Haverford College Faculty Meeting Minutes

December 20, 2012

Deborah Roberts, Clerk

4:17 p.m.

Moment of silence.

Action I. Approval of the minutes of November 15, 2012.

I. Reports, Items for Action, and Items for discussion

a. E.P.C. Phil Meneely (standing in for Anne McGuire)

1) Our current agenda: we are now discussing Distribution Requirements, a recommendation for graduation rituals for Flagship scholarship language students (who take a 5th year abroad); we remind you of proposal deadlines.

2) We are re-submitting our proposal for a new class-time slot (att. doc.) We considered various points made in the last faculty meeting and in later comments to us, and have concluded that this is the solution with most gain and least cost.

QUESTION: How will this work with Bryn Mawr’s class schedule? REPLY: Bryn Mawr has a looser class-time schedule, and one which preserves a lunch-time slot; it is hard to predict whether this new proposal will cause any time-conflicts, but it will present fewer than our present schedule does.

QUESTION: This proposal for a new slot straddles two current slots (11-12 and 12-1) which are heavily used by pre-med students. Do you have any idea of the number of students (or the number of courses) which might be expected to migrate to this new slot? What “conflict” does this proposal resolve? How did you investigate the “conflict?”

REPLY: We think this presents the least cost, and the conflicts affect very few students (in numbers of students and in number of courses.)

COMMENT: I think that this does not really address the student plenary resolution which began this proves: the plenary resolution called for more MORNING classes. I don’t think this is a good solution. We need more “management” of class scheduling (whether be SEADS, or by Registrar, or by some other mechanism: anything but the faculty free-choice chaos that we now have.) RELATED COMMENT: I agree that we need something better, but NOT by means of the Registrar.

QUESTION: Have you consulted with Bryn Mawr about this? REPLY: Not really, (nor did they consult with us in completely re-casting their course requirements); but we see this as a very small step, which we can take and see what happens with it.
COMMENT: I don’t think we have studied the consequences of this thoroughly enough. 
REPLY: Our schedule is already a very complex one which raises many problems for students as it is; this proposal, which opens up M-W-F 1 ½ hour slots, helps alleviate one problem, which is that there are too many T-Th 1 ½ hour classes at the same time.

The Clerk commented that there seemed to be a lot of support for the proposal, but that people have also raised questions that EPC might respond to, and there is no urgency to decide this right now. Hence,

The Clerk suggested a straw poll: 41 votes, Yes 36, No 5. The Clerk asked for those 5 to speak.

COMMENT: I was in favor, but now I am against; there seem to be too many questions that E.P.C. has not thought through. RELATED COMMENT: I agree; this should be done with the use of a computer program and in consultation with Bryn Mawr, and perhaps the Registrar should assign teaching slots.

The Clerk suggested a three way straw poll: 40 votes, Yes 25, Maybe (too soon) 15. The Clerk commented that it seems that we need some more discussion.

COMMENT: (rhetorical question): Why are we spending time on this, when we are not experts on this question? The Clerk replied: It is more about EPC’s time, not the Faculty Meeting’s time. If we get only 5 No next time we take a straw poll, I think we can proceed and simply ask those 5 if they wish to stand outside the consensus.

3) EPC proposes that Chesick Scholars be allowed to receive up to 2 course credits for pre-matriculation courses (by analogy to AP credits) (att. doc.) We have had a version of a summer pre-matriculation program (Howard Hughes M.I.) for 6 or 7 years; the proposal for course credit came up at a brown-bag lunch when we were discussing its present form (the Chesick Scholars Program.) It seemed to us better than our practice of giving credits to high school AP courses: these courses are taught by Haverford faculty, and many of these students are coming from high schools which would not have offered AP courses at all. The awarding of course-credit would not be automatic; we could award ½ or 1 credit depending on achievement (as we count AP courses awarded 4 or 5 credits.)

COMMENT: At the faculty meeting last March we did not approve the Chesick Scholars Program as a whole; we merely approved a one-year pilot version of the program. But now it appears to be a fait accompli. Was this then, and is this now, a “fake” discussion? REPLY: I was the Director of its predecessor, the Howard Hughes M.I. program. We have had such programs for a long time. All that is asked now is that EPC grant Haverford course-credit for the courses which these students take.
COMMENT: The document that was circulated for the March faculty meeting included mention of course credit. Because this agenda item was repeatedly bumped from the agendas, we did not have adequate time for discussion.

COMMENT: From what I have heard, I don’t see any evidence that these courses are worth Haverford course credit. The assessments that were made of the H.H.M.I. program did not show evidence that these programs have any real effect on student performance.

COMMENT: I taught in this program last summer. There is a big difference between the H.H.M.I. program in the past and the Chesick Scholars program: these Chesick Scholars are not just Natural Science students, but also in the Humanities and Social Sciences. Last summer’s program was very different from the previous ones. We do need to assess results, but we can’t see them for several more years; we can hope to see the beneficial results of this new program on recruitment of students, which the Admissions Office thinks that it has already seen.

COMMENT: I also taught in this program last summer. You can examine the course I taught just as you can examine high school AP courses and school courses taken elsewhere in the U.S. in the summer or in Study Abroad. We certainly have enough data to make judgments about whether these courses are worth Haverford course credit. We are not being asked to assess the value of the whole Chesick Scholars Program, which would be premature at any rate; we are being asked to grant course credit for courses which our own faculty are teaching.

COMMENT: I agree with the last two speakers; I have not taught in the program myself, but I have had good experience with a graduate of the program. How do we assess the value of AP courses? We can’t.

COMMENT: The 2010 EPC said that EPC in the future should make a judgment only about the course-credit issue. We did have a discussion about “managing” the effect on departmental offerings of released-time for faculty to teach these courses [but this aspect of the program (released-time) has now been dropped], and about the effect of diminished summer research time for faculty who teach them, especially for younger faculty.

COMMENT: I think that EPC should come back to us with an explanation of the status of the Chesick Scholars Program; if it is approved, then course-credit follows as a matter of course.

COMMENT/QUESTION: How is this different from any other summer programs our students take?

COMMENT: All of these programs, such as the older H.H.M.I. program and especially now the Chesick Scholars Program, are excellent programs for these students. The value for these students is that they actually graduate from Haverford; these programs help make that happen. Giving Haverford course credit makes it better; that gives the courses more bite. These programs benefit a class of students who really need help.
COMMENT: I agree with much of what you are saying about the value of these programs. But I have concerns: 1) Is this a good use of faculty summer research time? 2) If these are “underprepared” students, why do we think it is a good idea to allow them to take 30, rather than 32, regular Haverford courses for graduation? One would think that they need more, rather than fewer, Haverford courses.

COMMENT: I have been doing this for a long time. The Chesick Scholars Program is more robust than the H.H.M.I. was; the courses are really very good. The Chesick Scholars Program is aimed at “High Achieving” underprepared students. Moreover, teaching these courses benefits those who teach them; it makes you a better teacher in the regular full-year Haverford program.

The Clerk commented: This has been a complicated discussion; we are not in any case moving to action today. So discussion will continue. I propose a straw poll in which the third category is very broad: Vote 1 to indicate that you approve EPC’s proposal on the single issue of granting credit; vote 2 to indicate that you don’t favor granting credit; vote 3 if you are undecided, if you need more time or information, if you have procedural questions about just what the faculty has been or should be asked to approve, or if you think that the issue of approving credit can’t be separated from approval of the program as a whole.

42 votes; Yes 32, No 0(zero), Undecided (etc.) 10.

The Clerk commented: People should communicate their specific questions and views to EPC, and EPC should frame the document (when it returns to the faculty) with a clear statement of procedural status and context.

b. F.A.P.C. (Rob Manning): An election system reform proposal (att. doc.)

There are some details to be worked out. Any ideas?

COMMENT: For two-year terms, how do we deal with planned upcoming sabbatical leaves? Do we remove ourselves from consideration when we know that this is in the offering, or do we handle that when it in fact takes place?

COMMENT: The issue of “up to three choices”; I gather that you can indeed choose only one person? (REPLY: Yes.)

Preliminary straw poll: 40 votes, Yes 40, No 0(zero), Maybe 0(zero)

c. Report of the President

Haverford has joined with other college presidents in addressing our political leaders about the for rational gun safety measures, including opposing legislation allowing guns on our campuses, a ban on military-style automatic weapons and high capacity ammunition magazines, and other measures.
Richard Freedman has already given you as report on the December 6 Board conference-call meeting.

We decided to hold the inauguration of Dan Weiss on October 26, at the same time as the Board meeting (which has been pushed back to this date) and Family and Friends weekend.

The February Board meeting will discussing the budget and the beginning discussions about academic planning, space planning, and administrative-area planning. We will keep you informed and try to keep key constituencies on the same page on these issues, to promote transparency. The goal is to have a first draft of a plan for Dan Weiss to work with next year, and we hope that the campaign can start in the following year.

The following personnel recommendations will go to the Board at the February meeting: re-appointment of Zach Oberfield (Political Science) as Assistant Professor, and promotion to Associate Professor and tenure to Casey Londergan (Chemistry), Travis Zadeh (Religion), and Barak Mendelsohn (Political Science.)

I am asking Jess Lord to make a brief report about next year’s freshman class.

Jess Lord (Dean of Admissions): We have had a record number of applications and applications through the Questbridge process (for low-income students. We have accepted 141 students through Early Decision.

QUESTION: I have heard that 40-45% of our Early Admission students are listed athletes; that seems to me a very large number. REPLY: This has been true for many years. Our Athletic Recruitment takes place largely in this early time period. This # does not affect the general number of Athletes admitted as a whole; in fact, the % has gone down recently. RELATED REPLY (Faculty Athletics Rep.): the number matches the # athletes in the student body as a whole.

d. Report of the Faculty Representative to the Board (Richard Freedman) (att. doc.) You have it.

e. Open Question Period. (agenda items, and additional attached documents: AAC about the budget, Provost’s report, Admissions Committee report)

QUESTION (to AAC): Why are we in a budget hole? REPLY: This is an artifact of a working budget; the final version will (must!) be a balanced budget.

QUESTION/ COMMENT: (TO AAC): The spending formula remains constant, but the number of students has gone up by 10. We have only inconclusive results about the effectiveness of the No Loan policy. (That is: what is its opportunity cost? What do you lose by allocating so many resources to a No Loan policy?) What “new positions” are being referred to? What does a 2% salary increase” mean, when it is
clear that we are below the practice of our peers? **REPLY:** In fact, the increase in # students is 15; we need the increase in order to balance the budget. The spending rate is unsustainable; it is clear that we have to control it. We don’t want to increase student charge too much. *Of course* we all want higher salary; and we are *usually* behind our peer institutions, which are richer than we are. The No Loan policy decision has been delayed until Dan Weiss comes on board. We haven’t *finalized* yet any new positions. (It is a “plug-number” in the budget as of now.)

**COMMENT (Faculty Rep. to the Board):** We do not sit on the Board’s Finance Committee.

**QUESTION:** Can we please have data about our salaries relative to our peers? We haven’t had it in a while. (**Reply:** YES.)

**REPLY (Dick Wynn):** The Endowment pretty much follows the market. It was $380-395,000,000 last year. We have spent down the endowment lately; the Board for sound reasons wishes to stop doing that. We do not have a new spending formula yet; we are in the process of tweaking the old one. We now are using a three-year instead of a one-year average market value; the resulting spending number for FY14 is flat.

Adjourned at 5:50 p.m. 

Linda Gerstein, Secretary to the Faculty