Haverford College Faculty Meeting Minutes

May 15, 2014
9:02 a.m.

Deborah Roberts, Clerk

Moment of silence.

**Action I.** Approval of the minutes of April 17, 2014.

1. **Report of The Provost.** “I now seek the faculty’s approval for the awarding of degrees…”

**Action II.** The faculty so approved.

2. Darin Hayton, for Committee on Honors, Fellowship, and Prizes…. [This item actually came up later in the faculty meeting, because the relevant documents had not yet appeared in the room, although it belongs here in the agenda.]

“We seek the faculty’s approval for the nomination of the following seniors for graduation as Summa cum laude, Magna cum laude, or cum laude….”

In doing this, we note that we are using the new Honors criteria approved by the faculty last month, thus also awarding college-wide honors cum laude.

**QUESTION:** What was the GPA cut-off for *cum laude*? **REPLY:** Roughly 3.68…

**COMMENT:** I note the striking increase of majors in the Social Sciences; how to account for that? **REPLY:** It may be partly due to the increase of double-majors.

**COMMENT:** Since it is hard to interpret these figures because they represent some double-majors across divisions, it would be nice in the future to see more refinement of the description of students receiving honors by divisions, and also by revealing the actual number of students in each category, along with comparative figures about the demographics of senior students by division.

**QUESTION:** Since, (it turns out, in response to a question), these calculations do not include eighth-semester senior grades, did the Honors Committee discuss the possibility of doing this in the future? **REPLY:** We will consider this possibility next year.
**QUESTION:** I note that there are a very small % of students of color here in this list; do you have a sense of why? **REPLY:** The awarding of *Summa* and *Magna* is a result of both GPA and nominations from the faculty: we looked at the students which were thus proposed to us. The awarding of *cum laude* was GPA-driven and purely mechanical; it reflects student grade-performance. The Committee did not examine the proposed names for the category of “students of color.”

**COMMENT:** My experience is that students who come “underprepared-from-high school” often experience grade-troubles in their freshman year but can improve markedly later on; perhaps we could eliminate first-year grades to compensate for this and thus get a better picture of student performance. **SUPPORTING COMMENT:** Or, instead of eliminating freshman grades entirely, we could weight sophomore-junior-senior grades more heavily than freshmen grades in making the GPA calculations, (as Phi Beta Kappa does.) **REPLY:** This is something else for the Honors committee to consider next year.

**Action III:** The faculty approved the senior Honors student-list.

3. **Academic Council:** Rebecca Compton, Alex Norquist: personnel case criteria (att. doc.)

We are now presenting this version, after further consultation with many faculty; we think this is now a better proposal, an improvement in the language. We see this as useful guidance 1) for the faculty as they receive consideration for promotion; 2) for department Chairs as they mentor younger faculty; and also 3) for sharing the college’s values and expectations with candidates during the process of recruiting of new faculty.

There are a series of small changes, mostly in the area of scholarship and in softened language about the order of importance of criteria, stressing the importance of the community in which the candidate works, and including attention to new emerging platforms of scholarly performance. In the area of service, we note that candidates often don’t choose the service they do, but rather are assigned service responsibilities.

**COMMENT:** In discussing service, we should eliminate “etc.” in the criteria, since “etc.” conveys precisely the vagueness which we are trying to eliminate. **REPLY:** Yes.

**COMMENT:** Although I don’t agree with everything as it is stated in the proposal, I do think that it represents our considered judgment and I accept it.

**COMMENT:** I note that no value is given in this statement to “contributions to diversity” in the statement of criteria for service; I suggest that we add that language indicating that consideration should be given to candidates who do indeed contribute to diversity. **REPLY:** We will address this, yes.
The Clerk called for a straw-poll: Do we accept the proposal? Yes 43, No 1.

The Clerk asked: Does the 1 person wish to speak, or to identify oneself as standing outside the consensus? Apparently not.

Action IV. The faculty approved the new document (with minor changes just suggested) about criteria for promotion.

4. Ann McGuire, for FRRC: updates to the handbook. (att. doc.)

After considering comments last month, and comments which came to us later, we submit the following revised version (with the addition of #7, the alcohol policy statement.)

The Clerk asked for a straw-poll: Yes 42, No 1.

The Clerk asked: does the 1 person want to speak?

COMMENT: Yes, it was I. (I should have spoken up earlier.) This is a document for the faculty handbook; why does item #6 (about sexual or romantic relationships) refer to all employees (staff as well as faculty)? The Faculty Handbook isn’t intended to cover issues affecting staff. REPLY: Some of this language was in fact lifted from the Staff handbook; and some Staff are in fact former students; perhaps it would be better to say something like: “as with all employees of the college, relations between faculty and students…”

The Clerk asked if the Commentator was now willing to join a consensus? Yes.

The Clerk then asked: Do we now have a consensus? YES.

Action IV: The faculty accepted the proposal on Handbook revisions to Section I,D and Section III, C-D, c).


COMMENT: Isn’t student class-attendance a “normal” expectation, rather than a “special” one? [After some discussion, in which the issue of “special” attendance-rules which the faculty has qualified in some way came up.] REPLY: We clearly need some clarification in the language about class attendance.

QUESTION: Are there expectations about norms of faculty appearance on campus, as part of normal teaching responsibilities, during exam period? [After some discussion, including anecdotal evidence that some faculty are routinely absent during exam period, it was agreed that we don’t want to be too restrictive in our discussion of faculty performance, and also that there is a need for flexibility; but we should have some statement about this, and it was agreed that this needs some clarification.]
QUESTION: What are the expectations for faculty service while on faculty leave? There seems to be some troubling lack of consistency in what gets asked of faculty on leave.

REPLY: There are various types of leave: sabbatical and otherwise, full leave and partial leave; in town and out of town; it is clear that this needs to be addressed in more detail.

COMMENT: In the Grievance procedure (section III, J, 1), there should be a statement that: in the case that the President and Provost decide that the matter should be brought to a close, then the grievant should be notified “in a timely fashion” about this decision.

REPLY: Yes.

The Clerk asked for a straw-poll: Yes 15, Yes (minor changes) 27, No 1, Undecided 6. Please communicate your ideas to about this to Rob Fairman and Ann McGuire.

FRRC then turned to the new policy on non-discrimination/harassment:

COMMENT: Conforming to Paragraph 4, which excludes “the display in the workplace or classroom of sexually suggestive objects or pictures…,” would make it virtually impossible to teach about certain subjects. Should we be warning students in advance when there may be an issue coming up in classroom, or in readings or viewings, which may be offensive to someone? REPLY: Perhaps the operative word would be “inappropriate?” RESPONSE: But how to define “inappropriate?”

COMMENT: Shouldn’t we distinguish between office space and classroom space?

COMMENT (Dean): Students are very exercised about the “Trigger-language warnings” issue.

COMMENT: It is not only a question of “sexually offensive” subjects; there are issues of religion, extreme violence, and political ideology which may offend some students; do we have to avoid troublesome questions?

COMMENT: Should we be warning students when something which may offend someone will be coming up in classroom or in readings or viewings? (like a “PG17” statement?) ANOTHER COMMENT: Perhaps we can find better language to reject what is clearly “offensive” and to accept what may be troublesome to some?

COMMENT (The President): We have to distinguish between our sense of “academic freedom” and our College Lawyers’ desire to protect us against litigation; this statement reflects our Lawyers’ sense of what is safe for us, but we do not have to totally accept their suggestions.

It seems that we have to go back to the drawing board with this statement. Please communicate your views to FRRC.

5. FAPC: Richard Freedman and Suzanne Amador Kane: report on the April Board meeting. (att. doc.)
COMMENT: You note that you were not present at the Educational Affairs Committee during discussion of personnel cases, not yourselves being members of Academic Council, (as previous Faculty Reps. to the Board, under the old system before the creation of FAPC, had been.) We had discussed this problem at the time we created FAPC and had noted at that time that this was a disadvantage of the new arrangement; we had expressed in the faculty minutes a desire that a faculty member from the Academic Council which had deliberated on the current cases be present when the Board discussed personnel decisions, (in addition to the Provost, who is of course present); but apparently this has not happened. REPLY (Provost): Yes, indeed, this has inadvertently slipped out of sight; we will have to address this next fall.

6. FAPC: Richard Freedman and Rob Manning: faculty housing (att. doc.)

QUESTION: Where does this now leave us? We have been discussing this for some time! Can something actually happen? REPLY: It seems that the easiest thing to address, to make a change without needing to change too much, would be in the mortgage policy, (although the financial ramifications are not clear.) But the larger issue is: what does the faculty think of a Faculty Housing policy? What is its purpose? For instance, how many on the faculty would be interested in a significant renovation-and-purchase policy? (Apparently not that many, on the basis of the survey.)

COMMENT (The President): The ball is in our court: It is the job of the Administration to propose a housing policy to the Board.

QUESTION: What is “the current thinking” about emeritus campus housing? Many of us made decisions on housing (the decision to remain in campus housing) on the assumption that emeritus housing would exist for us. REPLY: We have been talking about a future policy; we assume that everyone here is “grandfathered in,” that there would be no radical changes for current faculty. It is an issue for the long-term. (Although one might imagine that a more generous mortgage policy might make it easier for older faculty to change their housing arrangements.)

COMMENT (Associate Provost): However, there is an immediate concern also: in the last year we did not have enough campus housing for those who wanted it.

Please pass your comments to next year’s FAPC: Laura McGrane and Casey Londergan

II. Report of the President

1. I am pleased to announce:

The following re-appointments: Imke Brust, Heidi Jacobs, Seleha Jilani, Alexander Kitroeff, Jon Wilson
The following promotion to Associate Professor with Tenure: Beth Willman

The following promotions to Professor: Tom Lloyd, Rob Manning, Iruka Okeke

2. The discussion at the Board meeting of the Strategic Plan was very productive and enthusiastic. The Plan needs a more robust discussion of Diversity, and a section on outcomes, which will be on the agenda for this summer.


4. About the current issue of our proposed fourth Honorary Degree candidate: [The summary below includes replies to several questions from the floor.]

We had a very productive open-campus meeting last Thursday and we heard each other out. The Honorary Degree Committee and Board leaders then reaffirmed its invitation; that is, we did not rescind the invitation. I wrote a letter reaffirming the invitation, communicating the role that our Quaker traditions have played in the concerns that had arisen, and inviting the possibility of fruitful dialogue and a respect for the views of others. Our invitation was declined, under the contested circumstances of its offering. There has been a lot of media commentary on this; it has not been a great moment for Haverford in the world. My job has been to “balance,” and I had invited respectful dialogue; but in this case, that scenario has not been the outcome. The opening salvo in the affair did not invite that kind of dialogue; hence, the tone had already been set from the beginning. The issue before us in the future is: how do we as a campus deal with such disagreements, in a situation where there are strong minority views and a group that is interested in “winning?”

5. This year’s Mary Lindback Foundation Teaching Award goes to Beth Willman.

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

We are in the process of writing new “Memorandums of Understanding” for Bi-college programs; please send me any information you have.

We had a fruitful meeting last Monday as a beginning of a college discussion of Diversity: what we might mean by it, how we are doing, what more we can do, how we might frame the issue in a productive way?

I ask that the faculty join me in expressing our gratitude to Board Representatives Suzanne Amador Kane and Richard Freedman for their exceptional service both with the Board and on FAPC.
I want to express my profound appreciation to Fran Blase and Rob Fairman for agreeing to continue service on the Provost’s team for 2014-2015; their creativity and hard work are essential to the faculty’s success.

And I want, finally, to extend my sincere thanks to the whole faculty for its remarkable dedication to teaching, research, and our complex, intentional governance responsibilities, which you uphold with inspiring commitment.

IV: A Report from OAR: Kelly Wilcox (att. doc.)

Although we have had only two years of operation, we are going full steam. We use a coaching model of partnership with students; we work from a base of student strengths, we center our services around student collaboration, peer-tutoring, and shared spaces. Next year we will be focusing on faculty-partnership. We can facilitate refresher-courses for student skills; we also run TA-training courses. (In reply to a question): we sometimes find that students who had had initial difficulties with courses later make the best tutors for students finding themselves in a similar position. (In reply to another question): the proportion of the student population who come to OAR accurately represents the demographics of the student body.)

IV. Open Question Period

It was noted that a question had arisen as to whether the faculty is still consulted about honorary degree candidate nomination: indeed they are, most recently this year in a Daily Digest during the fall semester. It was suggested that this is not the most useful venue and that other forms of communication with the faculty will be pursued in future years.

In reply to questions: The announced “Risk Management For International Travel” policy (faculty/staff with students in tow) is new; and we will be working next year on a similar policy for travel to domestic U.S. sites with similar potential problems of security and safety.

Adjourned at 10:50 a.m.

Linda Gerstein, Secretary to the Faculty