

Haverford College Faculty Meeting Minutes

November 17, 2011
4:20 p.m.

Deborah Roberts, Clerk

Moment of silence.

Action I. Approval of the minutes of October 27, 2011.

I. Report of the Provost.

1. I want to remind you about the upcoming Honor Council meeting for new faculty.
2. There is a Faculty Research Talk by Shizhe Huang on November 30.
3. We are having a “brown-bag lunch” in the Faculty Dining Room on Friday Nov. 18 (tomorrow) 12-1:30.
4. I want to announce a prestigious award to Roberto Castillo-Sandoval (Spanish Dept.) for his new book Letters From the Antipodes, a “Writings For Memory” literary prize from the Chilean Ministry of Culture: he is imminently off to Chile to present a lecture and receive the prize.
5. As for my own personal plans, I will finish my five-year term as Provost in June 2012 and then take a sabbatical.

[The Clerk proposed, and the faculty enthusiastically responded with, a expression of appreciation from the faculty to Linda Bell for all she has done.]

II. Report of the President.

1. Here is my Provost-plan for the year:
I look forward to continue working with Linda Bell to make this a seamless transitional year. I rely on her and I think we make a good team. (And she certainly well deserves her sabbatical.)

Some of you spoke about continuing Linda’s Provostship beyond the end of this year; some of you spoke about a change; there was no consensus on this issue. And Linda has now graciously cleared the air of an ad hominem discussion.

I have been talking with the faculty, but also with previous Haverford presidents, to get a sense of how things are done “around here,” and I also have my own experience at other institutions and my own

judgment about how things work and don't work. I have heard, and followed, the advice to not rush things too fast. However, time is now passing and I am convinced that we need to move forward now on a plan to have a Provost in place ready to start serving on July 1. Such a person will need some mentoring from Linda Bell and a chance to size up the job and rearrange his or her life in order to do this service for the College.

Thus we have to start now, with the goal of concluding the choice-process around the first week in February, in time for the Board of Managers to approve the selection at its February meeting.

Certainly the new President will eventually pick his/her own team, and in fact not only the Provost but also the whole senior staff. But there is a lot of room for error in expecting a President to pick the second-officer of the institution when walking in the door. So the best thing is to have a seasoned, respected person in place to partner and assist the new President at first. I see this as an "Interim Provost" who would serve for an initial one-year term.

In fact, all senior officers should be continually reviewed for service; one serves minute-by-minute at the pleasure of the President or Board, as the case may be. (I myself, as a Provost and a President, never had "term" appointment.) We are now putting in place a formal review procedure for both the President and the senior staff, this year. (The President will review senior staff, the Board will review the President.)

A word about "interim": there are considerable advantages to such a position. It is an ideal way to test whether one really wants to do it: it is a limited commitment, with a graceful way out, and has the benefit of "a honeymoon period." I hope that potential candidates are not put off by the title "interim," and of course it could turn into a more long-term appointment afterward. In any case, it would be an opportunity to learn about the institution and yourself and to make a real difference to Haverford. "Interim" was the experience which set me on my road to being an administrator.

I will keep the nomination process open until December 1. I will ask for written materials from candidates, and then I will make the final slate known to the faculty and ask for your evaluations. Starting around January 15, I will interview candidates and ask for Academic Council's advice. The final selection will be mine, subject to the approval of the Board.

QUESTION: What will the interview process look like? **REPLY:**
After I read the materials submitted by candidates, I will interview

them: in other words, the process will be “talking with me.” I will also ask Academic Council to help me review the materials, which I will submit to them in a redacted form.

QUESTION: What is the actual term of the Interim Provost? When will the “Interim Provost” start serving? Linda Bell will be Provost until June 30; what will the “Interim” Provost be doing when “learning” from the sitting Provost? **REPLY:** The Interim Provost will start serving on July 1; there will be no title and no salary and no change in current position responsibilities until July 1, 2012.

QUESTION: Can we also write to you about what we desire, and do not desire, in an Interim Provost? **REPLY:** Oh yes indeed, I want to choose someone for you who has a broad representation in the faculty.

2. Remember the Board’s visit, and the conversations with you on December 2.
3. We have created a group of donors who have been making substantial gifts to the College (of over \$1,000,000), called “The Whitehead Circle” (in honor of John Whitehead.)

III. Announcements, Reports, Items for Action, Items for Discussion

1. Anne McGuire, for EPC (attached documents)

- a. The Language Requirement.

We are asking the faculty to approve this proposal: Two semesters of college level study of a language other than English, which must be completed by the end of the junior year. This can be fulfilled by taking two semesters at a level appropriate to previous accomplishment, or by taking two semesters in a language not previously studied.

QUESTION: I approve this proposal. But what of a student with poor knowledge of English? Would such a person have to take a third language? **REPLY:** Such a person could take two semesters of literature in his/her own language. **COMMENT:** But we don’t have literature courses in many languages. **REPLY:** We are asking for two semesters of language at the College level, whatever the language used.

COMMENT: I am opposed to piece-meal considering of College requirements; I think we should wait on this until we discuss all the requirements. I in fact think that the opportunity cost of *any* requirement is too high a price to pay (the foregone other courses.)

COMMENT: In one sense, this would make the language requirement equivalent to all our divisional requirements, that a student must take it (whether one Q or two or three NA, SO, or NS semesters.) But it is different in that a student must take it at the level into which the student has been placed; in Mathematics, for instance, the student has a choice and can move up or down in level.

COMMENT (Mathematics): In fact, we are trying to lessen the flexibility of the student to “choose.”

COMMENTS: (from various language departments): We feel that we should do the placing; we try to “stretch” a student into achieving more; but we also are flexible in accommodating to the student’s capacities and needs.

COMMENT: This is in fact a *small* change, apparently affecting only 30 or so students.

COMMENT: Well, this is not so trivial in terms of cost to the College. **(ANOTHER:** or to the student, because it is two courses.)

COMMENT: I was at first sensitive to this point; but I am convinced by the language departments’ argument that this is the one requirement (two semesters of college-level work) out of which a student can opt, and that this is not fair or sensible. Perhaps we will eventually remove some requirements; but this modification of current practice simply brings the language requirement up to par with the others.

COMMENT: We (The language departments) sense a disrespect for our scholarly enterprise among the other departments; the experience of taking a language course at the college level is very valuable; there is a high intellectual cost for the absence of it.

ANOTHER (related) COMMENT: The educational vision which we have, that students should experience an “Other” language, is very important; college-level proficiency is not measured by SAT language scores which measure high school performance. **But for students for whom English is their second language:** for these students, we need some more thinking on this issue. **(EPC comment):** Bryn Mawr now allows two semesters of English literature for such students. **REPLY:** But Bryn Mawr, who has many more such students, also has an increasing number of ESL (English as a Second Language) courses.

QUESTION: Could we simply preserve the Handbook language which states that “Students for whom English is their second language should consult their Deans about this requirement.”

COMMENT: When talking about senior research, we have heard complaints from the SO and HU departments that students are unable to do independent research because of a deficiency in language capacity: this requirement could increase the number of students who could use languages in senior research.

COMMENT: Perhaps if we had more language classes NOT in the early a.m. hours, we would get more willing participants. (Yes!) (Yes, Timing is important, it creates unintended consequences. EPC must look into this.)

The Clerk: Am I hearing any other demurrs besides the one person who feels that we should consider all requirements at the same time? **Another person:** I too am concerned about the interaction effects: that is, parity with other requirements.

Response (another person): We can't always stop making a decision because it is outside the scope of all related problems. This would make every requirement equal to every other one.

Another person: Speaking of equity: We have a language requirement, but it is the only one which students can fulfill without taking a Haverford Course: that is very peculiar!

COMMENTS; Some discussion arose about “proficiency” and what it means: EPC made it clear that “one year of college-level exposure” is what it means.

The Clerk: I hear no objection except from the one person who wishes to postpone the issue to the consideration of *all* requirements and hence would stand outside the consensus; but since the subject of ESL students has been raised, and this is only a “first reading” (this year) of the EPC proposal, I suggest that EPC goes back and works on the ESL issue, and considers the change from “proficiency” to “exposure,” and then brings this forward to us at the next faculty meeting. We should then be able to move rapidly forward.

EPC: O.K. And take note: EPC proposes to have a “brown-bag” lunch to open discussion on all General Education requirements.

- b. New Search positions: an opening discussion.

Please note that Department, Center, and Concentration Blueprint statements are due in to EPC on Dec. 9.

The document we have submitted to you is trying to inform you of the situation as of now.

QUESTION: I appreciate your attempt at clarification. But why was the Fine Arts position included in the category of NEW positions filled? Was this the Sculpture position? The FCAE recommendation was for two positions in Fine Arts: 1) a “conversion” of the interim appointment in sculpture (in place ever since the retirement of Chris Cairns in Sculpture) into a tenure-track appointment AND 2) a new position in a Multi-media Art Curriculum. Then, (at a bad moment in our financial history), the Tuttle Bequest for a Humanities Center post-doctoral fellow in Visual Culture was diverted to fill the tenure-track conversion Sculpture position. **SUPPORTING COMMENTS** (Fine Arts Dept.): We decided that we had to fill the Sculpture position first; and in the course of the Search, we realized that we had to fill it at the senior level. **PROVOST:** Everyone spoke accurately; but this is too complex an issue for the faculty meeting floor. And in fact, only three of these new positions were filled with new money.

2. Maris Gillette & David Sedley, Faculty Reps. to the Board
 - a. We will need to have (imminently) an election to replace Maud McInerney as Humanities representative to Academic Council, since she is going on leave next semester.
- QUESTION:** For what term? One semester (the remainder of her [old form, three-year term] , or for 1 ½ semesters (to fill a new form, two-year term)?

Some discussion followed on this: it was pointed out that we had not provided for this situation when we reduced the Council terms to two years while having, still, a sitting three-year term constituency; and that the Handbook (with old-form language) speaks of “filling out the term.” So we decided to stick to the Handbook language: ELECTION FOR A ONE-SEMESTER TERM.

 - b. There will be an extended Faculty-Board conversation on December 2. We will send you a fuller description of this process. (Secretary: which was done the next day.)

- c. We would now like to have a discussion with the faculty about our views on priorities for dealing with the financial situation. It is indeed not a “crisis,” but nothing is certain, and all institutions are having these conversations now about possible trade-offs; our current practices may not be sustainable. The Board would like to hear our views on *principles*: What is most important to us? Should we maximize financial aid? Should we maximize compensation? Should we minimize student charges?

COMMENT: One thing which I never see mentioned, but which I think is very important: what will be the overall staffing level for replacement staffing? (Yes, yes!)

Various other comments:

There should not be too much jump in tuition.

The effect of reducing financial aid would hurt the quality of our students.

Do we KNOW that? Some think YES; some think NO.

We have to protect the academic core of the college: support faculty and student research.

If we keep up financial aid to students, we will have to be willing to pay for that by a more-slowly-growing Blueprint faculty. Response: but the Blueprint is funded only by raising money for positions. (Is this a plea for a change of our money-raising priorities?)

Enrollment *will* grow, but only up to the limit of the Dining Facility capacity. (N.B.:As long as we keep the present food-policy, and don't “out-source” it to Ardmore and apartment-living.)

We may need to tinker with the “Need-Blind” policy.

Financial aid is important to working-class students; middle-class students can borrow with 0% loans.

We need to understand more thoroughly the “discount rate” policy.

We can't increase the 8/1 (or whatever it is in reality) S/F ratio because of our ratings with USNews (however defective it is, it is acted-upon by parents.)

And: This is a silly discussion because people don't know what they are talking about. The faculty need to be better informed before they can give meaningful feedback to the Board.

And: our discussion should be focusing on the effects of the changes which we make.

Adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

Linda Gerstein, Secretary to the Faculty

