the members that some staff in Student Affairs have been working without a break for two years and will be taking some well-deserved time off in January, another factor that needs to be taken into account. On the other hand, even if all staff were working, there would still not be sufficient resources available. Professor Manion asked why plans call for so many students to be on campus in January. Provost Epstein explained that around 160 students are set to take in-person classes, and others will be doing thesis work in labs and studios, for example. In addition, some international students will not be able to travel, due to various travel restrictions associated with COVID-19; other students have no other place to go during January. In addition, some winter athletes will also be on campus. Some members wondered whether it is wise to continue with athletics during this time. President Martin said that this issue will be considered, along with many others, notably with NESCAC (New England Small College Athletic Conference) presidents, taking into account the latest data about the spread of the virus.

Turning briefly to the subject of student mental health needs, the president noted the challenges students face when isolated in a hotel room at the Rodeway Inn. She worries about the impact of this experience on them. Professors Umphrey and Martini wondered whether students placed in isolation because of COVID-19 could spend time together, given that they already have the virus. President Martin said that she will look into this matter.

Conversation returned to the topic of the academic calendar for the next academic year. Provost Epstein noted that the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) has expressed concerns about the Committee of Six's proposal to have Monday classes running on the Wednesday start date (August 31) and not to hold classes on Labor Day, and the impact of doing so. If adopted, this proposal would lead to a scenario in which some classes (in particular, Monday seminars and labs) that would meet on the first Wednesday (August 31) would not meet again until September 12, the last day of the add-drop period. In addition, some Five-College students would likely miss more than one class under this schedule. With the university's later start, it would be a challenge for UMass students to be settled in their residence halls and be ready to take classes on August 31, the provost noted. The members wondered if students who had classes late in the day would be able to add or drop courses on September 12, as some classes could end after the 5:00 P.M. deadline. The provost said that the registrar's office will assist students in this situation individually, preferring to offer exceptions and not to extend the add-drop period for all students. The committee, while acknowledging these issues, still felt that preserving the Labor Day holiday is very important, particularly for staff morale. Some members asked if other schools have classes on Labor Day. The provost said that this is not uncommon. Some members commented that no other Five-College institution plans to have classes on Labor Day. Professor Schroeder Rodríguez, who agreed with the Committee of Six's proposal, asked how students would be informed that a Monday schedule would be followed on the first day of class, which would be on Wednesday. Provost Epstein

said that the Office of Student Affairs and the Office of the Registrar will send numerous messages to students, shifting one day's schedule to a different day has happened many times before; it is a regular occurrence at UMass, she noted. It was agreed that the Committee of Six's proposed calendar should be brought to a vote. (Later, concerns about the Committee of Six's proposal led the provost to inform the members that the CEP would like to weigh in, and that the faculty's vote would be delayed until January or beyond.) The remainder of the meeting was devoted to personnel matters.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Provost and Dean of the Faculty

The sixteenth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2021–2022 was called to order by President Martin via Zoom at 2:30 P.M. on Monday, January 31, 2022. Present via Zoom, in addition to the president, were Professors Clotfelter, Manion, Martini, Schroeder Rodríguez, Umphrey, and Vaughan; Provost and Dean of the Faculty Epstein; and Associate Provost Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with President Martin posing the following questions and asking the members to take a few minutes to record their responses: What are you doing when you are doing what you consider to be your best work? What is happening at the moments when you think Amherst is at its best? What excites and/or inspires you in those moments? Once the committee had completed this exercise, President Martin explained that she is requesting that everyone who leads meetings at the college in the coming weeks ask these same questions of those who attend. Plans call for responses to be provided, perhaps via a Google drive or another mechanism, without individuals' names, and for the submissions to be compiled and made available to the community. The purpose of undertaking this simple exercise, the president said, is to encourage students, faculty, and staff to take time to reflect on positive experiences as a way of getting at what members of the community value. This, she believes, will also help in the upcoming transition. The president thanked the members for participating in this effort.

Conversation turned briefly to the academic calendar for 2022–2023. Provost Epstein informed the members that, as they may have observed, she had not forwarded the Committee of Six's proposed calendar to the faculty for an electronic vote, following the committee's meeting of December 16, the last of the fall semester, when the calendar had been discussed. The provost reminded the members that the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) had expressed concerns about the Committee of Six's modifications to the CEP's proposed calendar, specifically the idea of having Monday classes running on the Wednesday start date (August 31) and not holding classes on Labor Day. The CEP continues to feel that this schedule would be disruptive, the provost explained. If it were to be adopted, some classes (in particular, Monday seminars and labs) that would meet on the first Wednesday (August 31) would not meet again until September 12, the last day of the add-drop period. The members of the CEP feel that the Committee of Six should have referred the calendar back to the CEP, so that the Committee of Six's proposed modifications could be considered. The CEP has now discussed this matter again and continues to feel that [its calendar proposal](#) should be brought to the faculty for a vote.

The provost noted that, in response to the Committee of Six's concern about staff members working on Labor Day, Kate Harrington, chief human resources officer, convened a group of staff members from across the college to discuss this issue. Provost Epstein noted that the number of staff members who work on Labor Day is not insignificant, and that many staff colleagues would need to work on Labor Day—supporting students and preparing for the start of classes—whether classes are held on the holiday or not. Thus far, feedback from staff members suggests that individuals recognize that there are reasons that they need to work on Labor Day, including the need for the semester to end early enough for students to get home for the holidays, and are not opposed to doing so. Frustration seems to arise, however, when staff are not recognized for working on Labor Day or other holidays. Currently, non-exempt staff (who are paid hourly) are paid double-time on holidays, but it is often not otherwise acknowledged that they are working on holidays. Provost Epstein said that the college is assessing ways to acknowledge exempt staff (who are salaried) and are required to work on holidays, as well as employees who take on additional work assignments, as there are financial implications associated with various approaches to doing so. K. Harrington will make a recommendation about the issue, Provost Epstein expects; in the meantime, she suggested that classes be held on Labor Day and that the CEP's calendar proposal be forwarded to the faculty. It was agreed that a faculty meeting should be held on February 15, and that the calendar proposal should be on the agenda.

The members next considered some committee nominations, including those for a memorial minute committee for Jim Maraniss, Professor of Spanish, Emeritus, who died on January 9, 2022. The members then approved the following faculty meeting dates for spring: February 15, March 1, April 5, April 19,

May 3, May 17, and May 26 (9:00 A.M.). Provost Epstein noted that degrees will be voted electronically, due to the semester ending later than is typical because of changes to the academic calendar necessitated by the pandemic.

Under “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Manion said that it has been brought to her attention by several students that there were incidents of assault, harassment, and stalking on campus, and that they felt Amherst was unsafe and the institution was not responsive. They further alerted her to posts on Instagram of anonymized descriptions of incidents of sexual harassment and assault that they say have been committed at the college by Amherst students against other Amherst students. These postings are heartbreaking, she commented. Professor Manion asked the president if she could provide more information about what is taking place and how the college will respond, including what faculty can do to support students. President Martin said that she has also read these devastating narratives of dating violence, stalking, rape, and other forms of abuse. Laurie Frankl, Title IX coordinator, has reached out on Instagram, but the students using the page have not, to her knowledge, responded to her suggestion of including a posting from the college about resources and support that is available. The president informed the members that she would soon be announcing that there will be a comprehensive review of the issue of sexual misconduct and assault on campus. ([This communication was sent on February 3.](#)) President Martin explained that the seriousness of the accounts on social media and concerns that have been conveyed in other venues necessitate action. She noted in this context that she has been informed that the upcoming report of the [Campus Safety Advisory Committee](#) will include serious concerns about sexual misconduct on campus. The president commented that, in 2012, she had commissioned a report on sexual misconduct at Amherst, in response to numerous student accounts that resembled those that have been posted on social media recently. At that time, students described major problems in the college’s response to their reports. Since then, significant changes in staffing, policies, procedures, and practices have been implemented, and additional resources have been provided. Still, sexual misconduct continues to occur and often goes unreported, the president noted. She stressed the importance of bolstering efforts in the realms of prevention, education, self-assessment, and of holding individuals and the community accountable for upholding a culture of respect and responsibility at Amherst.

Continuing, President Martin said that the college has once again engaged Gina Maisto Smith and Leslie Gomez, leaders of a national practice dedicated to improving institutional responses to sexual misconduct, who led the 2012 review. At that time, the president said, she had also formed a committee of faculty, staff, students, and trustees, which was chaired by Margaret Hunt, a professor of history and women’s, sexuality, and gender studies, who has since left the college. In 2013, that committee submitted a report titled [Toward a Culture of Respect: The Problem of Sexual Misconduct at Amherst College](#). All of the recommendations from that report were implemented. President Martin informed the members that, as part of the upcoming review, [G. Smith and L. Gomez](#) will hold listening sessions with students and review policies and practices relating to sexual misconduct and Title IX at the college (more details are included in the president’s announcement). The members thanked President Martin for her vigorous response to this critical issue. They also expressed the view that faculty members would welcome having additional training on the requirements surrounding reporting, which is mandatory, and how to approach this sensitive issue when they learn of incidents of sexual misconduct at the college. Continuing to gain greater clarity about their role and responsibilities, and the processes and support that are in place, would be most helpful to colleagues, the committee agreed.

At 3:00 P.M., consultant Susan Pierce joined the meeting. As a follow-up to her discussion with the committee on December 15, 2021, she has developed a preliminary proposal for a possible committee structure for the members’ consideration, as requested. The goal of this effort, it had been agreed, should be to streamline the committee structure, recognizing that faculty time should be allocated to matters where the faculty has primary responsibility, and where the faculty’s contributions are most

consequential. Any new structure should lead to more impactful, satisfying, and efficient uses of faculty time—taking into account the best practices of shared governance, all concurred. S. Pierce noted that information gleaned from the faculty survey about service, which was administered in October of 2021, as well as from her many conversations with faculty, staff, and the Committee of Six, guided her efforts to develop the proposal she would discuss today. The consultant informed the members that both of these mechanisms for gathering feedback had revealed that a significant number of Amherst faculty—particularly associate and assistant professors—view service as a burden that reduces the time they have available to devote to teaching and scholarship.

Continuing, S. Pierce reviewed the definition of *shared governance* (see the Committee of Six minutes of December 15 for an earlier discussion of this topic). She reiterated that *shared governance* is conventionally defined as the relationship among the board of trustees, the president, and the faculty and noted the following: that the board has ultimate fiduciary responsibility for the governance and welfare of the college and delegates primary operational responsibility for the college to the president; that the president recommends primary, albeit often recommending responsibility, for academic matters to the faculty; and that this responsibility generally includes teaching, scholarship, advising, the curriculum, educational policies, academic standards, faculty hiring, tenure and promotion. The standing committees of the faculty, S. Pierce explained, should focus on these areas. She noted that the president also delegates operational responsibility for administrative matters to the senior administration and commented that members of the faculty should also serve in a formal consulting role to the president and, in some instances, to the board in matters of institutional importance such as changes in the institutional mission; strategic planning; operating and capital budgets related to the academic programs; diversity, equity, and inclusion work; student academic support services; the design of academic buildings; the academic calendar; and student retention and graduation rates. In other areas, S. Pierce said, faculty may be asked to play an informal advisory role. These might include policies relating to admissions and financial aid; the library; educational technology; athletics; appointments of senior academic administrators; course scheduling; and fundraising for academic programs, faculty, and facilities. Finally, she noted, there are areas about which the faculty (as well as the staff and, in many instances, students) should be informed.

In elaborating on *faculty governance*, S. Pierce commented that the faculty has responsibility for conducting the business of the faculty. As an example, she noted, the faculty creates appropriate committees to conduct faculty business and develops charges for these bodies. The elected leadership of the faculty ensures that faculty meetings and faculty committees are focused on significant matters, such as ensuring that the quality of teaching, scholarship, and academic support services are of the highest quality.

S. Pierce then turned to the role of staff in college governance. She noted that Amherst has appointed senior leaders with high levels of expertise in their areas of responsibility. As a result, some faculty have expressed the view that the college no longer needs standing faculty committees in those areas that are not the primary responsibility of the faculty, and where there is significant administrative expertise. These areas include, for example, admission, financial aid, the library, technology, and benefits. The consultant said that some members of the faculty have expressed the view that the major value of service on these committees is that professors are informed about some key aspects of the college; several suggested, however, that senior administrators might—once a year or maybe once a semester—hold informational sessions for faculty and staff who are interested in learning more about these areas. In addition, interested faculty could offer to serve in a more informal advisory role to administrators who would turn to them when they wanted faculty input. S. Pierce told the committee that she had numerous conversations with members of the faculty and the administration to learn their views about the aspects of faculty service that are consequential and which areas are ably handled by members of the administration and staff. The members thanked S. Pierce for her recommendations,

which they supported for the most part, and then discussed her proposal, which she had shared with them prior to the meeting.

A centerpiece of the consultant's recommendations, based on the Committee of Six's own recommendation, is to replace the current Committee of Six with two new committees—a committee on reappointment, tenure, and promotion and a faculty executive committee. Under the proposal, the responsibilities of the Committee on Priorities and Resources (CPR) would be folded into the new executive committee, as would some other work that currently falls under other committees. The new structure would also feature four standing committees (the Committee on Reappointment, Tenure, and Promotion; the Faculty Executive Committee; the Committee on Educational Policy; and the Committee on Adjudication), a small number of committees that would include faculty members in an advisory role, and a number of specialized committees (largely in the sciences), most of which must be in place as a matter of compliance with external regulations. A significant number of committees would be decommissioned, under the plan.

As a general matter, the members expressed enthusiasm for S. Pierce's bold approach to bringing about a transformation of the committee structure, preferring it over a more cautious and incremental proposal that might place emphasis on refinement. It was agreed that ensuring that the committee structure is built around the areas in which the faculty has primary responsibility, and/or on areas in which academic interests warrant that the faculty be assured a role in any related conversations. The committee noted that the proposal relies on establishing a sense of clarity about these areas of responsibility, which is very important. S. Pierce concurred. She noted that, in regard to decision-making authority, the faculty may choose to vote on anything it wishes to, but the faculty may play a deciding role only in areas of primary responsibility, for example, surrounding the curriculum. Faculty input may also be sought on other questions that require institutional decisions, but the faculty may not have the prerogative to vote on these matters.

S. Pierce asked whether the members would like to suggest changes to the proposal. Referencing the proposal to decommission the Committee on Education and Athletics and the Faculty Committee on Admission and Financial Aid, Professor Umphrey commented that, over many years (most recently through the efforts of the Ad Hoc Faculty Committee on Athletics in 2018), the faculty has taken a great interest in matters that fall under the charges of these two committees—which touch upon the academic mission and the faculty's role in setting policies surrounding the standards for admission. She asked how the faculty will be able to weigh in and have an impact on these matters if these standing committees are decommissioned. S. Pierce noted that charging ad hoc committees that include faculty will allow for this, as will strengthening the role of the faculty athletics representative (FAR).

Continuing, Professor Umphrey commented that, with the Supreme Court taking up the issue of affirmative action in the fall, she anticipates that there will be very serious questions to consider on the horizon. Decommissioning these two standing committees could leave a gap in the faculty's ability to do so effectively, she suggested. S. Pierce commented that an ad hoc committee can have the same standing as a permanent committee and often has more visibility. As an example, an ad hoc committee could be charged with exploring the implications of a Supreme Court decision and making recommendations to the faculty executive committee and the president, S. Pierce noted. Some members wondered how—if there were no standing committees involved—there would be oversight over the implementation of any recommendations that might be adopted. S. Pierce said that such oversight would be the responsibility of the faculty executive committee, with support from the provost's office, in regard to keeping track of where recommendations stand. Professor Martini expressed support for this idea, noting that, if the Committee of Six is freed from considering personnel matters, it would have time for this work.

Concluding the discussion about the role of ad hoc committees, S. Pierce acknowledged that she heard from some faculty that ad hoc committees at Amherst do not seem to have as much impact as standing committees. Her own experience has shown her that this is often not the case, however. President

Martin agreed that ad hoc committees can bring a great deal of focus and thought to the examination of an issue, without becoming bogged down with quotidian matters, and that these bodies have had an impact at the college. She noted, for example, that the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Faculty Committee on Athletics helped lead to athletics teams at the college becoming somewhat more diverse and to a limited reduction in the number of recruited athletes. S. Pierce noted that the college could always try the approach of reducing the number of standing committees and charging ad hoc committees, as needed, for several years. Changes in the committee structure could always be made, and the executive committee could monitor the effectiveness of this approach over time.

Continuing the conversation about S. Pierce's proposal, the members discussed how student input could be solicited if committees that now have student representation are decommissioned. It was agreed that it is important to think further about this issue. Provost Epstein suggested that, perhaps, the Office of Student Affairs (OSA) could consider establishing a student advisory committee that could serve as a sounding board for faculty and administrators. She agreed to consult with the OSA about this issue. The members discussed whether the Community Standards Review Board should be decommissioned, as S. Pierce proposed, given that the body addresses cases of those accused of academic dishonesty. It was noted that some faculty prefer not to be part of adjudicating these cases, as they may have a student who has been involved in one in their classes after the resolution of the case. Another possibility is relying on the class deans, the provost noted, though they may also face the same issue of having students who are accused of academic dishonesty in their classes at a later time. Provost Epstein, who commented that all appeals regarding such cases go to the provost, ensuring faculty oversight, said that she would discuss the matter of faculty representation and input in regard to cases of academic dishonesty with colleagues in the OSA. After the members raised similar concerns about the proposal to decommission the Committee on Academic Standing and Special Majors, the provost said that she would discuss this issue with the OSA as well. It was agreed that it is important to have a college-wide policy regarding plagiarism, rather than leaving this topic to departments. Provost Epstein commented that there should be a faculty discussion about this issue more broadly, as it is a longstanding concern.

Moving forward, the members agreed that it is important to remember that faculty responses to the survey on service that was conducted in October—including the expression of dissatisfaction with the current system—have shaped S. Pierce's proposal. The members decided that it would be helpful to share with the faculty more information about the survey responses, while continuing to protect those of individual faculty. The committee agreed that it would be most useful to get the faculty's feedback on the committee-structure proposal, particularly on the idea of splitting the Committee of Six into two separate committees as a first step. The committee decided that a committee-of-the-whole discussion about the proposal, which would include a presentation by S. Pierce, should be on the agenda for the February 15 faculty meeting. The members agreed that after learning the faculty's views on the question of whether the Committee of Six should be split, the committee could then think about specifics in regard to how a tenure, reappointment, and promotion committee should be selected, and its make-up, to inform a future motion that would be brought to the faculty. The members asked S. Pierce to provide information about the features of tenure and promotion committees at peer institutions, and she agreed to do so. She also agreed to prepare a memo to the faculty that, along with an expanded summary of survey results, could accompany the faculty meeting agenda. The members thanked S. Pierce and she left the meeting at 4:00 P.M. The members turned briefly to a personnel matter.

Returning to "Questions from Committee Members," Professor Clotfelter asked a number of questions that were prompted by [an opinion piece, titled "Forging a Partnership between Amherst College and Amherst Schools,"](#) that appeared in the *Daily Hampshire Gazette* on January 27, 2022. He noted that some members of the Amherst college community have signed a petition to request that the college provide greater financial support to the local public schools. Professor Clotfelter asked the president if the college is considering doing so. The president responded that the college provides financial support

to the public schools on an annual basis. She noted that, as a non-profit institution, Amherst faces a number of complexities and limitations when it comes to making gifts to other non-profit organizations. Separate and apart from these issues, which revolve around the college's status as a non-profit entity, Amherst must consider the views that donors and those paying tuition hold about using Amherst College funds for purposes other than to support the college. She noted that the recent donations that the college made to the Jones Library and the Drake were one-time gifts that were made in honor of Amherst's bicentennial. Professor Martini wondered if, by providing some funding to support the construction of a local public school that will be highly energy efficient, Amherst would benefit by offsetting some of the college's carbon footprint—which is keeping with the college's climate action plan. This would bring benefits both to the college and the town, she noted. The president said that this is a possibility and that the college has been considering it.

The committee next discussed whether to constitute an ad hoc committee to evaluate January term. The provost noted that, in addition to [the note sent in early December by a number of faculty signatories requesting that the faculty discuss adopting a January term as part of the academic calendar](#), she has received a number of notes from individual faculty members expressing enthusiasm for January term, as well as commentary from staff members, noting the challenges surrounding January term. Professor Vaughan expressed support for charging an ad hoc committee to evaluate the January term, while Professor Manion wondered whether the CEP or the Committee of Six should undertake this evaluation. Provost Epstein conveyed that the CEP has a full plate this semester, and also suggested that the Committee of Six might also be too busy to undertake this work. Other members agreed and felt that it would be best to charge an ad hoc committee with conducting a comprehensive review and assessment of January term and considering the question of whether January term—in the current or an alternative form—should be adopted as a feature of Amherst's academic calendar going forward.

The committee noted the support of some faculty for adopting a January term, as well as the challenges that staff members have faced during January term and the general lack of infrastructure at the college to support this endeavor. The members agreed that the ad hoc committee should be asked to evaluate the opportunities that January term affords in such realms as teaching and learning; the curriculum and co-curriculum; student life; community engagement; and faculty and staff workload, as well as any disadvantages associated with January term in these and other areas, including whether the college has the infrastructure in place to support students, faculty, and staff during January term, in its current form. The experiences of students, faculty, and staff during the January terms offered in 2021 and 2022 should be used as an important measure of the benefits and limitations of January term, the members noted. It was agreed that questions that the ad hoc committee will address include January term's impact on the availability of courses in the fall and spring semester because of shifts in faculty teaching loads; the format of January term (hybrid, in-person, fully remote); issues surrounding academic credit and other academic policies; and the possible compression of the academic calendar. The committee also decided to request that the ad hoc committee consider the feasibility of offering January term in the current form, in the future, from an administrative and resource perspective. The committee also felt that the ad hoc committee should consider other options for offering an intellectually vibrant experience for students and faculty during some or all of the period between the fall and spring semesters, including offering courses that are shorter in duration and less intensive that would not be credit-bearing.

Continuing the discussion, the members also decided, that in undertaking its work, the ad committee should be tasked with consulting broadly with faculty, students, and staff members across the college—including but not limited to students who took courses, engaged in research on campus, and/or were employed and/or remained on campus to meet other purposes or needs during January term; faculty who taught and/or supervised honors students during January term; and staff in the Office of Student Affairs, the Office of the Registrar, the Office of Institutional Research, the Center for Teaching and

Learning, academic departments, the science center, the Office of Admission; the Finance Office, and Campus Operations, among other areas. The members noted that the ad hoc committee should also be asked to gather the views of the community via surveys and feedback gleaned from interviews with individuals and groups and to seek information from peer institutions that offer January terms.

Conversation turned to the membership of the committee. The members expressed a preference for having the following make-up: three faculty members; one member of the instructional staff who supported faculty during January term, the chief student affairs officer, or her designee(s); the interim chief financial officer; the director of institutional research and registrar services; and two students, each of whom took a January-term course. It was agreed that the ad hoc committee should meet weekly during the spring 2022 semester and should be asked to share its report, which will include its recommendations, with the CEP by May 1, 2022. The CEP would then be asked to forward its views on the ad hoc committee's proposals to the Committee of Six by May 15, 2022. The members agreed to bring a motion regarding January term to the faculty by the conclusion of the 2021–2022 academic year. Provost Epstein noted that, if a proposal to have January term in the next academic year is accepted, the calendar being proposed would allow for this. The committee agreed to consider nominations for faculty to serve on the ad hoc committee at its next meeting, noting that it might be helpful to have a former member of the Ad Hoc Faculty Committee on Academic Structures during COVID-19 serve, as that body proposed having a January term during the 2020–2021 and 2021–2022 academic year.

President Martin left the meeting at 4:45 P.M. The members then turned briefly to committee nominations. With little time remaining, the members discussed a [Statement on Remote Teaching and Learning](#) and [letter about this statement](#) that was forwarded by the CEP. Professor Umphrey commented that she finds the statement to be thoughtful and compelling, particularly its second and third points, which she sees as supporting an equalizing infrastructure of the college. Professor Manion said that she found the statement to be backward-looking and reactionary and said that it places restrictions on academic freedom, commenting that many of the key issues raised by the faculty signatories in [the letter that was sent to the Committee of Six in the fall](#) have been ignored in the CEP's document. She is not in favor of the statement for these reasons. Provost Epstein commented that it would be helpful to have a statement on online learning that would represent the consensus of the faculty on this matter. Ideally, the faculty would vote on such a statement. With its statement, the CEP is essentially acknowledging that the statement and ideas expressed in the faculty signatories' letter are incompatible with CEP's own views about the place of remote teaching at a residential liberal arts college, the provost said. She noted that policies allowing for remote teaching were developed during an emergency under highly unusual circumstances, and that they have not been formalized via regular faculty governance processes. With the hour growing late, the members agreed to return to this issue at the committee's next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Provost and Dean of the Faculty

The seventeenth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2021–2022 was called to order by President Martin via Zoom at 2:30 P.M. on Monday, February 7, 2022. Present via Zoom, in addition to the president, were Professors Clotfelter, Manion, Martini, Schroeder Rodríguez, Umphrey, and Vaughan; Provost and Dean of the Faculty Epstein; and Associate Provost Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with Professor Umphrey asking whether the *Faculty Handbook* has been updated to reflect the changes to the college's housing program policies that were adopted at the end of last semester, and whether these changes will be communicated to the faculty (beyond the minutes of the committee's discussions about this topic). She also inquired whether notification of houses that are being put up for sale will be given anytime soon. Associate Provost Tobin said that the [description of the housing program](#) in the *Faculty Handbook* is up to date, with the exception of a couple of outstanding details that are still being resolved. Provost Epstein said that she would check in with Jim Brassord, chief of campus operations, and report back about when information about houses that are for sale will be shared.

Continuing with questions, Professor Clotfelter expressed concern over a problem involving two National Science Foundation (NSF) grants, which affected two members of the faculty in very significant ways, and about the processes that will be in place going forward to try to prevent such a problem from happening again. Provost Epstein explained that complications resulting from a new registration requirement for doing business with the federal government (including grant submissions), set by the System for Award Management (SAM), and representing a change to a longstanding process, led to this problem. As a result, Amherst's registration status was not active for a brief period; meeting the new requirement required certain steps that took some time to complete, she noted. As a result, an NSF program officer declined to allow one faculty member to submit a grant proposal in this round of applications. Another colleague faced a number of challenges with an award that was already in progress. Ultimately, that issue was resolved, and the grant award is moving forward. Provost Epstein commented that this episode was serious, very unfortunate, and very frustrating, and she apologized on behalf of the college. The provost said that safeguards are being put in place to prevent an issue of this kind from occurring in the future. Professor Clotfelter suggested that it might be helpful to take a close look at the structure of the Grants Office at the college to ensure that it is optimal. The provost responded that this process is already under way. Associate Provost Jack Cheney, who is overseeing the Grants Office until a new director is hired, is working with colleagues on a self-study of both the Grants Office and the research administration function, which resides in the Office of the Controller—the first step in an external review that will be conducted by the [National Council of University Research Administrators \(NCURA\)](#). It is hoped that a visiting team will come to the college in May and that its report will be available by the end of May. The provost also informed the members that the Office of the Controller is considering adding another individual to the office to handle the accounting side of the grant process, allowing Darlene Sliwa, the research administrator, who works half time, to focus solely on compliance. Provost Epstein noted that the period of transition in the Grants Office presents an opportunity to take a fresh look at the structure and procedures of the grants and research administration function. Professor Clotfelter thanked the provost for undertaking this effort.

Professor Vaughan next asked the provost for an update on hiring for vacant positions in the area of information technology at the college. Provost Epstein said that she understands that it continues to be challenging to fill some vacant positions because of the many opportunities that are open to those in the field. She said that she would check in with David Hamilton, chief of information technology, about this issue and report back to the members.

Professor Martini inquired about the procedure used to reappoint senior lecturers at the college, commenting that reviewing teaching evaluations and submitting a departmental recommendation every five years—often over an Amherst career that spans decades—seems unnecessarily onerous for department(s). The process is onerous for senior lecturers, as well, she noted. The provost said that, as

the appointment of lecturers increases at the college, as an approach to addressing enrollment pressures in introductory courses within certain areas of the curriculum, a number of issues surrounding lecturers should be reviewed. Professor Schroeder Rodríguez concurred and suggested that the consideration be given to changing the title from *lecturer* to *assistant or associate professor of teaching*. Other institutions use these titles, and he feels that they convey this position's focus on teaching and would help colleagues feel more respected for their work.

Conversation turned briefly to the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP)'s proposal for the [academic calendar for 2022–2023](#). Provost Epstein said that she is hesitant to hold up a vote on the calendar any longer because of the issue of how to recognize staff who work on Labor day and other holidays (see details in the members' earlier discussion of this topic in the committee's minutes of January 31, 2022). As noted at the meeting of January 31, Kate Harrington, chief human resources officer, is examining this issue, but it will take some time. Staff members who have been consulted have said that they are not averse to working on Labor day, as long as their work is recognized in appropriate ways. In order to allow the semester to end in time for students to get home before the holidays, Provost Epstein said that she would like to bring the calendar forward to the faculty for a vote on February 15. Under the proposed calendar, classes would be held on Labor Day. In regard to recognizing staff, the members agreed that doing so should include a financial component, if possible. Provost Epstein said that the college is exploring how additional financial compensation could be included for exempt (salaried) staff in ways that meet legal requirements. Non-exempt staff (who are paid hourly) are already compensated. President Martin noted that, if such compensation is regularized, the funding to support this effort must be included in the college's budget. She expressed support for compensating staff who work on holidays, as did the committee. The members then voted six in favor and zero opposed on the substance of the calendar proposal and six in favor and zero opposed to forward the motion to approve the calendar to the faculty.

At 3:00 P.M., consultant Susan Resneck Pierce joined the meeting. In preparation for the February 15 faculty meeting in which she would give a presentation during a committee-of-the-whole conversation, S. Pierce reviewed with the committee a [memo to the faculty](#) that she had provided about her proposals surrounding the structure of committees at the college. The intention was to send the memo to the faculty, along with the agenda for the faculty meeting. Ahead of the Committee of Six's meeting, at the committee's request, S. Pierce also shared information about the features of tenure and promotion committees at some peer institutions.

The members then considered some questions that might arise surrounding the proposal to split the Committee of Six into two separate committees—a faculty executive committee and a reappointment, tenure, and promotion committee. For example, would any losses occur if this separation took place? What could be gained? Is it necessary to share at this time an imagined structure and election process for the two committees, in order to consider the question of splitting the Committee of Six? What about a recommendation on whether the president should be present during meetings of the reappointment, tenure, and promotion committee? What about sharing thoughts regarding the meeting schedule for the two committees? Would it be necessary at this time to provide details about the imagined streamlined committee structure? The members agreed that the question of whether to split the Committee of Six could be considered without knowing more details at this time. After gaining a better sense of the faculty's views, the members could work with S. Pierce to focus on such details. The committee also decided that the question of splitting the Committee of Six should be seen as the first phase of a proposal to transform the committee structure.

The members discussed some of the questions shared above in a preliminary way. For example, the provost said that she imagines that the reappointment, tenure, and promotion committee would only meet at certain times of year, when personnel cases would be considered. The executive committee might meet biweekly rather than weekly, as the Committee of Six does now, and have meetings that are

shorter in duration. If this structure were adopted, the president and provost would likely have time in their schedules to attend the meetings of both committees, if desired. The committee asked President Martin for her thoughts about whether the president should continue to attend meetings in which faculty personnel cases are discussed. The president expressed support for continuing with this structure, noting how important it has been for her to listen to the committee's discussions, including its final assessment of each case, in addition to evaluating the candidates' dossiers herself. The process also has helped her learn about the faculty's areas of scholarly and teaching focus, which has been helpful for a variety of reasons—among them getting to know the Amherst faculty, which has been a pleasure—and for her meetings with potential donors who wish to support the academic mission of the college. Several committee members expressed support for continuing to have the president present during faculty personnel deliberations, finding President Martin's reasoning to be compelling.

The committee also discussed in a preliminary way other salient issues vis-à-vis the committee that would focus on faculty personnel processes—e.g., whether a selection process should be put in place to ensure disciplinary diversity on the committee (some members felt this should be done), whether only associate and full professors should serve (most members felt this would be best), the terms of the members (perhaps two years), and some other points. Professor Manion expressed the view that it is not necessary to put new parameters in place. In regard to the executive committee, the members noted the expectation that adopting this structure, with the personnel processes removed from the governance committee's charge, would allow the executive committee to take on a leadership role. In addition, it was noted that, with the reduction of other committees as some of their work is folded into the executive committee, the service responsibility of many faculty members would be reduced under the proposal. The committee agreed that, in splitting the two committees, the intention would not be to create two co-equal committees. The executive committee is envisioned as being the key governance committee of the faculty, it was noted.

Concluding the conversation, the members decided to aim for bringing a motion to split the Committee of Six to the faculty on March 1, taking into account the faculty's response at the February 15 faculty meeting. Another goal will be to bring, later this spring, a proposal for a charge for the reappointment, tenure, and promotion committee and a proposal to revise the committee structure more broadly. The members thanked S. Pierce, and she left the meeting at 3:46 P.M. The committee then turned to personnel matters.

The members next reviewed a [revised version of a charge to the Ad Hoc Committee](#) to Evaluate the January Term that incorporated some of the members' points made the previous week. After approving the charge, the committee selected nominees to serve on the ad hoc committee. Professor Umphrey asked if the idea of having half-credit courses during January should be considered. Provost Epstein responded that adopting this approach should be considered for a variety of reasons, including to allow students with deficiencies to have more opportunities and flexibility to make them up. It was noted that it will be essential to consider the resources that would be needed to mount courses during January, including staffing, and the financial implications more broadly.

The meeting ended with a follow-up conversation about the Statement on [Remote Teaching and Learning](#) and [letter about this statement](#) that were forwarded by the CEP. While most members expressed support for the substance of this statement, they also felt that the ongoing impact of the pandemic could make it challenging to consider the issue of online teaching and learning through a lens that is not colored by the challenges and daily impact of the COVID-19 era. Once this emergency has receded, the faculty would be better situated to take up the matter of the role of technology in teaching, most members felt. At the same time, the president, the provost and most members agreed with the CEP that individual faculty members should not have the discretion to decide to teach remotely, a view of the faculty who had sent a letter to the committee this fall. This letter had prompted the CEP to draft its statement. Taken to an extreme, President Martin noted, remote

instruction could be considered a change in Amherst's mission as a residential liberal arts college that "is committed to learning through close colloquy." The decision to make such a change may well be in the purview of the board of trustees.

Returning to the question of whether to forward CEP's statement to the faculty, Provost Epstein reiterated her view that it would be helpful to have a statement on online learning that would represent the consensus of the faculty on this matter. Ideally, the faculty would vote on such a statement. She noted, as she had during the committee's last discussion, that current policies allowing for remote teaching were developed during an emergency under highly unusual circumstances and have not been formalized via regular faculty governance processes. The members agreed that it would be best, given the current state of the pandemic, because they feel that the current policies are serving college well, and because they do not feel it is urgent to take a vote on the CEP statement, to keep these policies in place—that an instructor may teach online for up to two weeks' worth of classes per semester, as long as the department chair is kept informed of the situation. As the CEP noted, under the policy, the purpose of permitting limited online teaching at Amherst is not for faculty members' convenience; it is to allow faculty to continue teaching under circumstances that otherwise would necessitate classes being canceled.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Provost and Dean of the Faculty

The eighteenth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2021–2022 was called to order by President Martin via Zoom at 2:30 P.M. on Monday, February 21, 2022. Present via Zoom, in addition to the president, were Professors Clotfelter, Manion, Martini, Schroeder Rodríguez, Umphrey, and Vaughan; Provost and Dean of the Faculty Epstein; and Associate Provost Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with the provost—following up on questions asked by Professor Vaughan the previous week—sharing information about the status of hiring in the area of information technology at the college. Provost Epstein informed the members that David Hamilton, chief information officer, has told her that he is about to hire a technology operations specialist and a technology services operations manager. The searches for these positions took longer than anticipated, unfortunately. In addition, interviews are about to begin for the position of associate chief information officer, D. Hamilton informed the provost. In other hiring news, recruitment of a high-performance computing administrator is presenting some challenges, and D. Hamilton said that he is exploring ways to attract a more robust application pool. Unfortunately, two more IT staff members (the assistant to the chief information officer and the IT accessibility specialist) have left the college. The assistant position has been posted and has generated a good pool of candidates, and the IT accessibility specialist position will be listed this month. D. Hamilton has also requested an additional position (systems administrator/integrator) to support IT's work on cybersecurity; in addition, he has asked for a permanent appointment for an academic technology specialist that was originally a term appointment, with the goal of bolstering support for the use of technology in teaching and research.

Under “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Vaughan thanked Provost Epstein for providing this update and then commented on another topic—the rising number of students who have tested positive for COVID-19. He suggested that the provost remind the faculty about strategies for supporting students in their courses who are in isolation. The provost said that she would be happy to resend the email on this topic that she had shared with the faculty prior to the start of the spring semester, which would serve as a reminder. She noted that the most helpful action that faculty can take is to let students know how absences and missed work will be addressed during the period in which students cannot attend class. Many students in isolation are feeling anxious about their academic performance while they are in isolation, the provost noted. She also informed the members that the library would soon be providing suggestions regarding how best to provide reserve material to students in isolation. The members agreed that it is very important that faculty communicate their policies (perhaps via Moodle) to their students, as well as how students can expect to be supported while they are in isolation. (The provost later sent two emails on this subject to the faculty, [one on February 23](#) and [the other on February 25](#).)

Continuing with questions, Professor Umphrey inquired, on behalf of a colleague who has been receiving questions on the subject from students, whether Amherst will make medical abortions available to students and whether the college's insurance will cover this medication. The University of Massachusetts has begun doing so, it was noted, and the *Amherst Student* ran [a piece](#) on this issue. The provost said that she would contact Dr. Emily Jones, director of student health services, and report back to the committee about what she learns.

Turning to another matter, Professor Manion expressed frustration with the college's current data system for tracking whether students have met major and graduation requirements and prerequisites for courses in which they might want to enroll. She noted that the system is cumbersome and archaic and creates challenges for advisors and students, who need this information to be readily accessible. Given that Workday Student is not yet in place, she wonders whether some interim solution might be found, suggesting the use of Google forms, for example, to support the next round of registration. Provost Epstein said that, while Workday will not be a panacea, it is expected to address many of these issues. Putting an interim system in place does not seem workable to her, but she said that she would consult with Jesse Barba, director of institutional research and registrar services, and, if the committee

wishes, would invite him to the next meeting to discuss this issue. The members agreed that it would be helpful to learn more from J. Barba about the possibility of making use of an interim system and the status of Workday Student. Professor Martini said that she had been impressed with some aspects of Workday Student after seeing a preview of some of its features, and said that she is hopeful that the new system will be an improvement. At the same time, she noted that she has found Workday to be a challenge when using the system for some administrative processes. The provost said that the college is continuing to address issues surrounding the implementation of Workday, including considering new strategies to support the administrative work of academic departments that might include new staffing models.

Continuing with questions, Professor Schroeder Rodríguez suggested that [a letter that the committee had received from Professor Rangan](#), which focuses on the service burden of serving as the chair of an academic program, be discussed when the committee next discusses the topic of service. The members agreed.

Discussion turned to the topic of the proposal to divide the Committee of Six into two separate committees—a faculty executive committee and a tenure and promotion committee—and to transform the committee structure more broadly. Most members agreed that views expressed in the committee-of-the-whole conversation at the February 15 faculty meeting suggested that there is support for dividing the Committee of Six, but that more time should be taken to consider possible changes to the committee structure as a whole, particularly in regard to eliminating some major committees. In addition, the members noted that, at the meeting, some tenure-track professors had spoken eloquently to the idea of having a faculty executive committee with broader representation, a possible outcome if the review of reappointment, tenure, and promotion cases is no longer part of the charge of the executive committee. The members agreed that dividing the Committee of Six presents an opportunity to make it feasible for tenure-track faculty to serve on the executive committee and that having broader representation on the executive committee is a worthy goal.

Professor Clotfelter expressed the view that, if the proposal that is brought forward is to split the Committee of Six for a trial period of three years, proposals for broader changes to the committee structure should wait until this period is over and the experiment is assessed. Most members felt that the take away from the discussion at the faculty meeting was that some faculty feel that committees should not be dissolved, but rather the work of committees should be reimagined so that committees can have more of an impact. If an executive committee is created, it could be tasked with taking a careful look at what committees are doing, before any proposal for change is made. Most members agreed that this would be the best approach. The Committee of Six's focus now, most members felt, should be on developing a charge for the Tenure and Promotion Committee. In addition, the committee noted that it would be useful for the Committee of Six at this time to consider changes to the ways in which faculty meetings are conducted, with the goal of creating new approaches that could encourage a broader range of voices to be heard. Professor Schroeder Rodríguez suggested that one approach to gather more feedback from the faculty body might be to use straw polls when considering proposals.

Professor Manion agreed with the other members' view that a proposal to split the Committee of Six should be brought forward at this time, but also thought that the committee should move forward with proposals for further changes and bring them to a vote before the faculty. She argued that there is overwhelming evidence that many faculty members find committee service, in its current form, to be a waste of time. Other members emphasized that they do not think that the work of transforming the committee structure should be abandoned, but that, if such work is undertaken, it requires a more sustained period of deliberation and consultation, in order to be educative and successful and to gain the support of the faculty. Most members felt that charging the executive committee to undertake this effort would lead to the best outcome.

Agreeing with Professor Manion, President Martin commented that creating the impression that a

small number of voices can carry the day, without more meaningful conversation by the body, can limit the effectiveness of faculty governance. As the president had said at the meeting, she was dismayed by the discourse that had characterized the proposal to relieve the faculty's service burden as an attempt by the administration to take power away from the faculty. In her view, it would be best to engage in further conversation about the proposal for a new committee structure by bringing a proposal forward. Of course, the decision is up to the Committee of Six, she noted.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Umphrey agreed that it would be valuable to have more conversation about the role that faculty should play in thinking about areas such as admission and athletics, for example, given the history of the faculty's contributions to considering these and other issues. While the faculty may not have decision-making authority in some areas, it continues to be important for the faculty to have venues in which to foreground its values and to weigh in effectively, she commented. Professor Clotfelter said that he thinks that the focus now should be on bringing a proposal forward to split the Committee of Six, which will involve ironing out the details. Before proposals are brought forward to decommission major committees, he would like to learn more about the role that the faculty plays on these committees. Other members agreed, and noted that the question of how faculty are best informed about significant matters at the college should be considered. It was noted that, historically, through work on committees, faculty have effected change; Professor Martini offered the example of the work of faculty members on the Committee on Priorities and Resources that had led to the current policy on parenting leave for faculty members, which has had a significant positive impact. Professor Manion commented that, if a faculty member has not served on a major committee, the individual would not know how the committee functions. While she learned a great deal from serving on the Faculty Committee on Admission and Financial Aid (FCAFA), for example, she reiterated her view that other ways of informing more faculty about the admission process would be preferable to having a small number of faculty serving on the FCAFA spend hours in committee meetings when they play no role in decision-making. President Martin suggested that the committee might want to consider a future model in which there would be a small number of standing committees, among them—a faculty executive committee and a tenure and promotion committee—giving the executive committee the authority to charge ad hoc committees, as issues arise. The charges of such ad hoc committees could be precisely defined and would be a workable substitute for standing committees, in her view. Swarthmore uses this model, she noted.

Returning briefly to the topic of improving the ways in which faculty meetings are conducted, Professor Schroeder Rodríguez commented that the rigid interpretation of Robert's Rules of Order is not serving the faculty well. He asked if there might be a way of limiting comments by a speaker to two or three minutes, for example, so more voices can be heard. He also reiterated his proposal that straw polls be used, suggesting that a poll on the question of splitting the Committee of Six would have changed the course of the conversation at the February 15 meeting. Responses to a simple "yes" or "no" question would have generated a sense of the faculty's views on the issue quickly and efficiently, he noted. In his view, the committee should consider the issue of the kind of space that the faculty wants to create for conversation, striving to find ways to foster community, rather than confrontation. The other members agreed. In regard to time limits specifically, President Martin said that the faculty would have to vote to set such limits. She commented that other presidents whom she has consulted about the use of Robert's Rules at faculty meetings all said that their institutions do not adhere so precisely to Robert's rules. She agreed that the tenor of discussions at Amherst faculty meetings can be demoralizing, particularly for administrators who may be singled out for criticism, and when the administration as a whole is treated with contempt. In regard to commentary of this kind at the February 15 meeting, Professor Martini noted that the idea that the administration and the board of trustees have a history of rejecting proposals from the faculty is an uncommon occurrence. In her experience, proposals brought forward by faculty committees are regularly dismissed by the faculty on

the floor of faculty meetings.

In preparation for drafting a charge for the Tenure and Promotion Committee, the members discussed some details about the possible makeup, terms, and selection process for this body. It was noted that a model that maintains continuity with the Committee of Six in regard to makeup and terms of the new committee could be desirable. This would mean that there would be six tenured professors serving. It was noted that if there were only four members, one from each division, for example, the number of members considering some personnel cases could be too small—when candidates from some of the members' departments were standing. Some system of selecting an alternate might be possible in such a circumstance, however. The question of whether to adopt a selection process that would ensure representation across the humanities, social sciences, sciences, and arts was also discussed. It was noted that such representation has typically occurred organically through the Committee of Six election, without imposing a process to ensure disciplinary distribution. Another model—the so-called “elect/select procedure—was also considered as a possible way of constituting the committee. Under this process, a slate of faculty would be elected, and then the Faculty Executive Committee would choose from among those who had been elected to serve, filling in any gaps in terms of discipline and other forms of diversity, perhaps, as needed. The members considered questions such as what the criteria might be for selecting from the elected individuals and what would be done if some or all of those who were elected felt that they were overburdened with other work.

The committee also discussed whether members of both committees should have course releases and also whether course releases should be a feature of chairing a major committee such as the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP). Views varied on this question, since the workload of the separate committees, particularly the committee that would focus on the reappointment, tenure, and promotion, would not be consistent. One idea would be to have a threshold for course release for that committee that would be based on the number of personnel cases in a given year. Another suggestion was to provide one course release to members during their term on either of the two committees, to be taken in the heaviest semester in regard to workload, or to provide course releases only to those who would chair the committees, if it is decided that there should be chairs. The provost pointed out that course releases are very expensive, something that should be considered. In addition, removing the number of courses from the curriculum that would be required to grant the number of course releases under discussion would increase the workload of other faculty, in order to make the needed number and kind of courses available to students.

Continuing the discussion, Professor Umphrey stressed the importance of not increasing the service burden of faculty leaders by taking away course releases, unless the workload of the committees is lightened and meetings are less frequent than they are now. Professor Manion agreed with Professor Umphrey about the importance of not taking away course releases for this important work. If course releases were not available for everyone, she wonders if faculty serving on these committees could be compensated in ways other than those in which chairs of academic departments are. It was agreed that the committee should develop a draft motion, based on today's conversation, as a starting point for honing the details of the proposal for a charge for the committee that will focus on faculty personnel process.

The members next reviewed proposals for senior sabbatical fellowships. Following a brief discussion, the committee voted to forward them to the board of trustees for ratification. The members then turned to personnel matters.

The meeting concluded with a brief discussion of [a draft proposal, not yet finalized, from the CEP to revise the college's Latin honors system](#). [In a note from Professor Burkett, chair of the CEP](#), she requests that the Committee of Six provide feedback on the draft proposal. Learning the committee's views would inform the final proposal that the CEP would bring forward, she noted. Provost Epstein said that the proposal seeks to address a concern surrounding the use of a GPA cut-off that is based on class rank,

as measured by a student's cumulative GPA relative to the student's classmates, as one of the criteria for Latin honors. Under the CEP's proposal, the class rank criterion would be replaced with two college-level requirements for receiving summa or magna honors—achieving a fixed grade cut-off based, for example, on students having a median grade such as A or above (summa) or A-minus or above (magna) and satisfying a “modest breadth requirement.” The letter of recommendation for honors from students' departments would be retained as a feature of the requirements for Latin honors. The provost commented that removing the class rank criterion would enable departmental recommendations to play more of a role in awarding Latin honors, and likely would result in more students achieving summa and magna honors. Preventing honors inflation would largely be left to departments, under the proposal, she noted. Adding the breadth requirement would represent a college-wide requirement for achieving honors. Professor Manion expressed support for removing the cut-off based on class rank, expressing the view that doing so will improve teaching and learning. Some members expressed concern about the implementation of the proposal, wondering, for example, whether there might be consequences that still need to be thought through. It was noted that the breadth requirement would require that each course be assigned to a discipline, and that someone review students' transcripts to ensure that they have met the requirement. Provost Epstein noted that the idea would be that all faculty would need to tag their courses as representing one of the defined categories. Each course could satisfy only one breadth requirement. Professor Umphrey, noting that the current system for Latin honors was put in place because the faculty had been concerned that too many students were earning Latin honors, expressed some concern that the current proposal, if implemented, might reproduce the problem. She suggested that the numeric median grade be higher than what has been proposed, which would have the effect of making it a little harder to achieve summa and magna honors. She also expressed some concern that, since most students would meet the median-grade requirement, the breadth requirement feels a bit like a de facto distribution requirement. Professor Umphrey finds the idea of creating a backdoor to closing the open curriculum to be problematic, she said. The members agreed to continue their discussion of the proposal at their next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Provost and Dean of the Faculty

The nineteenth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2021–2022 was called to order by President Martin via Zoom at 2:30 P.M. on Monday, February 28, 2022. Present via Zoom, in addition to the president, were Professors Clotfelter, Manion, Martini, Schroeder Rodríguez, Umphrey, and Vaughan; Provost and Dean of the Faculty Epstein; and Associate Provost Tobin, recorder.

Following up on a question asked at the committee's February 21 meeting, the provost reported back about what she had learned about matters relating to the availability of medical abortions at the college and insurance coverage. Dr. Emily Jones, director of student health services, informed the provost that medical abortion is covered by the college's student insurance, noting that the drug is a tier one medication with a co-pay of \$15.00. Dr. Jones said that about 50 percent of Amherst students are on student insurance. Students who do not have student insurance and are considered to have high financial need can submit bills or receipts to financial aid for payment or reimbursement, she noted. Or, if such students have the medication delivered directly to Amherst's health center, center staff can submit the cost to financial aid for them, and it will be covered. Dr. Jones also said that, for those who have other insurance that does not cover abortion services, or have insurance but don't want the medication to appear on an explanation of benefits that is sent home, the college has referred students to the Western Mass Abortion Fund. There are grants available through this fund, although individuals are expected to contribute amounts they can afford on a sliding scale, she said. Dr. Jones noted that she believes that this fund is mostly accessed for surgical abortion, as that procedure is much more expensive than medical abortion; Dr. Jones said that she has assisted students on a couple of occasions to access and utilize this funding source, she said.

Turning to another topic, Provost Epstein informed the members that she has been receiving some questions about a make-up day for classes that were canceled due to inclement weather on February 25. The provost said that it is likely that the make-up day will take place on May 16, which is during the reading period, but that the decision about a make-up day has not been finalized yet, due to the possibility that bad weather during the spring might result in other snow days/cancellations.

Concluding her remarks, the provost said that she has received a request for the committee to meet with consultants Gina Smith and Leslie Gomez, as part of their work on the college's sexual misconduct review. The consultants would like to hear the members' views on a variety of topics that may include policies and procedures regarding sex- and gender-based harassment and violence, mandated reporting, student culture, and other topics. Provost Epstein noted that G. Smith and L. Gomez will be conducting listening sessions over the next two weeks and said that her office will be in touch about scheduling a session with some or all Committee of Six members, depending on members' availability.

Under "Questions from Committee Members," Professor Schroeder Rodríguez asked, on behalf of the ad hoc committee tasked with evaluating January term, what the timeline would be for adopting a January term on a permanent basis, should the ad hoc committee bring a recommendation forward to do so. Provost Epstein said that the schedule outlined in the ad hoc committee's charge, though tight and if the ad hoc committee can meet the necessary deadline, would allow a vote to take place at the final faculty meeting of this academic year, which is set for May 26. The timeline for future January terms will depend on the recommendation brought forward and the outcome of a vote—and when that vote takes place—she said.

Given the surge in COVID-19 cases among students at this time, with more than one hundred currently in isolation, Professor Martini inquired about plans that are in place should the college use all of its available isolation space. President Martin and Provost Epstein said that it is hoped that the number of cases will soon decline, commenting that Hampshire County has been a hotspot for the virus. The college has other options if additional students need to be in isolation, including having students isolate in their rooms, if necessary.

Concluding the committee's questions, Professor Clotfelter asked when staff in shared offices, and by mutual agreement, will be allowed to work without wearing masks, and when everyone will be able to be in

their offices, unmasked, with the door open. He noted that students are allowed to be unmasked in their residence halls, which seems equivalent. The provost commented that this is not really equivalent, given that staff and faculty are required to work in their offices in proximity to others; students in dorms do not need to be in common rooms of their residence halls, if they are uncomfortable with fellow students not masking. It was also noted that some offices will not allow for social distancing due to their square footage. President Martin said that the college will continue to consider the appropriate timing for relaxing some protocols, depending on the course of the pandemic.

Jesse Barba, director of institutional research and registrar services, joined the meeting at 2:40 p.m. to respond to Professor Manion's concerns about the college's current data system for tracking whether students have met major and graduation requirements and prerequisites for courses in which they might want to enroll, and her question about whether an interim system might be adopted until Workday Student is put in place. J. Barba noted that some of the complexity involved in the processes that Professor Manion had mentioned are a function of the number of permissions that the college requires rather than the technology alone. He suggested that it might be helpful to reexamine which permissions are truly necessary to grant different kinds of requests; in his view, the required permissions are sometimes more rule-based than substantive. In regard to the idea of putting some kind of interim system in place during the period before Workday Student is online, he said that it would not be practical to do so. As it is, a great deal of staff time is being devoted to coming up with Workday systems that will allow all the necessary functions to take place in the right order. Some stopgap measures have been put in place, however. For example, the registrar's office has added a Google-Form solution for requesting that a course be changed to pass/fail. The office will also now accept permissions via email for some requests, J. Barba noted. In such cases, students are asked to send all the pieces of a request in a package so that staff members do not have to sort through multiple emails relating to a single request. Another one of many reasons for simply staying the course is that plans call for having only one more registration period before Workday Student is live. Anything that would be done on a temporary basis now would require a great deal of work, and the college does not have the staffing needed to focus on such an effort—particularly when so much energy is being devoted to Workday.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Martini asked if Workday Student will improve the student experience with these processes, and that of chairs and ADCs, in regard to collecting needed permissions. J. Barba said that there should be a world of difference after Workday Student is implemented, though of course no system will be perfect. The processes should be more transparent, as each business practice will be discrete in Workday, with approvals flowing one at a time, he said. At different stages, notifications will be provided, rather than approvals. He also explained that it will be possible for departments to decide whether some of the chair's approvals may be entered into Workday by the ADC. Professor Manion thanked J. Barba for this information, noting that she had thought that there would be a longer delay in implementing Workday Student. She asked whether the new system will be compatible with Moodle. J. Barba responded that the data integration is under way now. He noted, as an example of how the system will work, that, if prerequisites are listed in the catalog, the system will automatically enforce them. On the other hand, many faculty members will still want students to check in with them if they have not met a prerequisite but are still petitioning to take a class. The system is being built to allow for that approach as well. J. Barba said that there is a lack of uniformity among departments in this regard. When it comes to major requirements, those involved in implementing Workday Student are working with some departments that have volunteered to have their requirements encoded into Workday. It will be possible, if a department wishes, to click on a box to verify that a student has completed the requirements of the major. On the other hand, the degree-audit portion of Workday Student will be a one-, two-, or three-year project, J. Barba explained. The committee thanked J. Barba for the helpful information that he had provided, and he left the meeting at 3:00 P.M.

Conversation turned to the envisioned Faculty Executive Committee (FEC) and Tenure and Promotion Committee (TPC), a continuation of the conversation that had begun at the February 21 meeting about the makeup of the two committees, how their members might be selected, and the responsibilities of the two bodies. In regard to size and makeup, the initial view of most members was that the FEC should comprise four faculty members and the president and the provost and dean of the faculty (serving ex officio and without vote) who would serve for a term of two years, and that the TPC should comprise five faculty members and the president and dean of the faculty (serving ex officio and without vote), who would also serve for two years. The committee also considered whether there might be an election process that would result in a slate of nominees from which the executive committee would select the next year's committee members, or a direct election. Initially, most members favored an elect/appoint model, with the goal of creating a committee that is representative of the diversity of the entire faculty, to the extent possible. In regard to having tenure-track faculty serve on the committee, the committee felt that having such representation would be important, though not coming to a conclusion about the way in which pre-tenure colleagues might be selected, and whether they should be able to opt in or opt out of the election process. The question of exemptions that should be in place in regard to the ballot was also discussed briefly. At present, exemptions are granted for a number of reasons, including for current and past service on some major faculty committees ([See Faculty Handbook IV.1., S. a.](#)). The idea of increasing the number of available faculty by changing some of the exemptions was considered, though some members felt that doing so might result in the same small group of faculty be available to serve and ending up on the FEC and TPC, when, ideally, all eligible faculty should be engaged in service on these and other committees. In addition, the committee felt that, for the next year, it could be beneficial for current members of the Committee of Six to serve on one of the two new committees, for the sake of continuity. Most members also felt that the FEC's agenda for its first year should include taking up the issue of the committee structure at the college and making recommendations for transformative changes.

Shifting the course of the conversation, Professor Manion expressed the view that the proposal to split the Committee of Six doesn't necessarily make sense, without moving forward with the complementary proposal to fold the work of other committees into the FEC—for example, the responsibilities of the Committee on Priorities and Resources. If the latter proposal is no longer under consideration, she is unsure what the charge of the FEC would be, and she worries that more faculty will need to serve on the two separate committees, without the benefits that would come from eliminating other committees and freeing colleagues from less meaningful service obligations. She asked what the argument would be for splitting the Committee of Six, if taking up the broader question of committee structure is off the table. Some members agreed that there might be less reason to split the Committee of Six at this point, while others argued that one major reason for doing so is to have more diverse points of view represented on the executive committee, with personnel business not being part of its charge. The committee agreed to outline the responsibilities of the executive committee in detail in a revised draft charge, imagining that the FEC's responsibilities would include, for example representing faculty views to the administration on a wide range of college matters; preparing the agenda for faculty meetings; evaluating the committee structure on a regular basis and making recommendations to the faculty for changes; and following up on policies and recommendations approved by the faculty to ensure that they move forward.

Professor Manion said that she continues to wonder how the college's system of faculty governance would be strengthened simply by dividing the Committee of Six. President Martin commented on how valuable it would be to have a faculty body that is advisory to the president and the provost and that serves as a conduit for regular communication between the faculty and leadership of the college. Having a closer and more consistent relationship with the administration would give the faculty greater voice in important college matters, she noted. The president said that, while there is other work that an executive committee would do, she sees the communication function as primary. In her own experience,

since much of the Committee of Six's time has been taken up with personnel processes, other matters that are brought to the committee are usually of a pressing nature, rather than part of a pattern of sustained consultation. President Martin also argued for reducing the overall number of committees and eliminating those that are not a good use of faculty time. She also commented that retaining the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) is essential, since authority for the curriculum is delegated by the trustees directly to the faculty. Professor Manion agreed that having greater access to the administration to convey the views of the faculty is a compelling argument for constituting a separate faculty executive committee, as did the other members. The members agreed to continue the discussion of the FEC and TPC at their next meeting, using revised charges as a starting point for coming to consensus about the necessary details.

The meeting ended with a brief conversation about [the draft proposal, not yet finalized, from the CEP to revise the college's Latin honors system](#), which had been discussed initially at the February 21 Committee of Six meeting. Provost Epstein emphasized that the CEP would like guidance from the Committee of Six about whether the proposal seems viable and should be brought to the faculty. One member expressed a preference for moving away from the system of Latin honors altogether, finding that it results in exclusivity and inequities, and retain department-level honors only—while recognizing that such an approach would not be viable. It was noted that more students would be eligible for magna and summa honors under the CEP's proposal, and that moving to an eligibility system that would make use of median grades rather than class rank, in addition to a departmental thesis recommendation, would be more transparent. Some members expressed support for this idea. Students would know what they would need to aim for and where they stood. Another member expressed a preference for Latin honors to be awarded based on thesis work alone and not linked to grades, and also questioned the desirability of the modest breadth requirement that the CEP had proposed. Provost Epstein commented that many feel that Latin honors are the highest college-wide honor that can be awarded and thus should not be controlled by departments alone. Other members worried that the proposal would lead to even greater grade inflation, wondered how courses taken pass/fail would be factored into the median grade calculation for Latin honors, and expressed concern that the proposal would result in so many students receiving Latin honors that the designation would essentially no longer be meaningful. Some members said that, before they could support the proposal, they would need more detailed data about how many more students would be eligible for Latin honors if median grades rather than class rank became a determinative factor, in addition to the departmental thesis recommendation. In the end, the members did not reach consensus about the proposal. Provost Epstein said that she would convey the committee's views to the CEP. The remainder of the meeting was devoted to personnel matters.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Provost and Dean of the Faculty

The twentieth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2021–2022 was called to order by President Martin via Zoom at 2:30 P.M. on Monday, March 7, 2022. Present via Zoom, in addition to the president, were Professors Clotfelter, Manion, Martini, Schroeder Rodríguez, Umphrey, and Vaughan; Provost and Dean of the Faculty Epstein; and Associate Provost Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with “Questions from Committee Members.” Professor Schroeder Rodríguez expressed appreciation for [the president’s email to the community](#) about Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, commenting on how much the communication had resonated with students with whom he had spoken. President Martin said that she has been in regular contact with students at the college who have ties to Ukraine, and that Amherst has been offering whatever support it can. She thanked Hannah Bliss, director of immigration and visa services, for all the help that she has been providing to the students. President Martin commented that Amherst students with ties to Russia have also been experiencing a good deal of distress, and that the college has been supporting them as well. On a related note, Professor Vaughan praised the faculty panels that have been held on the situation in Ukraine, commenting on how informative they have been; he thanked President Martin for supporting these opportunities. The president expressed her appreciation to the faculty who have organized the panels. She noted that another virtual discussion of the horrific events of the last week, and how the invasion may affect Europe, NATO, and the world, would be held at 7:00 P.M. today, and that this webinar already had 1,200 registrants. Professors Glebov, Mattiacci, and Taubman and Samuel Charap ’02, senior political scientist at RAND Corporation, will be participating, she noted, and Professor Kunichika will moderate the discussion.

Noting the current spike in COVID-19 cases among students, Professor Vaughan next thanked Provost Epstein for once again sharing information via email with the faculty about the implications for teaching and learning when students are in isolation. He stressed the importance of continuing to inform colleagues about how best to support students during this difficult time. President Martin commented that COVID cases have been declining, fortunately, and noted that the past several weeks have been difficult. On a related note, Professor Clotfelter, on behalf of a number of science faculty members, said that they want to raise awareness about the challenges of mounting lab courses when labs need to be staged for students who cannot be present because they are in isolation.

On behalf of some other colleagues, Professor Clotfelter next asked if the college has plans to reevaluate the grant-in-aid program. He commented that many peer institutions have far more generous tuition benefits. Provost Epstein responded that the Committee on Priorities and Resources (CPR) examined this issue a couple of years ago and set the goal of moving to a tuition benefit that is equivalent to 30 percent of Amherst’s tuition. Achieving this goal, it had been agreed, would be done gradually over a seven-year period. Currently, the college is in the middle of the time span for these increases. Colleagues are welcome to send a letter to the CPR about the grant-in-aid program if they wish, she noted.

Conversation returned to the draft charge that the committee is preparing for the Faculty Executive Committee (FEC) as a three-year pilot, for consideration by the faculty; the members agreed that the draft was almost complete. Refining the members’ charge for this proposed body prompted further consideration of several issues that the committee had discussed on February 28, most notably the makeup of the committee, whether to have faculty members chair the FEC and if so for what term, and the selection process for its membership.

Discussion turned first to whether a faculty member should chair the FEC. After discussing models such as having a colleague chair for a semester or for two years, the members decided to propose that a faculty chair serve for one year. Most members felt that the members of the FEC should elect their chair, rather than having the faculty elect the chair, and felt that it would be important for the chair to be able to begin work over the summer, so as to organize the agenda and other work and to serve as a point of contact for faculty members and other committees. Over time, ideally, the chair should be someone who had served on the FEC the previous year. Most members agreed that pre-tenure faculty members should not chair the committee. The committee agreed to continue to discuss the matter.

Reiterating the view that one of the FEC’s responsibilities should be to follow up on policies and recommendations approved by the faculty, the members noted that it would be most useful to be able to draw on data when evaluating progress and outcomes of such changes. As a more general matter, President Martin commented on the need to have more staffing to support the institutional research

function at the college, noting the importance of data-driven decision-making. All agreed that the FEC should also serve as a sounding board for the faculty and should encourage a free flow of communication and information between the faculty and the administration, representing the interests of all faculty and the college as a whole. For this reason, the members agreed that a tenure-track faculty member should serve on the FEC.

In reviewing the functions of the Committee of Six, most of which the FEC would carry out under the proposed model (with the exception of faculty personnel processes), the committee discussed whether the members of the committee should continue to read all theses recommended for summa cum laude honors, and theses recommended for summa cum laude honors that would drop down to magna cum laude, if the student is not in the top 25 percent of the class, but is in the top 40 percent. The committee agreed that, while the members should not read the theses, they should continue to review departmental recommendations for summa. In this way, there would continue to be a vetting of honors work beyond the departmental level.

Conversation turned to the process of selecting the members of the FEC. The members discussed again the exemptions that are currently in place when the ballot for the Committee of Six is created each year. At present, exemptions are granted for a number of reasons, including for current and past service on some major faculty committees ([See Faculty Handbook IV.1., S., a.](#)). The idea of increasing the number of available faculty by changing some of the exemptions was considered once again. A guiding principle, it was agreed, should be finding ways to distribute committee service among more faculty, instead of having the same small group of faculty assume leadership roles. The committee discussed whether pre-tenure colleagues should be “protected” from college-wide service; most members questioned whether this approach would be in pre-tenure colleagues’ best interest. On the other hand, since the goal of current plans to restructure committee service is to lessen committee service burdens for faculty, fewer colleagues would be involved in college-wide committee service in any given year, if restructuring goes forward. The question of which ballot exemptions should continue was left unresolved, and the members agreed to continue discussion of this point. The committee continued to feel that, for the next year, it could be beneficial for current members of the Committee of Six to serve on either the FEC or the Tenure and Promotion Committee, for the sake of continuity.

The committee then discussed the selection process for membership on the FEC. After some discussion of the elect/select model, under which a group of faculty that would exceed the number needed in a given year would be elected by the faculty, from which the FEC would select a subset to serve, the members agreed to propose retaining the current Committee of Six election structure. It seemed to the members that the elect/select model could produce some distrust of the process, perhaps, and that a direct election process that would represent the will of the majority and be more transparent makes the most sense. The committee also considered whether a single slot on the FEC should be reserved for a pre-tenure faculty member and whether a system should be adopted under which all pre-tenure faculty members should appear on the ballot, or whether they should be allowed to opt in or opt out of being on the ballot. Some members preferred an opt-in approach, while others liked the idea of one that would allow pre-tenure faculty to opt out of being on the ballot. It was agreed that faculty in their first year at the college should not be on the ballot, and some consideration was given to including only pre-tenure faculty who have been reappointed. Some members felt that the college has a tendency to overprotect pre-tenure colleagues and that it would be helpful for them to serve and to be given the opportunity to think about the college broadly. In the end, the members decided to propose that a slot be reserved for a pre-tenure faculty member who would serve a one-year term, which would reduce the burden of service on the FEC for the individual. While faculty members in their first year would not be on the ballot, all others would be, under the members’ proposal. If service on the FEC would present a significant hardship for a pre-tenure faculty member, that individual could speak with the provost about being removed from the ballot. This option exists now, Provost Epstein noted, and she has received virtually no requests to be removed from the Committee of Six ballot.

Concluding the discussion, the members decided that if the pre-tenure faculty member rotates off the FEC each year, the ideal membership of the FEC would be three tenured members (who would serve two-years terms, though their service could be interrupted by leaves) and one pre-tenure faculty member,

who would serve a one-year term. While some felt that continuity could be a problem, others felt that having more faculty circulating through leadership positions is beneficial. In addition, it was noted that members could choose to delay their sabbaticals if they wished. While the administration will make the final decision regarding course releases, the members presented a number of options. Provost Epstein, who noted the expense to the institution of course release and the burden it places on other faculty to teach larger classes, said that she and the president would consider the possibilities, and that the new president may also weigh in. Professor Clotfelter suggested that there be strict limits on the number of meetings of the FEC, which would be expected to meet biweekly and to have shorter meetings than is currently the case for the Committee of Six. He also said that it would be important to have continuity administratively and expressed hope that Associate Provost Tobin would support the work of the FEC. The remainder of the meeting was devoted to personnel matters.

The meeting adjourned at 5:05 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Provost and Dean of the Faculty

The twenty-first meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2021–2022 was called to order by President Martin via Zoom at 2:30 P.M. on Monday, March 28, 2022. Present via Zoom, in addition to the president, were Professors Clotfelter, Manion, Martini, Schroeder Rodríguez, Umphrey, and Vaughan; Provost and Dean of the Faculty Epstein; and Associate Provost Tobin, recorder.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Motion 1

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

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

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

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

Motion 2A

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

Motion 2B

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

Motion Three

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

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

3. The Criteria for Tenure

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

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

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Provost and Dean of the Faculty

The twenty-second meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2021–2022 was called to order by President Martin via Zoom at 2:30 p.m. on Monday, April 11, 2022. Present via Zoom, in addition to the president, were Professors Clotfelter, Manion, Martini, Schroeder Rodríguez, Umphrey, and Vaughan; Provost and Dean of the Faculty Epstein; and Associate Provost Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with Provost Epstein offering congratulations to Professor Vaughan on his recently announced Guggenheim Fellowship. The members offered their warm congratulations as well.

Conversation turned to how best to move forward with the timing of the faculty's consideration of motions that appeared on the April 5 faculty meeting agenda, but which were not discussed at the meeting because time ran out. Since the president's travel schedule does not permit holding a meeting on April 19, the members agreed that a faculty meeting should be held on April 26, due to the importance, in particular, of having a vote on the specifics of the charge of the Tenure and Promotion Committee (TPC) and the proposal to revise the tenure criteria language in the *Faculty Handbook*. In addition, the members decided that the committee should bring forward a motion to have Professors Schroeder Rodríguez and Martini, who would normally continue for a second year on the Committee of Six, each serve on one of the new committees for the 2022–2023 academic year. The goal would be to provide continuity for the inaugural year of the Faculty Executive Committee (FEC) and the TPC. It was agreed that Professors Schroeder Rodríguez and Martini should draw straws at the next Committee of Six meeting to decide which committee they might potentially serve on next year.

Under "Questions from Committee Members," Professor Umphrey asked if there are plans to open a space for faculty to gather informally for lunch, coffee, and conversation any time soon, and if the creation of such a space is part of future plans. President Martin said that it is her understanding that plans call for a space that can be used for these activities in the new campus center; much of the space there is being planned to be flexible, so that it can meet evolving needs. Professor Umphrey stressed the importance of having a space as soon as possible and wondered if Lewis-Sebring can revert to its former use now. Provost Epstein said that it is her understanding that Lewis-Sebring will continue to be used for overflow student dining for the remainder of this academic year. It is her hope that the space will be available in the fall for faculty and staff dining. Professor Umphrey asked if creative solutions can be found to this problem before the fall, while expressing her appreciation for the parties and dinners that the provost has hosted in an effort to build and maintain connections during this time. Professor Schroeder Rodríguez wondered if it might be possible for faculty and staff to get their meals in Val and then bring their food to Lewis-Sebring as an interim solution. Provost Epstein said that this will not be possible this spring, but that this is one of the plans under consideration for fall. The provost said that she realizes the importance of having a space for faculty and staff to gather over meals and will continue to advocate for opening such a venue, as soon as is reasonably practicable.

Discussion turned to the possible responsibilities of the chair of the FEC. The members suggested that the chair play a leading role in proactively shaping the new committee's agenda. The committee expressed support for shifting to a model that would rely to a lesser degree on the provost's office developing the agenda than is currently the case for the Committee of Six. It was agreed, however, that there would need to be collaboration with the provost's office in regard to setting the agenda. The members supported the idea of having the chair work over the summer, in collaboration with the provost, to identify a couple of major issues that the FEC could address over the course of the next academic year. One such issue that is already on the docket is consideration of ways to reimagine the committee structure, with the goal of streamlining it. The committee also stressed the importance of having the chair of the FEC consult regularly with the chairs of the other major faculty committees (e.g., the Committee on Educational Policy and the Committee on Priorities and Resources). The members also expressed the view that finding ways to improve the processes and culture surrounding faculty meetings should be high on the FEC's agenda, with the goal of finding ways to encourage greater participation and to potentially improve the tenor of discourse. One member suggested that the FEC review issues of concern surrounding faculty meetings that were conveyed by faculty members via the survey conducted by consultant Susan Pierce in this context.

Continuing the discussion of the role of the chair of the FEC, the members agreed that, as a general matter, it would be ideal for the chair of the FEC to serve as a conduit of information to the FEC from other committees. It would be desirable for the chair, and the committee as a whole, to meet with other

committees to learn about the agendas of those bodies, which will often intersect with the FEC's own. In addition, the members suggested, the chair should hold office hours to meet with individual faculty, groups of faculty, and departments, to provide opportunities to raise issues of concern and to answer questions. Professor Manion suggested that creating this forum outside faculty meetings for these purposes might contribute to more productive and efficient faculty meetings. One member proposed that, in addition, the FEC chair regularly be given the opportunity to discuss the FEC's agenda at faculty meetings.

Professor Umphrey raised the question of whether the president would be likely to consult with the chair in the event of a crisis. President Martin said that she would be more likely to consult with the FEC as a whole, when possible, in order to be able to consider a range of voices. On the other hand, she noted, many crises during her time at Amherst have required that she consult very quickly with those who have most expertise in the field—for example, in the area of sexual misconduct or public health—and then to keep the Committee of Six informed and seek the members' views. So much depends on the nature of the crisis, the president noted. Professor Vaughan expressed a preference for providing the president with the views of the entire FEC, when consulted. He feels that attention should be focused on the formal administrative role of the chair, and warned against creating a position that would lead to a single individual having too much power. The members agreed to consider the role of the chair of the FEC further at the committee's next meeting.

Discussion turned to the topic of the procedures ([Faculty Handbook \(III., A., final paragraph\)](#)) used for considering tenure cases for appointments at the level of professor and associate professor with tenure. Provost Epstein noted that hiring at this level has become a more common practice in recent years. She informed the members that, in her view and in the experience of those in her office, constituting ad hoc committees to conduct these reviews and to make recommendations, in collaboration with departments, is unnecessarily complex and time-consuming; leads to work that is duplicative; and places significant, undue burdens on departments and the tenured faculty members who serve on ad hoc committees. She proposed that the procedures followed for tenure cases for candidates for tenure at the level of professor and associate professor with tenure follow, to the extent possible, the regular procedures for tenure cases at the college, dispensing with the process of appointing an ad hoc committee and relying on departments to assemble the tenure dossier and to make the recommendation for tenure. After discussing the details of the current process—which involves appointing an ad hoc committee comprising one tenured member of the department that is recommending the hire/tenure, and three tenured faculty members from related departments—the committee agreed that this change makes sense. The members decided to make a motion to revise the *Faculty Handbook* accordingly. It was emphasized that the TPC (if approved) will follow the standard process of reviewing the letters from external reviewers early in the tenure process, with the option of requesting additional letters if it is decided that they are needed.

The committee next discussed the question of whether research students should be asked to provide teaching evaluations—in particular, retrospective letters—for the purpose of reappointment and tenure reviews. Provost Epstein explained that tenure-track faculty members, particularly those in STEM fields, have long viewed their work with research students as an important part of their teaching that should be represented in the evaluation of their teaching effectiveness at the time of reappointment and tenure. At present, if such students do not take a class with a professor, they are not solicited for an evaluation. These would include students who work in a faculty member's lab, but who do not have the professor for a course, either during the academic year or in the summer, Provost Epstein commented. It was noted that faculty in the arts, humanities, and social sciences also have research students. The members discussed the criteria that might be used to decide whether a research student should be solicited for an evaluation, as some may interact with a faculty member for a brief period of time, while others may do so for a couple of weeks, several months, a semester, or a year. The committee also noted that virtually all research students who work in faculty members' labs are paid, and some concern was raised that this structure could lead to negative teaching evaluations under circumstances relating to the pay rate set by a faculty supervisor, for example. The members agreed that, if evaluations were to be solicited from research students, it must be for work that is substantive and takes place over an extended time period. The question was raised as to who would decide which students would meet any criteria that might be set, and who would track student work to make sure that only those students who meet the criteria were solicited.

Continuing the discussion, one member wondered whether thesis students who don't complete a thesis and don't convert their honors course to a special topics course, and thus do not receive a grade, should be asked to do an evaluation; this is not the case now, the member noted. Professor Schroeder Rodríguez suggested that one criterion for soliciting an evaluation should be that the student has worked with the faculty member for at least a semester or its equivalent. Professor Martini expressed the view that students with whom a faculty interacts as part of the Summer Science Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) Program or the Gregory S. Call Research Program should be asked to provide evaluations if a change is made. Another suggestion was to ask candidates for reappointment and tenure to provide a list of research students from whom they want the department to solicit retrospective letters—in much the way tenure candidates are asked to provide names of colleagues who might be asked to write “colleague letters.” The members agreed that, to move the conversation forward, it would be helpful to develop a proposal for how best to structure a system of having research students provide evaluation of teaching. Professor Clotfelter agreed to draft such a proposal to share with the members as a starting point for further discussion.

Discussion turned to the process for considering [a letter from Professor Fong](#) in which she made some proposals regarding committee service. The members agreed that, given that the FEC will take up the issue of the committee structure during the next academic year, the letter should be forwarded to that committee once the FEC is constituted. The remainder of the meeting was devoted to personnel matters.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Provost and Dean of the Faculty

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Provost and Dean of the Faculty

The twenty-fourth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2021–2022 was called to order by President Martin via Zoom at 2:30 p.m. on Monday, April 25, 2022. Present via Zoom, in addition to the president, were Professors Clotfelter, Manion, Martini, Schroeder Rodríguez, Umphrey, and Vaughan; Provost and Dean of the Faculty Epstein; and Associate Provost and Associate Dean of the Faculty Dhingra, who served as the recorder for this meeting. The meeting began with discussion of a personnel matter.

Under “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Schroeder Rodríguez asked about paying students for service on committees, including the Campus Safety Advisory Committee, which recently concluded its work. He noted that the Association of Amherst Students (AAS) had recently passed a policy to pay students for some of its committee work. The provost and president responded that the administration is looking into the new AAS policy, and that it is not clear that the college can use funds for this purpose. (Later, the *Amherst Student* reported that the AAS voted to delay the policy, given various legal and other concerns.) President Martin commented that the AAS also has a policy of not funding student organizations for work that isn’t open to all students. Provost Epstein said that she had been surprised by the AAS’s recent policy decision about committee work and expressed the view that it could be problematic to start down a path of paying students to participate in extra-curricular activities.

Continuing, Professor Umphrey posed a number of questions. She asked if the provost would provide some information about the origins and purpose of the Committee of Six’s annual meetings with tenure-track faculty, as the committee would be having such a meeting the next morning. Provost Epstein said that, some years ago, the Consultative Group for Tenure-Track Faculty had requested that the Committee of Six meet with its members, as well as with all tenure-track faculty. The group had also asked to have meetings with the president and provost. Originally, the thought was that these meetings would happen twice a year, but the Committee of Six later decided that the meetings should take place once a year. The meeting with the Committee of Six provides an opportunity for tenure-track faculty to ask questions and to learn about the committee’s work, Provost Epstein noted. Often, there have been questions about the tenure process as well as other subjects. Professor Manion commented that it would be much more effective if this type of meeting took place in the fall with the Committee of Six. The provost noted that the committee could certainly make a request that the meetings occur in the fall, however, it is her understanding that the group preferred that the meetings take place in the spring this year.

Professor Umphrey then asked if it might be possible to have a celebration when students turn in their theses, noting that other schools organize such events. Provost Epstein suggested writing to the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) about this idea. Concluding, Professor Umphrey thanked the provost for organizing the “Comeback-from-COVID” lunches for faculty, which will be held in Frost Library in the Center for Humanistic Inquiry (CHI) Think Tank. The provost said that thanks should go to Associate Provost Tobin and to Dee Brace, who is serving as a temporary assistant to the director of the CHI, who worked on the lunches.

President Martin next informed the members that the student anti-racism advisory group has raised concern that the student prizes that are given at the end of the year are tied to the allocation of gifts to departments that were made in the past, and thus are not equitably distributed. The students wonder whether the college can make sure that every department can afford to offer a prize. Provost Epstein commented that all departments offer prizes for the best thesis each year; some departments have many other prizes, while some have fewer. One or two programs might not offer any prizes, she noted. Provost Epstein commented that there is more of a disparity among departments when it comes to the undergraduate prizes that are given at the undergraduate award ceremony, in comparison to those that are given at Senior Assembly. President Martin asked what the smallest dollar amount is for prizes. Provost Epstein said that she believes that all prizes should be at least \$500, but she is not sure that is the case. The provost agreed to find out more about these matters.

Professor Vaughan next asked if it would be possible to learn more about the status of the presidential search, while continuing to maintain confidentiality. Provost Epstein responded that more will be learned after the meeting of the trustees that will take place over commencement weekend. Professor Umphrey, a member of the search committee, informed the members that interviews with the finalists will take place very soon.

Continuing with “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Manion asked how long tents can

remain up for teaching purposes. President Martin responded that the tents may stay up until close to when classes end, but not quite until May 13; staff need to take down some of the tents in order to put others up, and facilities is currently short staffed, she noted.

Turning to another topic, the president informed the members that the college has purchased a house on Sunset Avenue that will become the residence of the next president of Amherst. The house, which is within walking distance of the campus, will provide more privacy than the current president's house, which will soon sit between two academic buildings—the new Lyceum and Morgan Hall. Extensive infrastructure renovations are needed to the new house, though this work will not be completed until the end of the new president's first semester at the college. President Martin said that it is her hope that the current president's house can become a place for the faculty to gather, both informally and for more scheduled events such as lunches, informal gatherings, or other meetings. At the same time, the current president's house will probably continue to function as a space in which the president can entertain larger groups, and some have suggested that alumni might make use of the space on some weekends. No definitive decisions have been made as to the use, the president said. Professor Umphrey expressed enthusiasm for using the current president's house in the ways that had been described, commenting on the benefits for faculty in regard to furthering opportunities for social interaction, in particular. President Martin said that her proposal centers around this use.

Conversation turned to finalizing proposed revisions to the language for reappointment procedures in the *Faculty Handbook* so as to better align the language with current practice. The committee made some minor additional revisions to the proposal. It was agreed to bring the proposal to the faculty for approval at the next faculty meeting.

The committee then discussed whether, to inform the evaluation of teaching effectiveness for reappointment and tenure, letters to evaluate teaching should be solicited from students who do research work with faculty members during the summer or over the academic year. It has been suggested that it would be helpful to do so, as some of these students' experiences might not otherwise be captured in the reappointment and tenure processes. The committee decided that it would raise this issue with tenure-track colleagues during the members' meeting with them the next day. If such a procedure were put in place, it would be important to have a clear understanding of what is meant by "research" in this context. A member noted that, in the sciences, faculty have a great deal of "face time" with students over the summer, unlike in the humanities. The member doesn't know how to think about non-science students in this regard and expressed the view that the model in the sciences lends itself well to generating meaningful letters that are based on substantive experiences. Another member questioned the need for letters from research students, wondering what would be gained from the envisioned letters—that is, what new information would be learned.

Continuing the conversation, another member noted that, based on conversations with some tenure-track faculty, the member believes that most research students, at least in the humanities, also take courses with the faculty member with whom they are doing research. Such students often discuss their summer experiences in their course evaluations. The member noted that, on the other hand, for Summer Science Undergraduate Research (SURF) students, who haven't yet chosen a major, it is not uncommon for a student to have not taken a course with the faculty member. It was seen as being important to have letters that discuss the instruction and mentoring that takes place when this is the case. The member commented that, although the number of students in this category is relatively small, they can provide a very different type of letter about their summer experience. Another member, who had also consulted with other faculty about this issue, said it would be important to distinguish between student work that is involved and has mentoring that is akin to teaching, versus that which involves basic support functions.

In regard to whether letters from research students should be solicited only from science students, the provost said that she did not understand why they would not be solicited from students who have collaborated with faculty in the humanities and social sciences. She noted that Gregory S. Call Academic Interns, for example, work with students for six weeks over the summer and meet with faculty at least once a week. A member commented that, in the humanities, the Gregory S. Call Research Fellows are all doing honors work, which is already captured in the letters that they write as thesis students. One member commented that, in the sciences, there are Greg Call students who are not doing honors work, and that

they would not be solicited for an evaluation if they were not also taking a course with the research mentor. Another question that was raised was whether faculty should be able to opt in or opt out of having letters solicited from research students, if this process were put in place. One member expressed the view that it should be possible to search for research students in Workday, based on whatever criteria might be established; it would be preferable that the students just be contacted, rather than allowing an opt in/opt out process. Provost Epstein noted that the question remains as to whether research students should be solicited, commenting that some tenure-track faculty members have been concerned for years that the work that they do with students over the summer is not recognized.

Concluding the discussion, some members noted that it appears that, in the humanities and some social sciences, the need for letters from research students seems less pressing, but that it could be informative to solicit them for science faculty. A member commented that it could also be informative to solicit letters from Schupf Fellows, who work with faculty in other disciplines. Provost Epstein said that those students may not have taken a course with their faculty mentor, so that the fellows' experiences might not be captured through other evaluations. She expressed the view that it does not seem like a good idea to limit the proposal to solicit letters from research students in the sciences only. A member commented that, if the concern is a lack of compensation for mentoring and teaching labor, gathering additional teaching evaluations seems like a strange way of addressing this issue. Another member noted that some faculty want to have evaluations from students who have excelled at research. Summer programs are a double-edged sword, another member noted; they require a great deal from faculty. A couple of members noted that many tenure-track faculty do not want to let students down and can feel pressured to take research students, particularly as the college has made more funding available to support this activity, even if chairs advise them not to. The money and opportunity is there, and tenure-track faculty can find it difficult to say "no." Provost Epstein said that her office is hearing the opposite. Faculty seem to want more funding to support more research students and more academic interns, for example. A member expressed the view that faculty who will be on campus often want more research students, while those who are doing research in the field may not. The members agreed that, to inform their consideration of this issue, they would discuss the proposal at the meeting with tenure-track faculty to learn their views; the feedback that they receive can then be shared at the next Committee of Six meeting.

Conversation turned to the system that is currently being used to solicit teaching evaluations for tenured faculty (see *Faculty Handbook* ([IV., B., 2.](#))). Provost Epstein reiterated that the automated system has proven to be a failure in regard to student participation. Since the current system cannot be used in Workday, some kind of change is needed in any case. Some members questioned the value and purpose of the evaluations, and it was noted that, currently, there is no incentive (other than professional ethos) for tenured faculty to pay attention to them. Some members wondered if it would be preferable to return to using paper evaluations or to use Google forms. Provost Epstein expressed the view that the only way that student participation will increase is by setting aside time in class for doing the evaluations. One member commented that a return to paper would be preferable, as she does not want her students bringing laptops to class. The provost said that she understands that other institutions have found that, unless grades are withheld from students who do complete evaluations, participation can be poor. The provost suggested that it would be helpful to bring forward a proposal to the faculty that time be set aside in class for students to complete evaluations. The members felt that at this point, it would be preferable to forward this issue to the new Faculty Executive Committee, for consideration in the next academic year.

The committee next discussed the ideal timing for the next faculty meeting. The provost noted that the CEP intends to bring its proposal for revising the system for awarding Latin honors to the Committee of Six soon. Given the complexity and importance of this issue, some members wondered whether this conversation should begin now, as it is likely to carry over to the fall. The committee would not meet again until May 9, it was noted, and some members felt that there might not be enough time to discuss the proposal before it potentially could be brought to the faculty. Provost Epstein informed the committee that it is unclear whether the CEP will be ready to forward the proposal to the Committee of Six by May 9, when the members next meet. Doing so would be essential if this is to be brought to the faculty this year, she noted. It was agreed that May 17 should be held as a date for a possible faculty meeting, though, in regard

to the Latin honors proposal, a discussion could take place at the last faculty meeting of the year on May 26.

The meeting ended with a review of departmental tenure criteria documents that have been submitted by departments thus far, in response to the committee's request. While the members agreed that many of the documents are excellent, they suggested that the provost share feedback about some issues with a small number of departments.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Provost and Dean of the Faculty

The twenty-fifth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2021–2022 was called to order by President Martin via Zoom at 2:30 P.M. on Monday, May 9, 2022. Present via Zoom, in addition to the president, were Professors Clotfelter, Manion, Martini, Schroeder Rodríguez, Umphrey, and Vaughan; Provost and Dean of the Faculty Epstein; and Associate Provost Tobin, recorder.

The meeting began with President Martin expressing concern about the impact of postings that some Amherst students are making using GroupMe (a service from Microsoft that is available on the web and as an app for mobile devices). GroupMe allows unlimited group text messaging. An *Amherst Student* piece stated that about 1,200 Amherst students are in the group, and it has been suggested that students are the only individuals allowed to join it. The president informed the members that she has learned from students that some Amherst students have launched vicious attacks against other Amherst students on GroupMe. As a result of some postings, students are said to have been shunned and ostracized. She suggested that, given the respect that Amherst students have for their professors, it would be helpful if faculty would discuss with students the serious impact that chats of this kind can have on some students' lives and the problematic online student culture it suggests. Some members said that some students have discussed the GroupMe postings with them. One member has devoted part of a class to discussing this issue. Another commented that a student said that, while the postings are awful and that the individual would not post on GroupMe, the student found the postings riveting and followed them. The committee wondered if the Office of Student Affairs is actively monitoring and mediating the situation with this platform. The president said that the college is considering what actions it can take to address this situation, but that there is no monitoring. The committee suggested that the president discuss the matter at the upcoming faculty meeting to raise awareness about the GroupMe.

Provost Epstein next reminded the members that, as noted on the academic calendar, Monday, May 16, is a makeup day for classes missed earlier in the semester. While it is completely up to faculty members whether they wish to make use of this day, she asked that, when making their decision, colleagues consider that many students are feeling exhausted after what has been another challenging semester.

Continuing with her remarks, the provost informed the committee that the president and she plan to bring a motion to the board of trustees at its commencement meeting to remove the language shown below in red from the *Faculty Handbook* ([III., E., 3., second paragraph](#)). Provost Epstein noted that the board voted to adopt this language and place it in the tenure criteria section in 1992. She said that this committee and prior Committees of Six, as well as individual faculty, have raised concern about this language, which conveys that certain "institutional considerations" can be a reason to deny tenure to an individual.

3. The Criteria for Tenure

The college values faculty whose commitment to the life of the mind is demonstrated through excellence in teaching, scholarship, and/or the creation of works of art, and contributions to professional service. Amherst tenures faculty who demonstrate growth, achievement, and continuing promise in both scholarship and teaching, evinced by a notable record of scholarly and/or artistic accomplishment and a demonstrated ability to teach undergraduates effectively. These two aspects of a candidate's record are of primary consideration in the tenure decision. Strength in one will not compensate for shortcoming in the other. A record of scholarly excellence must include evidence of original research that is peer-reviewed or of comparable scholarly rigor and standing, and/or its equivalent in the creative arts. A record of teaching excellence must include evidence of the ability to convey knowledge and engage students in rigorous and stimulating ways and a commitment to their intellectual growth. Additionally, faculty members are expected to contribute to their home departments and programs, to the life and work of the college, and to their professional fields (voted by the faculty, April 26, 2022).

Institutional considerations may play a role at the time of tenure, but if they are invoked, the president will give a full account of the reasons why. Institutional considerations include factors such as the tenure structure of the department, the rank structure of the department, and the fields of competence of the faculty member being considered for tenure in relation to those already represented in the department. Although the college has no formula for the percentage of faculty on

tenure, or for the distribution of faculty by anticipated retirement or rank generally or within departments, a particular judgment may be made which takes such factors into account (adopted by trustee vote, April 4, 1992).

Continuing, Provost Epstein said that she and the president agree that it is not appropriate to deny tenure on the basis of rank structure or field, and that the language on "institutional considerations" in the section on tenure criteria should no longer be part of the *Faculty Handbook*. She noted that, although the *Faculty Handbook* has sparse language on the termination of tenured faculty members (see [Faculty Handbook III., I., 1.](#) and below), she and the president believe that the college is sufficiently protected by the language that is in place, should Amherst need to terminate tenured members of the faculty, particularly if doing so is warranted by financial exigency. The wording permits the college to terminate tenured faculty members for "adequate cause" or "extraordinary circumstances because of financial exigencies." In general, Provost Epstein said that the president and she believe that the primary reason why the college would want to terminate tenured faculty members (other than "for cause," which is also covered) would be due to the college undergoing very severe financial hardship. She informed the members that she and the president will also suggest to the trustees very minor changes to the current language, shown below, for reasons of clarity. These are replacing a comma after *exigencies* with a period and capitalizing the *The* that follows, which now begins what is a separate sentence. In addition, these changes include substituting the word *meaning* for *definition* of tenure, so that the language in the *Faculty Handbook* is consistent.

1. Termination

The connection with the college of faculty members appointed for specified terms shall automatically cease at the end of the term specified, unless they are reappointed. **A member of the faculty holding a term appointment or an appointment without term may be relieved of his or her appointment at any time by the board of trustees only for adequate cause or under extraordinary circumstances because of financial exigencies. The appointment of a faculty member with tenure can be terminated only for those reasons consistent with the meaning of tenure.**

The provost also pointed the committee to the description of the meaning of tenure in the [Faculty Handbook \(III. E., 1.\)](#):

An appointment with tenure means an appointment without limit of time that can be terminated only for adequate cause or under extraordinary circumstances because of financial exigencies. Academic tenure and academic freedom are distinguishable but linked in the life of a college or university. Without freedom to explore new ideas, or to criticize existing beliefs and institutions, higher learning would become a sterile exercise and society would suffer accordingly. Academic freedom must be sustained for all faculty without regard to rank or tenure, recognizing the fact that the use of such freedom may anger powerful vested interests in the larger society or arouse the ire of administrators, faculty colleagues, or students within the academy. Tenure is an institutional safeguard for the conditions of academic freedom.

The protection of academic freedom by a guarantee of permanent tenure, therefore, represents an important part of the continuous effort that must be made to preserve the freedom of thought and speech that is the breath of life for a democratic society. This being so, then, 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 even though this act may challenge cherished beliefs and established institutions. Tenure requires also that faculty members foster freedom of inquiry for their colleagues and their students and respect the virtues of intellectual integrity and the claims of reason and evidence.

The members then turned to nominating colleagues to serve on the memorial minute committee for Richard J. Cody, Eliza J. Clark Folger Professor of English, Emeritus, who died on April 30, 2022.

Under “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Clotfelter asked about the expected number of students and guests who will attend the commencement being planned for the class of 2020. Provost Epstein said that she believes that 260 of the 453 students in the class of 2020 have registered for commencement, and that 1,148 guests are expected. Professor Clotfelter next inquired as to whether the commencement for the class of 2020 will mirror a regular commencement. Provost Epstein responded that there will be differences, for example the ceremony will be on Saturday instead of Sunday, noting that the event will take place in the afternoon. President Martin informed the members that the honorary degree recipients will give charges to the graduates, rather than offering speeches on a separate day. When asked about the upcoming reunion, and what attendance might be like, the president said that the expectation is that it will be a standard reunion, except that classes that have missed their fifth, twenty-fifth, or fiftieth reunions will also be invited to attend (the classes of 2015, 2016, 1995, 1996, and 1970 and 1971). She noted that she is aware that the class of 2017 is excited to be coming to campus for its first reunion. The number of alumni who plan to attend reunion is not yet known.

Continuing with questions, Professor Schroeder Rodríguez, who said that he had been contacted by a student writing an article for the *Amherst Student* about the faculty’s decision to divide the Committee of Six into two committees, asked if it would be appropriate to share the charges to the Faculty Executive Committee and the Tenure and Promotion Committee with the student. It was agreed that doing so would be fine.

Conversation turned to the committee’s proposal that, to better protect the identities of honors students, end-of-semester evaluations no longer be solicited from honors students—and that confidential letters from these students, solicited after they complete their honors experience, be used instead. Under the proposal, all honors students, whether they complete their honors work or not, would be asked to write confidential “annual” letters after receiving a final grade (after one semester, if they do not complete honors work, or after two semesters, if they do). In addition, the committee decided that “retrospective letters” should continue to be solicited from honors students at the time of the reappointment and tenure review. Under the proposal, annual letters and retrospective letters from honors students would become part of the candidate’s dossier at the time of the reappointment and tenure and would be summarized in the departmental recommendation at the time of those reviews, a redacted version of which would be shared with the candidate. It was agreed that candidates would not be provided with the annual letters themselves, which is also the case for retrospective letters. If approved, it was agreed that this change would be effective for future reappointment and tenure cases, but that for all tenure-track faculty hired before July 1, 2022, any end-of semester evaluations from honors students that have already been collected would be included in their tenure and reappointment dossiers. The members agreed to bring the proposal forward as a motion at the May 17 faculty meeting.

The members next discussed briefly their recent meeting with tenure-track faculty members. (The committee meets annually with tenure-track faculty.) In regard to the idea of moving to a system in which departments would solicit letters of evaluation from research students—a proposal that the committee has been considering—Professor Clotfelter said that one faculty member had spoken in favor of this idea, and that no reservations had been expressed. The committee decided to bring a proposal forward at the May 26 faculty meeting that, on an annual basis, departments be required to solicit, after final grades, confidential annual letters from all research students who were supervised by a tenure-track professor for 240 hours (the equivalent of six weeks of full-time work) or more at the end of the summer of the academic year in which the research experience took place and before the start of the next academic year. Under the proposal, annual letters from research students would become part of the candidate’s dossier at the time of reappointment and tenure. In addition, at the time of the reappointment and tenure review, departments would be required to solicit, after students have received final grades, confidential “retrospective” letters of evaluation from all research students who were supervised by a tenure-track professor for 240 hours or more. The members proposed this criterion for annual and retrospective letters as a means of ensuring that evaluations are solicited only from students who have had an experience of sufficient depth to be able to evaluate the professor who has supervised them. Thus, most summer research students and a limited number of students employed during the academic year would be asked to write letters, it was noted. Under the proposal, annual letters from research students and retrospective letters would be summarized in the departmental recommendation at the time of reappointment and tenure, a redacted version of which is

shared with the candidate. Candidates would not be provided with the letters themselves. The members agreed to place a motion about letters from research students on the agenda for the commencement faculty meeting on May 26.

The committee also recounted that the issue of joint appointments came up during the meeting with the tenure-track faculty. Colleagues praised the provost office's recent efforts to formalize the expectations for these positions—for example, regarding advising loads—to create greater clarity and to ensure consistency across departments. It was noted that these efforts have included meeting with chairs of departments with jointly appointed tenure-track faculty to discuss these appointments, which was seen as encouraging. The provost said that she anticipates putting a formal policy in place for joint appointments soon—creating a memorandum of understanding. Continuing with the summary, a member noted that, at the meeting, a concern had been raised about a department not following the procedures for the observation of classes that are in place for tenure-track faculty. The provost said that tenure-track faculty with this concern should reach out to their chair or to her. She stressed that arranging for these observations is the responsibility of the chair. On a related front, Provost Epstein said that she would remind departments to follow the procedures outlined in their department handbooks. In addition, she said that emphasis will be placed next year on trying to standardize mentoring practices across departments.

The members next decided that, given that it has been agreed that the Tenure and Promotion Committee (TPC) comprise five voting members, whereas the Committee of Six had six such members, they would bring a proposal forward that a requirement be put in place that at least four members of the TPC must review each reappointment and tenure case. It was agreed that, if approved by the faculty, this procedure should go into effect immediately. In addition, the members decided to propose that, in cases where two or more members of the TPC are required to abstain from discussion and voting in tenure cases because they come from the same department as the candidate, or for any other reason, alternate TPC members would be seated with voice and vote together with regular members of the committee for the session in which the candidate is discussed and the session in which the candidates are compared and a final vote taken. The alternates would be drawn from the TPC ballot, with the first alternate being the first runner-up, etc., excluding faculty members from the candidate's department.

Discussion turned to [a letter from six faculty members expressing concerns about Workday Student](#), the process by which it is being implemented, and the ways in which they feel that Workday may change the process of advising in ways that will not be beneficial to students. The members commented that it is important to learn if there is evidence that Workday Student, which has not yet been implemented, will lead to the consequences that the letter-writers suggest. Provost Epstein noted that, while Workday Student will not be a perfect solution, she does not believe that its use will prevent faculty members from advising students in the ways that they have traditionally. All faculty will need to move to this system, she noted, as it will be operational, and the old system is no longer viable. The provost reminded the members that the Ad Hoc Faculty Committee on Workday Student and the Faculty Computer Committee have been kept informed about the progress on Workday Student on an ongoing basis and have been provided with regular opportunities to learn about the system. There will also be opportunities to tweak the system in the future, as issues are identified, the provost said. The members stressed the importance of providing to the faculty as much information and training about Workday Student as possible. Provost Epstein said that, in addition to departmental training sessions, plans are in place to provide robust opportunities for faculty to learn the ins and outs of Workday Student and to receive support to prepare them to advise students. For example, plans call for the registrar's office to offer live help for faculty during new-student advising and during the add/drop period via Zoom, she noted.

Continuing the conversation, Professor Umphrey, who has not yet interacted with Workday Student, said that it is important to address the concern of the colleagues who sent the letter—as adopting new software should not drive a reimagination of advising, if that is what is, in fact, going to happen. Professor Clotfelter commented that one concern is that anomaly reports, which are available in the current system, will not be a feature of Workday Student at this time. These reports list courses for which a student has registered that were not on the list of courses approved by the advisor; these reports are very helpful to advisors. Some members commented that Workday Student will provide a degree-audit function that will be helpful to departments, as it will allow for the tracking of the completion of major requirements. It was

noted that, at present, there is a pilot under way with some departments using Workday Student to track major requirements. Provost Epstein commented that there is an expectation that all departments and programs that wish to track major requirements through Workday Student will be able to do so, though it may take a year or two for the registrar's office to implement this function of the new system.

Professor Vaughan asked how Workday Student will be assessed and how faculty will be involved. The provost responded that the Ad Hoc Faculty Committee on the Implementation of Workday Student will stay in place for at least a year, serving—along with the Faculty Computer Committee—as a venue for faculty to share suggestions and concerns. A member stressed the importance of communicating to the faculty a clear process for sharing suggestions and concerns. Provost Epstein thanked the committee and said that she would speak with Jesse Barba, director of institutional research and registrar services, and Sarah Barr, advisor to the provost on campus initiatives and director of community engagement, about the matters that have been raised.

The members decided to approve the motions on the agenda for the faculty meeting of May 17 and the faculty meeting agenda itself via the committee's drive. (On May 11, the members voted five in favor and zero opposed on each of the motions and five in favor and zero opposed to forward the agenda to the faculty. One member was unavailable to vote.)

The committee then turned to [the report of the Ad Hoc Committee to Evaluate the January Term](#). While the ad hoc committee decided not to bring a motion forward to have a January term in 2023, taking into account (among other factors) issues of staffing, its members suggested that a January Term pilot be considered for three years (2024–2026). The committee praised the creative and thorough work of the ad hoc committee and expressed enthusiasm for the ideas that were discussed in the report. Provost Epstein said that the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) has decided to discuss these suggestions next year. In addition, the members expressed the view that the Faculty Executive Committee should also take up this issue. The members then turned to a personnel matter.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Provost and Dean of the Faculty

The twenty-sixth meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2021–2022 was called to order by President Martin via Zoom at 2:30 p.m. on Monday, May 16, 2022. Present via Zoom, in addition to the president, were Professors Clotfelter, Martini, Schroeder Rodríguez, Umphrey, and Vaughan; Provost and Dean of the Faculty Epstein; and Associate Provost Tobin, recorder. Professor Manion was absent.

Under “Questions from Committee Members,” Professor Umphrey commented that, when the committee had previously considered the letter sent by colleagues about their reservations about Workday Student, the members had not taken up the signatories’ request that the matter be discussed at the last faculty meeting this year. Commenting that this has been raised as a governance issue, she suggested that the committee consider putting a discussion of Workday Student on the agenda for the May 26 faculty meeting. Other members expressed a preference for waiting to have a faculty conversation about Workday Student until after a good number of departments have attended training sessions. It was also felt that faculty would be in a better position to assess the system after they had used the system for at least one advising round. A member reiterated the view that it would be helpful to advisors if students receive training in Workday Student over the summer, so that they are prepared for advising discussions. Provost Epstein said that staff members in the registrar’s office and a Workday project staff member conducted user testing in January with Amherst students and found that students were able to complete advising and registration using Workday Student, with only training materials to guide them. It is felt that students will not have a problem learning to use the system. There are plans in place, however, to include Workday training for students as part of pre-orientation and orientation. The members noted that, if the signatories wish to have a discussion at the faculty meeting, they can certainly raise the issue, but it was agreed not to include this topic as an item on the agenda.

The committee next reviewed a motion, based on the members’ previous discussions, to bring forward a proposal that evaluations from some research students (see the criteria in the motion below) supervised by tenure-track faculty be solicited in the form of confidential “annual” letters, as well as retrospective letters at the time of the reappointment and tenure review. The details are included in the motion below. A member asked how research students’ hours would be tracked to ensure that a tenure-track faculty member has supervised a research student for at least 240 hours over the course of an academic year (which, it was agreed, can encompass the fall and spring semester, January, and summer), the threshold for soliciting evaluations. Professor Clotfelter noted that, since research students are paid (or take an honors course with a tenure-track faculty member, in which case they would be asked to write retrospective letters as honors students, at present), their hours would be available in Workday. An academic department coordinator would have access to this information. The members then voted five in favor and zero opposed on the content of the motion below and five in favor and zero opposed to forward the motion to the faculty.

Motion

That the *Faculty Handbook* ([III., D., 5., 3.](#)) and [III., E., 4.](#)), be revised as shown below in red text and black strike-outs. If approved, the new process for soliciting confidential annual letters and retrospective letters from research students would be put in place in the summer of 2022 and would become part of tenure and reappointment cases beginning in the 2023–2024 academic year.

[Faculty Handbook III., D., 5., 3.\)](#)

3) Evidence of Teaching Effectiveness. For the reappointment review, departments are required to have solicited end-of-semester evaluations of teaching from all students from every course, including every special topics course, taught by a tenure-track faculty member, with the exception of honors students, since the time of appointment through the semester before the faculty member stands for reappointment. These end-of-semester evaluations are signed and normally solicited in essay format in all classes in the final week of each semester on a common evaluation form approved by the

faculty. After the submission of grades, they are made available to the instructor without the names of the respondents. In addition, on an annual basis, departments are required to solicit from all honors students advised by a tenure-track faculty member that year, whether the students complete their honors work or not, confidential "annual" letters, after students receive a final grade (after one semester, if students do not complete honors work, or after two semesters, if they do). **In addition, on an annual basis, departments are required to solicit from all research students who were supervised by a tenure-track professor for 240 hours (the equivalent of six weeks of full-time work) or more that year confidential "annual" letters. Departments solicit annual letters from research students at the end of the summer of the academic year in which the research experience took place and before the start of the next academic year.** Annual letters from honors and research students taught through the year before the reappointment review become part of the candidate's dossier at the time of reappointment. In addition, at the time of reappointment review, departments are also required to have solicited, after students have received final grades, confidential "retrospective" letters of evaluation from all students from every course, including every honors and special topics course, taught by a tenure-track faculty member from the time of appointment through the semester immediately preceding the semester in which the reappointment review takes place. **In addition, at the time of reappointment review, departments are required to have solicited retrospective letters of evaluation from all research students who were supervised by a tenure-track professor for 240 hours (the equivalent of six weeks of full-time work) from the time of appointment through the semester immediately preceding the semester in which the reappointment review takes place.** Annual letters from honors and research students and retrospective letters are summarized in the departmental recommendation, a redacted version of which is shared with the candidate. Candidates are not provided with the letters themselves. Students asked to write letters are informed that their responses will be treated as confidential by the college. Reviews and ratings from informal and commercial websites, or any other anonymous materials, are inadmissible as evidence.

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

(5) For the tenure review, departments are required to have solicited end-of-semester evaluations of teaching from all students from every course, including every special topics course, taught by a tenure-track faculty member, with the exception of honors students, after the last semester considered as part of the reappointment review through the semester before the faculty member stands for tenure. These end-of-semester evaluations are to be signed and are normally solicited in essay format in all classes in the final week of each semester on a common evaluation form approved by the faculty. After the submission of grades, they are made available to the instructor without the names of the respondents. In addition, on an annual basis, departments are required to solicit from all honors students advised by a tenure-track faculty member that year, whether the students complete their honors work or not, confidential "annual" letters, after students receive a final grade (after one semester, if students do not complete honors work, or after two semesters, if they do). **In addition, on an annual basis, departments are required to solicit from all research students who were supervised by a tenure-track professor for 240 hours (the equivalent of six weeks of full-time work) or more that year confidential "annual" letters. Departments solicit annual letters from research students at the end of the summer of the academic year in which the research experience took place and before the start of the next academic year.** Annual letters from honors and research students that were reviewed at the time of reappointment and those received after the time of reappointment become part of the candidate's tenure dossier. In addition, at the time of tenure review, departments are also required to have solicited, after students have received final grades, confidential "retrospective" letters of evaluation from all students from every course, including every honors and special topics course, taught by a

tenure-track faculty member after the last semester considered as part of the reappointment review through the semester immediately preceding the semester in which the tenure review takes place. In addition, at the time of tenure review, departments are required to have solicited retrospective letters of evaluation from all research students who were supervised by a tenure-track professor for 240 hours (the equivalent of six weeks of full-time work) after the last semester considered as part of the reappointment review through the semester immediately preceding the semester in which the tenure review takes place. The department letters soliciting confidential annual and retrospective letters from students are included with their responses. Annual letters from honors and research students and retrospective letters are summarized in the departmental recommendation, a redacted version of which is shared with the candidate. Candidates are not provided with the letters themselves. Students asked to write letters are informed that their response will be treated as confidential by the college. Reviews and ratings from informal and commercial websites, or any other anonymous materials, are inadmissible as evidence. All written evidence used to evaluate teaching effectiveness assembled at the time of reappointment is also considered at the time of tenure review.

Conversation turned to a draft faculty meeting agenda for the final faculty meeting of the year on May 26. As noted on the agenda, reports from faculty committees were expected to be posted online in a written form, due to time constraints. The committee commented on the efforts of all faculty committees over the course of the year and expressed appreciation. While acknowledging the need to have most committee reports in a written format only, due to time constraints, the members suggested that the provost ask the chairs of the Committee on Educational Policy and Committee on Priorities and Resources also to offer very brief oral reports at the faculty meeting about the highlights of the work of these major committees. Provost Epstein said that she would be happy to do so, and the chairs later agreed to present brief reports. The members next considered nominations for the Jeffrey B. Ferguson Memorial Teaching Prize and selected a recipient for this year, noting how many colleagues had received impressive letters of nomination from current students, fellow faculty, and alumni. The recipient of the award will be announced at the final faculty meeting on May 26.

The meeting ended at 3:45 p.m., to allow for time to move to Johnson Chapel for a panel discussion in honor of the president. The members voted five in favor and zero opposed to forward the May 26 faculty meeting agenda to the faculty. Professor Manion, being absent, did not vote.

The meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Epstein
Provost and Dean of the Faculty