

Haverford College Faculty Meeting Minutes

February 15, 2018

Deborah Roberts, Clerk

Moment of silence.

Action I. Approval of the minutes of January 25, 2018.

II. Reports. Items for Action, and Items for Discussion

1. Ken Koltun-Fromm, ad hoc Research Policy Committee: beginning a discussion of a proposed re-stating of the College's policy on guidelines for faculty research (att. doc.)

We have arrived at this point because a group of faculty were approached to apply for a grant from a government funding agency (involving the Defense Department), a situation which initially appeared to contradict our current guidelines (in the Faculty Handbook, pp. 66-67) which come from the 1950s; and our consequent examination of those guidelines found them incoherent and no longer useful. We had an open meeting of the entire faculty in May 2017 to discuss this, and then a smaller meeting of faculty convened itself in November 2017 to discuss further. Out of that smaller meeting, we formed a yet smaller working group to try to construct better guidelines; the Provost formed this ad hoc Research Policy Committee (consisting of Ken Koltun-Fromm (Chair), David Watt, Becky Compton, Rob Manning, John Dougherty and Fran Blase) This group is now presenting this draft version of a new statement to start the discussion going; it is based on the principles 1) that we all act in trust of one another and in good faith; 2) that research for the purpose of weapon-development should not be supported by the College; and 3) that we operate in a research-world of intellectual freedom and public accessibility to the products of our research.

QUESTION: What is “incoherent” about our old statement? It seems to me to state clearly that military research is in conflict with the Quaker Peace Testimony.

REPLY: It rejects military research (which involves security clearances for personnel and non-publication of research for security purposes), and thus it excludes our application to the Department of Defense for funding; but is unclear about “other departments of the government,” and is willing to consider requests *from* government agencies *to* the College. There seems to be equivocation here. **(LATER) RESPONSE:** I do not think the old policy is incoherent. I think there would be a loss in removing

“Department of Defense, and its subgroups” specifically. This new statement would allow everything to go through and would reduce our “Quaker-ness.”

COMMENT (this statement was read by one faculty member for another who had to be absent today): These proposed guidelines are incomplete, and problematic; they need much more work. Some points where additional clarification are needed include:

1) The new guidelines do not clearly state the nature of “militaristic objectives.” It muddies the waters of what is the intent of research, vs. what can be the consequence of research as used by others. (I do support the general rule of not accepting funding for “development, manufacture or deployment of military weapons,” which seems clear and reasonable.)

2) The new guidelines should state clearly that these current-day defense agencies also support many research projects of broad scientific, health, and social aims that are consistent with our Haverford institutional values.

3) The issue of “publication of research” is complex, because it is not only the government agencies, but also private corporations who sponsor research which sometimes want to restrict immediate publication.

4) We want openness to maximal participation of our students, and this may involve students who are not U.S. nationals. There are a lot of “edge-cases” here.

COMMENT: I fully support that statement. I want to point out that the central focus should not be on the agency granting funding but on the research-project itself.

COMMENT: Unlike the 1950’s statement, this new statement does not mention the Department of Defense at all. **COMMENT:** But the more explicit the statement, the better; silence leaves too much open to interpretation. **REPLY:** We wanted to leave open the possibility for interpretation.

COMMENT: The issue of intent keeps coming up: *Whose* intent? The researcher, or the granting agency? **REPLY:** Yes, we thought it is our intent that matters. **COMMENT:** Well, we researchers can intend one thing (GPS, drones for photographing architectural sites, robots, artificial intelligence) and the granting agency can make it into a weapon. **COMMENT:** And why do we exclude “military weapons” and not “military technology?” **COMMENT:** Should we distinguish between “military” and “militaristic?”

COMMENT: It seems to me that we want a policy on guidelines that we can actually *use*; to be drawing a hard line here and now, when there are so many “edge cases,” doesn’t seem useful.

COMMENT: I am comfortable with supporting “basic research” of any kind, even if it could be later used for a specific weapons-purpose. **ANOTHER COMMENT:** But it seems to me to be worth saying clearly: “NOT for a weapon with intent to kill.” **ANOTHER COMMENT:** Perhaps we could replace the vague “are connected to” with the more specific “aimed to produce” in item 2. of the proposed guidelines. **REPLY:** “Aimed to produce” means that the committee would have to read minds.

COMMENT: If all we are saying is that we support “basic research,” why not make the most general statement to that effect: “in keeping with the values of the College.” **REPLY:** This is not just a statement that is turned toward the outside world; **it is also something to be presented as guidelines to new faculty concerning what research they can be doing at Haverford.**

COMMENT: I myself have studied ballistics physics; my intent is not militaristic; I would be willing to submit my research to the college’s interrogation about its concordance with the College’s values. But I think we have to be more clear and consistent in our statement in order for that judgment to be made. **REPLY:** Yes, but every time we thought of specifics, we could think of exceptions; so we thought it reasonable to focus on “interpretation,” to give the committee room. **ANOTHER COMMENT:** I should think that citing the Quaker Peace Testimony and College values is clear enough.

COMMENT (the Research Policy Committee): I think we, (as Faculty), have to ask ourselves: Do we want a policy that speaks to Quaker values? And to ask ourselves: do we want a hard, or a soft, policy?

A member of the faculty noted: As faculty members were have very different relationships to this research question; some of us are more “stake-holders” than others; could we identify our relationship to this question as we express opinions on it, for instance in a straw-poll?

"The Clerk noted that this wouldn't be possible in our current practice; in any case, it appeared that the Committee's proposal was not yet sufficiently worked out to call for a straw poll at this point. The discussion will continue."

III. Open Question Period

1. Rob Scarrow & Bret Mulligan, as Faculty Representative to the Board of Managers: the elections. Check your availability-status as described on the spreadsheet we sent out. As described, the elections will roll out in stages. Please pay attention to opportunities for nominations of others as well as self-nominations: we want to produce a robust list of candidates.
2. Maud McInerney, for EPC.

New course submissions: please send forthwith.

Remember that courses now have to be tagged to the new Gen. Ed. Requirements, which will take effect for the incoming first-year students in September 2018.

The Departmental submissions of courses for the fall semester registration (due to the Registrar on March 24, for an April pre-registration) will also have to have all OLD courses tagged for the new Gen. Ed. Requirements.

There ensued lot of questions from the faculty floor about this tagging: What about BMC and SC course-tagging? Do we tag BMC and SC courses for our own Gen Ed. System? Do we tag our own courses for the BMC system? The general answer seemed to be: We will work it out, as we have worked it out in relationship to the older BMC system. The system is in transition this year. In another year we will have an entirely new course system in which it is all integrated.

IV. Report of the President

A propos today's discussion, I think that the Faculty should accept its key role in being responsible for articulating "Haverford values"; this is a very important discussion. But we should also remember that we are not the *only* stewards of this question.

The disruption caused by the numbing tide of gun violence these days affects our students strongly; we remember this as we do our important mentoring work for students.

I am pleased to announce that the Board certified the promotion to Full Professor (so now, The Frank A. Kafker Professor of History) of Lisa Jane Graham.

"I will fulfill my term as President until June 2019, and then step back again to faculty. The Board is beginning to talk about the new Presidential search process, for which this is an auspicious time, we being now in a strong place for attracting good candidates."

(The faculty expressed their thanks to the President)

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

Note that we now have two speakers coming to campus this semester to discuss "Free Speech on Campus": Sigal Ben-Porath on March 8 and Leslie Kendrick on April 17.

The Board meeting approved the Library's construction budget of \$35.2 million dollars. The majority of the funding is from philanthropy but there is still a gap to reach the \$35.2 million.

We will be putting a new roof on Union Building (Music) this summer. The building will be inaccessible during this time.

The academic budget is very tight this year, and we will work closely with Chairs and coordinators to ensure they have the staffing they need for next year, but we must be cognizant of the financial limits.

Adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

Linda Gerstein, Secretary to the Faculty