Haverford College Faculty Meeting Minutes

December 19, 2013
4:25 p.m.

Deborah Roberts, Clerk

Moment of silence.

I. The Provost introduced Marta Bartholomew, the new Assistant Provost for Administration (APA.)

Action I. Approval of the minutes of November 21, 2013.

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

1. Rob Manning and Richard Freedman for FAPC: Changes in the charge and structure of the Admissions Committee (att. doc.)

Summary: The committee normally meets every third year. If, on a year when the committee is not in session, an Admissions representative or faculty member wishes to convene the committee, they may register that desire with a current faculty Board representative, who will take it to Academic Council for possible action.

COMMENT: How about if we had the following: the committee would continue to “exist” even in non-session years, to be called into action if needed? REPLY: the last sentence leaves room for this, among other possibilities.

QUESTION (current Chair of Admissions): The current Admissions committee has not discussed this; how does this change affect the agenda of the committee for spring 2014, among which items we intend to discuss the communication between Admissions and the faculty? REPLY: This is a language-change intended for the Faculty Handbook. This is not intended to close out any agenda items of this current committee, and it rests on an assumption of increased transparency and communication.

The Clerk asked for a straw-poll: (33 votes), Yes 33, No 0.

The Clerk: Do we have a consensus? YES.

Action II: The faculty approved the revision to the charge of the Admissions Committee.

II. Report of the President

1. The President expressed thanks to Michael Kiefer for his good service as VP of Institutional Advancement and described Mike’s new role as Special Assistant to the President on international affairs for the spring semester of 2014. Ann Figueredo (’84), current Director of Leadership
Gifts, will assume the position of interim VP of Institutional Advancement.

2. I have been traveling around the community with Jess Lord to discuss the proposed No Loan policy. Many students feel very strongly about it; and obviously, not everyone will be happy with it. We are agreed that we must make Haverford affordable; but that does not necessarily mean that we must have a No Loan policy.

3. There have been questions raised (for instance at the last faculty meeting), about the funding for the Sharpless renovations. We have now discussed it with AAC (and would have discussed it eventually in any case, in the context of reviewing the 2014 budget decisions.) We assumed that 1) Sharpless must be repaired, 2) it is impossible raise money from donors for repairs, and 3) we thought that we could raise the money internally: either by borrowing $ from a bank, or by borrowing $ from oneself [the Endowment], (where the Endowment becomes a “bank” in this sense, with a suitable pay-back schedule.) We would not move forward on this without a discussion with AAC.

4. Our Board of Managers committee structure needs revision, and we are just now beginning to think about it. For instance, as of now we have no Committee on Admissions or Committee on Technology; there will be two such committees, in connection with a revamping of the whole structure.

**QUESTION:** On the No Loan policy: do we think that students already take out more in loans than the College suggests? And do we assume that they will now take out even more? (This question was asked at a previous faculty meeting also.) **REPLY** (Jess Lord): Yes. About 29% of our students have loans, (and they are not all students on financial aid); there is an average $15,000 loan burden now. So surely the loans will go up; but how much? We don’t know.

**QUESTION:** How much would be saved by modifying the No Loan policy? We have been told that it is $800,000-1,000,000 annually; but what does this mean? **REPLY:** If we did not make this change, we would need to raise tuition yearly by about 1-2% to realize this yearly saving.

III. Report of the Provost.

1. **ALL OF US must all have participated in Title IX training sessions by Jan. 31, 2014. Not everyone has done it. There is one more Title IX training option:** either a) to watch a video to be shown on Jan. 7 or Jan. 8 or Jan. 9, 2014, or b) to use an on-line training session device in combination with the video.
2. The Provost’s report had several items which you may want to discuss.

3. Rob Fairman (Associate Provost): there are several upcoming deadlines. For Student Assistant Requests for summer 2014 or academic year 2014-2015, the deadline is Jan. 6, 2014. For Research Grant requests (up to $6,000), the deadline is January 27, 2014. Note that we also have a “limited research fund”: requests can be submitted anytime, for up to $1000.

Open Question Period.

1) COMMENT: Faculty meetings, quite short this year, have also been boring this year. But this is supposed to be a year when Big Decisions are being made about changes and the Strategic Plan for the future. There seems to be very little “unfiltered” contact between the whole faculty and the decision-makers, including previously-regular informal contact between faculty and the Board as a whole. Why have issues not been coming up here on the floor of the faculty meeting? (I think that Excellence is achieved by “productive conflict” and tension.)

COMMENT: I too have been shocked by the shortness of faculty meetings, but/and I observe that there is less un-productive discussion also. Perhaps there are other more informal venues which would be more productive of discussion? (I miss the role that the Faculty Dining Room lunches once played.)

COMMENT: Committees (EPC, FAPC) have been holding Open Meetings on specific agenda items; FAPC is holding an Open Meeting on Jan. 22, 2014.

COMMENT (The President): Our Strategic Planning Task Forces will be reporting back to the faculty in the spring semester.

COMMENT: I too would like to see provocative discussion; we should feel comfortable in standing up and speaking, (and [the Clerk] our recent changes in faculty meeting structure were intended to provide this opportunity, including the inclusion of this Open Question Period.)

2) COMMENT: I object to the document on mandatory practices for the electronic submission of senior theses, which has just been issued without extensive discussion with the faculty. There are flaws in it; it should have been discussed with individual departments (for instance, it contradicts the Mathematics department’s practice and agreement with the Library.) This document needs more work.

REPLY (Assoc. Provost): We simply wanted to have a permanent record of senior thesis work, in addition to any other departmental practice.

RESPONSE: The thesis-submission is a very sensitive process; this is a very heavy-handed document. It takes the form of “You must do thus….” from the Registrar.
A final Final Draft sometimes appears only as a result of many steps and much time and at the very last moment before Commencement, because we sometimes insist on revisions. (Later COMMENT: There is a difference between the “Final Copy” submitted to the department by the student and the “Archival Copy,” in which changes can be made at the last moment.)

In addition: I do not think that students be the ones who choose the level of archiving (dark, semi-dark, deep…); we (the faculty) should be choosing the level.

RESPONSE (Assoc. Provost): There is a sentence which apparently slipped out of the final version and which should be re-inserted: “After first discussing with the professor…” before choosing the level of archiving. But there does have to be some deadline: a week before Commencement seems reasonable.

COMMENT: Some of the “heavy-tone” results from the fact that the faculty has to take responsibility to see that there is indeed a submission of the thesis for archiving.

COMMENT (Assoc. Prov.): Submission is a voluntary process. 90% were submitted last year; we are aiming for 100%. We are certainly open to tweaking the document.

COMMENT: I have another concern about the document, a concern over the “privacy” issue: it is the student’s work, and it should be the student’s decision what happens to it. COMMENT/ and RESPONSE: In the sciences, the faculty often has as much ownership over the work, both data and interpretation, as the student. And there is the issue of possible poaching of pre-publication released data. ANOTHER COMMENT: When research comes from a grant, the Principal Investigator owns the data on which a thesis is based, although students own what they themselves write. So it is a very delicate issue to decide who owns the decision about the level of archiving. ANOTHER COMMENT: In the Music field, copyright issues are very slippery; “streaming” as a form of archiving is a tricky issue.

QUESTION: Do we archive the Haverford-major thesis work of Bryn Mawr students who major at Haverford? REPLY: Yes. And we also archive the thesis work of Haverford students who major at Bryn Mawr.

3) COMMENT: I have a concern about our apparently-haphazard practices for final-exam week deadlines. We have a system in which the entire exam-week is reserved for final work (which can be a final exam or work in lieu of a final exam.) We have a self-scheduled exam system, where students set their own schedules for taking exams and submitting final work during that week (whether as exams administered by the Registrar during daily exam-times, or as take-home exams, or as final papers/work in lieu of a final exam.) Apparently, some professors have been setting their own deadlines, earlier than noon on the final day of exam period; the result is that students may have more than one exam set on the same day, that they are therefore not self-scheduling, and that there is a deadline which is earlier than the college deadline.
RELATED COMMENT: And we used to have a “protected reading period on the weekend after classes end,” during which exams were not taken. And also, some time ago, some students protested against the giving of final class exams for in-class-work on the last day of the classes-week, on the grounds that this overloaded the very last week of the semester with two exams (the last class exam and the final exam.) (RESPONSE: That latter practice is sometimes unavoidable in terms of class planning and structure.)

COMMENT: I have a broader but related concern: the fall exam period is only a week long, whereas the spring period is more relaxed with two weeks. The December exam week is very pressured. Could we open up the calendar more in the fall? COMMENT: This was a consequence of the introduction of the full-week of Fall break. Could we re-think this practice? It makes for a crazy squeeze when you throw in what is virtually a week for Thanksgiving too. RELATED COMMENT: Yes, well… remember, we also have to allow for a TRI-College calendar! RELATED COMMENT: Note that Swarthmore’s exam schedule already differs from ours.

The Clerk: These are obviously questions for EPC to take up.

Adjourned at 5:35 p.m. Linda Gerstein, Secretary to the Faculty