Haverford College Faculty Meeting Minutes

Oct. 2, 2014

These minutes now come to you early, so that those who have questions or a comment about a proposal can communicate their thoughts to the reporting committee.

Moment of silence.

Action I. Approval of the minutes of September 4, 2014.

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

1. Anne McGuire, for FRRC (Faculty Rights and Responsibilities Comm. Working Group) (att. doc.): Revisions to the Handbook.

These were all presented at the May faculty meeting, for discussion. We made revisions and are coming to you now for Action. We will discuss it page-by-page.

First page: items about what goes on in the classroom. We added language allowing some flexibility in the arrangements.

The Clerk called for a straw-poll: Do we accept the revisions on p. 1? Yes 42 No 0. Apparently we have strong faculty support on p. 1.

Second page: items about beyond the classroom, leaves and end-of-year responsibilities.

COMMENT: As for eligibility for appointment to committees when on leave: we had discussed the possibility that someone on leave for the fall semester might still be put on a committee where the major responsibility fell in the second semester. REPLY: The critical word is “ordinarily.” COMMENTS: It would be good to have more specificity. We should distinguish between “eligible to serve” and “required to serve.” Can we force someone to serve when on leave? “Ordinarily” means that there may be very special exceptions; maybe we could have a phrase that says that? PROVOST’S clarification: One could always negotiate arrangements for a leave in which service is possible.

FRRC QUESTION: Do we need an additional sentence, or should we just leave it as it is? Apparently: “just leave it,” from the floor.

The Clerk called for a straw-poll: Do we accept the revisions on p. 2? Yes 48, No 2. Apparently we have faculty support for page 2.

Third page: grievance procedures.
COMMENTS: Why the word “if” at the end of the second paragraph, and the word “when” at the beginning of the third? COMMENT: How about changing it to: “in the event that…”? REPLY: we can certainly modify the language a little.

The Clerk called for a straw-poll: Assuming that FRRC modifies the language to reflect this suggestion, Do we accept these revisions? Yes 52, No 0. Apparently we have strong faculty support on p. 3.

The Clerk asked: Are there any further comments from those two who had reservations on p. 2? Apparently, no one wished to speak. Do they wish to be recorded as standing outside the consensus? Apparently no.

The Clerk asked: Do we have a consensus on the proposed revisions from FRRC? YES.

Action II: The faculty accepted the recommendations.

2. Phil Meneely, for EPC. (att. doc.)

We know that there have been problems with expediting small revisions in courses at the moment, it seems to necessitate a full new-course proposal. We are working on this and will present a new way to do this next time. This arises from the fact that the Handbook suggests a more hand-on EPC role than is in fact our practice.

Class scheduling: We sent you some of our preliminary data on when we teach. Tuesday-Thursday is very heavily used; we would like to encourage more use of Monday and Wednesdays and Fridays for 90-minute classes. (We have already opened up new 90-minute slots for those.) Such clustering around T-Th. Classes reduces choice for students.

Might we create some 90-minute evening slots? Any thoughts?

COMMENT: How about a package of class-time for a course which uses two 90-minute slots which are not of our customary “T-Th 11-2:30,” or “MW 11:30-1,” variety? Such as “M11:30-1 and Thursday 9:30-11 for a particular course?

COMMENT: My Algorithms class is looking into Haverford scheduling as a class project. We haven’t gotten very far yet, but it there are 60 slots already being taught at Haverford. We haven’t analyzed the data yet, but it seems to me that simply adding a 61st time slot would not do much to fix our problem.

COMMENT: Classes 2:30-4 hit up against our athletic program; what about more morning 90-minute slots? COMMENT: We did add a M-W 8:30-10 slot, under special circumstances. But we shall examine this more. COMMENT: But such a 90-minute slot occupies TWO 60-minute slots. COMMENT: remember that most science labs take up an entire afternoon.
EPC: Friday is obviously the under-utilized day; we urge you to note this, (we appeal to your better natures…)

3. Darin Hayton, for the Honors Committee
   We nominate few candidates for a Rhodes. Our peers nominate many more. Do we need to think about this? We should be encouraging qualified students to apply.

   As far as the awarding of College Honors at graduation, we streamlined the recommendation letter-writing procedure; but we got letters only from 20% faculty last year. Of the 46 candidates up for Honors, only 16 had confirming faculty letters. This meant that the Honors committee was making decisions without faculty letters; in the absence of letters, transcripts and GPAs get too much weight. We need suggestions from you about how to make the grades (the numbers, the averages) more meaningful.

   COMMENT: Phil Bean suggested to us that we alert the Deans early on, even sophomores but certainly juniors, about promising students, in order for the College to encourage such students to think about applying for such Honors and awards.

   QUESTION: Why the focus on Rhodes? Why not Marshalls, Fulbrights, others? We should publish a list yearly, available to faculty and students, of all available (or likely) fellowships out there.

   COMMENT: Is the absence of applications a symptom of our culture of “modesty?”

   COMMENT: Our last Rhodes awardee applied twice; we should encourage them to try and try again.

   COMMENT: Phil Bean once sent us a few examples of good and useful faculty letters; we should have that again. And he reminded us that different fellowships demand different kinds of letters. REPLY: Good ideas: a list of appropriate fellowships, and sample letters.

3. Casey Londergan, for FAPC (att. doc.): the year’s agenda

   A propos communication with senior staff (and I.A. especially): please participate in the events for the kick-off of the Campaign on Family Weekend Oct. 24-26.

The Report of the President

   Indeed: The Board meeting of Oct. 24-26, and Family Weekend. The strategic plan will be presented to the Board in final form. We will hold an open meeting for
discussing this one more time: October 8 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. in the Bryn Mawr Room, DC.

The Board is in the process of examining the structures of its own governance, including committee structure, self-assessment of its functioning, the “culture” of Board business.

We recognize that in the past there have been more opportunities for good interaction between faculty and Board, especially when there were four annual meetings (whereas there are now three.) Should we have more informal opportunities, besides dining together during Board meetings, for some faculty and Board members to get together?

There will be discussions about the operating budget: we are now have a deficit operating budget, which is due in part to actual experience and in part to changes in how we report our operations.

Students (a wide range of students representing different concerns) have raised the issue of Diversity and we are forming a Task Force on this: issues such as hiring Faculty and Staff to reflect Diversity, caring for our curriculum to reflect Diversity, the general culture of “Diversity.” The Board will discuss this on Oct. 24-25. We recognize a genera campus-wide sense of uneasy frustration about progress on these issues.

QUESTION: Has the issue of economic Diversity been raised? REPLY: Yes, although it is not at the top of the list.

QUESTION: Many of our peers have a Chief Diversity Officer. Why doesn’t Haverford? REPLY: This is not a simple question. It is easy to imagine and create an office which will not be able to do anything, and that would not be a good thing. It is another level of Administration: does an institution such as Haverford need this? We welcome a discussion of this issue.

The Report of the Provost (att, doc.)

The first openings of the Faculty Lunchroom (on Thursdays and Fridays) will take place on October 30 and 31 (not the previously-announced Oct. 23-24, which is the date of the Board meeting and Family Weekend.)

We are working on galvanizing the tri-co Africana programs, and I want to acknowledge the energetic efforts of Jesse Shipley (Anthropology) in doing this, and in particular in organizing the Chinua Achebe Festival coming up next week, with many exciting events. I now turn to Jesse to tell us more.

Jesse told us more, urging us to take part in one venue or the other: Haverford lectures and panel discussions on Monday and Tuesday afternoons, workshops all week.
on the three campuses, open-to-all lunches at the Coop on Monday and Tuesday for everyone to meet the speakers.

II. Open Question Period

QUESTION: What happened to the idea of an Ombudsman, which surfaced last spring?
REPLY: We are indeed considering it, it is on our agenda. We are considering a bi-co or even a tri-co person.

COMMENT: I am the faculty Chair if the IITS search committee for a CIO. I urge you to communicate your ideas and concerns, and give us your participation, in the search.
FURTHER COMMENT: As for our straw-poll/clicker operation: we use our IITS personnel rather heavily on this, which is hardly central to their concerns, and we need them in other places and ways. I, Joshua Schrier (Chemistry) volunteer to take over this function from IITS; I know how to use clickers, I do it all the time in class.

The Clerk: Shall we have a straw-poll on this? (under the old manpower arrangement.) Yes 37, No 0.

The Clerk: we apparently have a consensus.

Action III: Josh will take over the actual straw-poll operation during faculty meetings, bringing his laptop. (Presumably Roger Hill will continue to provide the screen for the operation. The Secretary will bring the clickers, the Clerk will bring the bullet-thing attachment to Josh’s laptop.)

COMMENT: Speaking as a member of the faculty who has recently used the Black Box Theater facilities for curricular enhancement, I am distressed by the lack of technical resources to support the Black Box Theater. ANOTHER COMMENT: I agree, especially because we rely on the Black Box Theater as our only Haverford dedicated theater space.

COMMENT: I serve on the Clearness committee, which convenes every four years and conducts a survey soliciting opinions and feedback from the Haverford community on a few chosen topics. There will be a shorter version of the survey that solicits feedback from the faculty about experiences with, and opinions about, the Honor Council process and how it impacts on their teaching; it is coming to you next week.

Adjourned at 5:39 p.m. Linda Gerstein, Secretary to the Faculty