Minutes of the Faculty Meeting  
Nov. 11, 2015

I. Report from the Secretary.

The previous minutes were duly posted and accepted without comment.

II. Reports from College Officers

    A. The President’s Report – President Greene began with two betimely expressions of gratitude to the faculty members who will be “taking on a lot” as members of the task force of globalization, to be chaired by Catherine Besteman, and the task force on diversity and inclusion, to be co-chaired by Betty Sasaki and Dan Lugo.

    Greene next addressed the budget for next year. Keeping with precedent, tradition, and the brute facts of institutional imperatives and mathematical necessity, there is not enough to do all that we want to do. Two areas were singled out (doubled out?) as key priorities: “non-compensation” expenses and faculty salaries. Budget lines for the former, which includes such expenditures as travel, have typically risen at about 1-2% per year. The plan is to maintain that for academic departments but flatten the increase for administrative departments. Faculty salaries have fallen back to the middle of the NESCAC pack, so a relatively bigger bump is in order; compensation for generally lower- and hourly-paid staff is even more significantly below where it should be, so that calls for a bigger, bigger bump.

    B. The Provost’s Report – Lori Kletzer prefaced her report with some new and some belated introductions of staff and faculty: Lisa-Ann Wallace and Dave Cusano will be coaching softball and track-and-field, respectively; and Neil Gross was re-introduced, this time as the no-longer-visiting and newly tenured Professor of Sociology. Also introduced were: Mina Amundsen, Assistant VP for Facilities and Campus Planning; Heather Bumps, Associate Secretary of the College; Elreo Campbell, Associate Dean and Director of Financial Aid; Erika Lamarre, Associate Dean of Students and Director of Campus Life; and Laura Meader, Assistant Director of Communications.

    Mark Tappan asked about the upcoming selection of an Associate Provost to replace the irreplaceable Paul Greenwood, specifically about the mechanisms for insuring a diverse pool of candidates. Kletzer replied that more information would be forthcoming and that the position would continue to be internal and rotating given our very positive recent experiences, jokingly adding, “present company excluded.” Neither Paul Greenwood nor Michael Donihue rose to the bait. Greenwood did, however, rise to introduce some New Business, because...

III. Old Business.
there was no pending old business.

IV. New Business

On behalf of the Academic Affairs Committee, Greenwood put a motion on the table concerning the formation of a task force to review and, if deemed appropriate, recommend revisions to the all-college distribution requirements. Although there have been some recent modifications to the requirements, e.g., concerning diversity and writing courses, this will be the first comprehensive review since 1991 – thus pre-dating the presence of a significant majority of the faculty at Colby (oh, and pre-dating some entire bodies of knowledge, too).

Jorge Olivares opened the questions by asking about the proposed composition of the task force: Why are there so many members who are not part of the teaching faculty? Related questions were also raised about the voting status of ex officio members (by Martha Arterberry), as well as about presence or number of representatives from the students (by Mark Tapan), from the administration (by Joe Reisert), from the libraries (by Bob Nelson), and from the Dean of Students office (by Elizabeth Leonard). Replies from Greenwood, Kletzer, and Jim Terhune (as another member of AAC) explained the reasoning behind the various components of the motion, but also made note that further input is welcome. Marilyn Pukkila rose to defend the honor of librarians, or at least their integral relevance to curricular matters, and then raised the question of whether the mechanism by which courses earn their distributional designations would also be within the purview of the task force. Kletzer indicated that that could be the case, depending on the outcome of the first round of recommendations. Winifred Tate asked about assessment, with Kletzer referring to the interconnectedness of our requirements and our precepts, and the attendant difficulties in making assessments beyond the level of individual student performance. Laura Saltz then asked about the possibility of interim reports along the way to avoid the kind of bottleneck that has developed with the task force on governance. The Provost indicated that the request for regular reports would be regarded as a friendly amendment, and, since the current motion must lie over to be acted upon at the next meeting, she deftly pivoted to the aforementioned bottleneck:

V. Open Discussion on Governance.

With Sandy Maisel joining the Provost as another point person for questions, discussion turned to the draft report of the Task Force on Shared Governance. Maisel cited the series of meetings – 7 in total – that have helped shape the draft. Bruce Maxwell took careful notes at each meeting. Every point that was raised in any of those meetings (some of which came up in all seven) was considered by the full Task Force. Leonard asked whether those notes could be circulated or, Sasaki suggested, posted. Would there be a way to see all the unaccepted recommendations and unaddressed points? Maisel noted that this was the 5th time he has appeared before the faculty; Adam Howard added that the notes from each meeting had already been delivered to the relevant Division Chair or counterpart. Kletzer said
the concern now was only about how, not whether, to share. (And then designated to Greenwood the full responsibility of sharing the mic to questioners in the far reaches of the auditorium.)

To Saltz’ request for a summary of the main clusters of concerns, Maisel identified Division Chairs, their roles, and the mechanisms for their selection as the largest cluster. The next cluster included divisional affiliations, how they are assigned, and how that impacts committee assignments, especially with respect to the Interdisciplinary Studies division. The future make-up of the Promotion and Tenure Committee along with the idea of ‘lifetime exemptions’ for those who have served on P & T for 6 years were also high on the list of issues.

In response to a question of whether there would be a full faculty meeting discussion of the task force report, Maisel noted that the task force motion will come before the faculty as new business when it is ready. The motion will then lay over for a month. It will then be open to full discussion, possible amendment, and vote(s). Howard noted that there were some relevant parts that did not need full faculty approval, e.g., concerning the merger or coordination of some committees, and those proposals could go directly to the affected committees (whereupon Greenwood exercised his authority and relieved Howard of the mic).

VI. Reports from College Committees.

There were no new reports, but Leonard asked if we can expect to hear more from the Committee on Mission and Priorities. She was assured that we will.

VI. Announcements.

Jim Fleming invited the IDS faculty to the divisional meeting on Thursday at 4:00 in Lovejoy 215 (with the governance draft report on the agenda).

Stacey Sheriff reminded the faculty about the Dec. 4 deadline for proposals for W1/Writing-Across-the-Curriculum course development grants courses.

Pat Burdick announced that Special Collections would be holding a Special Audubon folio reception on Dec. 3 at 4:00, and thanked the Arts and Humanities Center and Herb Wilson for their participation and support.

Saltz invited the faculty to an agenda-free lunch in the Fairchild Room in Dana Hall from 11:30 to 1:00 on December 7.

Jamison Kantor noted a noontime art talk in the museum, next Wednesday, Nov. 18, on “Romanticism and Julia Margaret Cameron’s Heaven.”

Kerill O’Neill announced the “Theater of War Event” scheduled to begin at 2:00 on Sunday. Co-sponsored by the Center for Arts and Humanities, the Goldfarb Center, the Theater and Dance Department, and the Colby Health Center, it will
include dramatic readings, presentations and a panel discussion (including, among other luminaries, Bro Adams).

Addendum

Remembrance Day (and its American cousin) went unremembered.

Hereby submitted (thereby completing the illocutionary act),
Dan Cohen
Faculty Secretary
Nov. 11, 2015