

Haverford College Faculty Meeting Minutes

Sept. 6, 2012
4:15 p.m.

Deborah Roberts, Clerk

Moment of silence.

Introduction of new Faculty and Staff.

Memorial Minute for Duane Kight, Associate Prof. of French: Maud McInerney

Action I. Approval of the minutes of May 10, 2012.

I. Report of the President. (att. doc.)

You already have a document on “Administrative Goals” for 2012-2013, which I developed in consultation with Senior Staff and Dan Weiss. Beyond last year’s project, which focused on “re-centering,” this year are moving forward to the first year of a two-year strategic planning process, which OI will lead this year and Dan Weiss next year. We will be looking at the institution as a whole, articulating goals and aspirations, and helping to make the case for a campaign to support it. We will be gathering the various pieces of institutional planning which have been going on over the past few years, especially the Blueprint and the “refreshed” departmental statements which were prepared last spring. I will be attempting to frame the discussion of the new Task Force on Academic Enrichment within a broader discussion that encompasses more than the academic program. I will share my thoughts on this with you at the next faculty meeting.

We will be postponing decisions on major budget trade-offs until the strategic plan is in place and the new president is on board.

II. Report of the Provost (att. doc.)

You already have a document from me on major goals in the Provost’s Office. The Task Force met last Monday. Discussion centered on: 1) the impact of the economic “event” of 2008 on the Blueprint; 2) the ways in which we have already, nonetheless, changed in the last five years by adding new faculty and new programs, including consortia; 3) the need for infrastructure to support these changes, and the changes and needs in enriching the physical endowment; 4) changes in the national and local perception of “The Purpose of a Liberal Arts Education” in recent years; 5) the Time-Table for this year (preparing documents in time for the October, February, and April Board meetings, and a final draft in May 2013.) There will be concerted consultations with key faculty committees (FAPC, EPC, AAC), the Centers, the entire faculty, students and staff.

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

1. FAPC and Academic Council (Peter Love, Laurie Hart, Curtis Greene): promotion procedures. (att. doc.)

Our proposal from last May had a major purpose in bringing us in line with the promotion procedure of our peers. (Last May, there was a straw poll vote of 55/7.) There is only one significant change in the present document; there was some confusion about what it says about who reads external letters: although letters from departmental junior faculty which speak about the candidate's scholarship will still be considered, we meant to say that only departmental senior faculty will read the external letters about scholarship.

QUESTION: Why *not* junior departmental faculty also? **REPLIES:** Confidentiality questions suggest limiting the circulation of these letters, not making them "open access" documents. One has to draw the line somewhere. External reviewers assume that only departmental senior professors will read them.

COMMENT: But we are NOT in line with other peers in that we do not have a "departmental discussion" about promotion cases. (A **LATER** reference was made to Bryn Mawr promotion practice, in which individual senior-faculty letters are written which are then summarized into a departmental letter.)

COMMENT: External reference letters in the sciences often include "comparative" assessments about the scholarship of other people in the department, including junior people.

QUESTION: *Why* are we trying to "normalize" ourselves in respect to our peers? We are *very* small, our departments are *very* small, we have a weak departmental structure in comparison with our peers. Also: I am concerned about the (undue?) influence of external letters on our internal letters.

RELATED COMMENT: Why should we be like other institutions?

REPLY: We are asking our departmental senior faculty to make a judgment; the external letters provide important information for making a judgment, (to our senior faculty as well as to Academic Council.) This is normal peer-review behavior, we expect to hear the advice of other scholars, that is what "peer-review" is. But we also trust our departmental senior faculty to have an independent judgment as well.

ANOTHER REPLY: The opinion of the departmental senior faculty about the material in the external letters is *also* useful information for Academic Council; in our current practice, Academic Council has only the views

(about the external letters) of the Glossator. **LATER RELATED**

COMMENT: We do indeed still think there is a role for a Glossator.

COMMENT: This talk about “normal” makes me nervous; we are not like other institutions, of course. But we are a high-quality institution making judgments about high-quality performance, and we should do it collectively. We need informed judgments, and of course not judgments which are “unduly swayed.” **ANOTHER RELATED COMMENT:** As my experience in making judgments about national grant applications shows, external letters from scholars in the field are very informative: our judgment should be *not* “unduly swayed,” but indeed be informed by external letters.

COMMENT: Speaking of Glossators: a Glossator’s report, which a candidate can read, is written with specific names in code (#1, #2, etc.) to protect confidentiality; do we assume that internal departmental senior faculty letters would refer to external letter-writers also in code, or in redacted form, if/when a candidate finally reads these letters? **REPLY (former Associate Provost):** Codes don’t always sufficiently mask identities, so our practice is to further redact well enough to do this when the letters are read by the candidate.

QUESTION: There is reference in the proposal to letters from other Haverford senior faculty outside the department, faculty with “relevant expertise”: *Who* chooses such people and would *they* also be able to read the external letters? **REPLY:** The Presenter, (in consultation with the candidate and the Associate Provost) chooses such people. **COMMENT:** I have a problem with the Presenter’s role here. **COMMENT:** This (reading the external letters) introduces a lack of clarity in the lines drawn and possibly more work for the faculty, because *many* non-departmental senior colleagues frequently write letters in promotion cases, and they often have expertise in crucial areas. Would they be welcome to read external letters as well? Either yes or no might be the appropriate answer, but can the final two sentences offer more clarification?

The Clerk asked if we could hear from junior faculty.

QUESTION: What is the meaning of the last two sentences? Are we being asked to approve this proposal in principle, or are we being asked to approve this very particular language? **REPLY:** This very language.

We took a straw poll: There were 68 votes. Yes 51, No 17.

****QUESTION:** Is there a threshold? **REPLY (The Clerk):** We are still figuring out this process, and the exact threshold is not clear. The working assumption is that a small number of dissenters (say 3 or 4) can be given a

chance to speak further and then asked if they are willing to stand outside an emerging consensus. These 17 are a significant minority. I would like to hear from them.**

Question: If we removed the last two sentences of the proposal (...” in some cases other selected tenured reviewers... outside the candidate’s department with expertise especially relevant...”), would there be more agreement?

Comment: I myself have not seen a proper text, since it came to us in two versions with different language.

Comment: We need to hear from more people, and perhaps especially from junior faculty.

Question: When a candidate expresses reservations (“concerns”) about letters from a particular outside reviewer, (which “reservations,” in current practice, only the Presenter and Academic Council sees), will the departmental (or non-departmental) senior faculty now see those reservations?

Comment: I am concerned about this emerging talk about “a departmental letter” (analogous to the Bryn Mawr departmental letter.)

** The document needs some more work.** ***The Clerk: Please communicate your reservations, concerns, questions to FAPC.*** FAPC asked people to let them know if their objections could be met by editorial improvements and minor changes, or if they were more deep-seated ones.

2. Faculty Athletics Representative (Casey Lundergan) (att. docs.)
I have two things to present to you: 1) my job description for the Handbook (Appendix to document) and 2) the general-policy document (“guidelines.”)

1) I have already been appointed as the Faculty Athletics Representative; the intent of the job description in the Handbook is to establish and empower the FAR as a Community figure. It is here defined as an “Associate Professor “; it need not be actually a tenured person, it could be someone on a continuing appointment but at the Associate Prof. level.

We took a straw poll; there were 66 votes, 65 Yes and 1 No.

****The Clerk asked:** Does the one person disagreeing wish to explain his/her views or would that person be willing to stand outside the consensus. The “No”- vote identified himself and said that he was actually in favor of the gist of it but that he had a question: Does “close consultation with the Athletics Director“ imply that the Athletics Director must consent in order for something to happen, in other words that the Athletics

Director has a veto? **REPLY:** NO.

“Ah, Therefore, I withdraw my No-vote, and declare myself as with the Yeses.”

The Clerk should at this point (as she later noted in an email to the faculty) have formally asked if we had a consensus; she will do so in the future, but we will presume a consensus in this case since the language of consensus was used in her question to the dissenter, and since no one objected.

Action II: The faculty accepts the proposed definition of the Faculty Athletics Representative for the Handbook.

2) Then Casey turned to the guidelines document.

We have changed a few things which were unclear in the May version. Section III: “between 4 and 7” is now clear. Section II/B text added: there may be other good reasons for missing a class. Section V/C has been eliminated; EPC will review the faculty liaison positions in the interest of balancing faculty service position assignments and faculty service-equity. Section II/C: language changed: “in a more balanced way.”

This document is not meant to be immutable; it is a living, changing, document that evolves with practice and experience over time and constant dialogue. And (response to a **QUESTION**): Yes, we can expect that all student athletes will have read this text; they have this year.

QUESTIONS (Several): It is clear that classes cannot normally be held between 4 and 7; but where in this document does it say that athletic events cannot normally be held during class times? I have students who are subject to scheduled 3 p.m. practices, and morning practices that last beyond 9:30 a.m.; this goes beyond the *occasional* away-game for which it is necessary to leave the campus before 4 p.m. because of transportation needs. **REPLY:** If this happens as a general problem, then we can negotiate over it, this is on the FAR to-do list; that is precisely the intent of this new position and these guidelines.

COMMENT: We all know that we have student-athletes who are restrained in their academic options by athletics; athletic activities are scheduled during class hours; games take place before 4 p.m.; away-games take them away from afternoon classes. And more to the point: The Student Athletics Handbook already contains these guidelines but we have not yet adopted them!

COMMENT: We cannot square the circle (the Secretary’s metaphor.) We cannot insist on rules for athletes in situations where there are no good choices; if we do, we will lose that battle.

The Clerk: I think that we have not yet had enough discussion.

We took a straw poll with three options. 66 votes: Yes 30, Yes but with revisions 31, No 5.

****The document needs some revisions. It will come back to us. Please communicate your revision-suggestions to Casey.****

3. FAPC (Peter Love) and the Clerk: faculty meeting proposal (att. doc.)

COMMENT: About the 6:00-6:15 period of extension (only for discussion, and open questions, no decisions): This trivializes those last fifteen minutes.

COMMENT: The same people will have to leave at 6 p.m. every time (whether to pick up children at day-care or for other personal reasons), and this will create two kinds of faculty: those who do and those who don't.

COMMENT: I wish to say that I support both proposals.

COMMENT (REPLY): Adding two more regularly-scheduled faculty meetings a year gives us more needed faculty meeting time; just adding fifteen minutes (to 6:15) gives us less time.

To the question of adding 15 minutes: We took a straw poll: 62 votes, Yes 12, No 50.

To the question of adding another scheduled faculty meeting (in addition to the second one in September that has become recent practice): We took a straw poll: 62 votes, Yes 39, No 23.

It was now 5:50 p.m., and we then proceeded to the 10-15-minute experiment (agreed upon last April) of an "open question period": questions addressed to those who had submitted "attached documents" to the faculty by email.

1. **QUESTION** to Institutional Advancement: Is it true, as I had heard last year, that money being raised by the campaign would be used to offset current expenses? **REPLY:** We have always accepted any gift which was designated to offset current programs. But the Blueprint has a new set of proposed priorities; then "2008" occurred. So now we say: Prudently, we use some of our gifts for expenses to which we have already made a commitment.
2. **QUESTION** to Dean: What has happened to plans for the Office of Academic Resources? **REPLY:** It is up and running in Stokes.
3. **COMMENT** to the Provost's office about the Digital Media Faculty Discussions: This announced discussion scheduled for October 4th is great; but

the existing Arts people (Fine Arts department, Bryn Mawr Art History department, the Library's Collections) must be a part of it.

4. **COMMENT:** Several new administrative positions (an additional associate provost; an appointment to Senior Staff) have been added to the administrative structure without consultation with the AAC (Administrative Advisory Committee.) Is this a new trend? **REPLY (President):** The new position (chief of staff in the President's office) is a replacement for (recently retired) Violet Brown's position, which has been re-designed. **RESPONSE:** But it is now a Senior Staff position. **REPLY:** The incumbent has always coordinated Senior Staff.

Adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Linda Gerstein, Secretary to the Faculty