Minutes of the Faculty Meeting
Dec. 9, 2015

I. Report from the Secretary.

The previous minutes were humbly submitted, dutifully posted, and despite the large and animated attendance, docilely accepted.

II. Reports from College Officers

A. The President’s Report – President Greene began by thanking all the faculty members who have been present at events for the students through the community’s recent, difficult times. He also thanked those who attended last night’s event in the Chapel and commended its planners, singling out the great efforts of Betty Sasaki.

Greene then turned to the announcement earlier in the day of the decision by Collaborative Consultants, a Massachusetts-based IT consulting firm, to open a center in Waterville, bringing 200 jobs as well as opportunities for internships and further development to the area. Colby’s future is tied to the future of Waterville and Collaborative Consultants is a training-intensive company, so this has the potential to be “a game changer” for the city (Biden-speak translation: this is really a BFD). Kudos to Brian Clark, Doug Terp, Ruth Jackson, and all the others who helped to bring this about.

B. The Provost’s Report – Lori Kletzer took a heartfelt moment to note the absence of Jack Sandler, the late men’s lacrosse coach, from the faculty meeting.

Echoing Greene, Kletzer also commended the planners of the previous night’s meeting – “My thinking changed” – and applauded the significance of Collaborative Consultants’ presence in Waterville.

The Provost’s report included two additional items: updates on the Library Planning Group and the search for an Associate Provost. The Library Planning Group is now fully constituted and ready to hit the ground running in January. Its charge is a detailed study of the library and all its programs, services, and impact on teaching. In addition, long-term space implications for the future will be within the Group’s purview, for which an outside consulting firm with expertise in the area will be available. The search for Paul Greenwood’s successor is officially underway now that the job description for the 3-year position has been sent to all tenured (=eligible) faculty and now that it has been announced here. In response to Jorge Olivares’ query about the search committee, Kletzer identified herself.

III. Old Business
The Academic Affairs Committee’s motion on the formation of a Task Force to review, and perhaps propose revisions to, the all-college academic distribution requirements was placed before the faculty. Judy Stone rose to propose an amendment to the proposal, viz., that the composition of the Task Force be reduced from the originally proposed 20 members to 11 members. The amendment would constitute the Task Force with the Dean of Faculty, or designee, along with 10 members of the teaching faculty to include 2 elected representatives from each of the 4 Divisions and 2 additional faculty appointed with an eye to counter any imbalances by division, gender, or rank. The Task Force would then consult with the Registrar, librarians, students, and other relevant constituencies.

Although the amendment was proposed in the spirit of a friendly amendment, Greenwood reported that the AAC considered it a sufficiently significant change to warrant coming before the entire faculty.

Paul Josephson volunteered to act as co-sponsor because he strongly supported the “spirit” of the amendment for recognizing that the ultimate responsibility for curricular planning belongs to the teaching faculty, a point reinforced by Jorge Olivares, reading from the Faculty Handbook: “The faculty shall establish policies relating to academic matters” (Article 6, 3). Greenwood noted that since any proposals to issue from the Task Force would have to come before the faculty, non-faculty representatives on the Task Force would not be in violation of the Handbook. Their presence around the table could provide valuable input. Stone acknowledged that obtaining input from different constituencies is important, adding that their presence per se is less so.

Herb Wilson said that a 20-person committee would be both impractically unwieldy and a “sea change” from past practice, e.g., the 3 curricular groups formed after the last accreditation visit. Margaret McFadden, while “very mindful of how well [different parts of the college community] work together,” re-emphasized that the final responsibility for the curriculum is the faculty while emphasizing that the responsibility to consult with others is included in that curricular responsibility. Patrice Franko, while worried about the “provostization” of committees, asked why the Associate Provost was not included. Stone replied that the Associate Provost would indeed be helpful and appropriate, and could be included since the amendment called for the Provost or designee. And isn’t the Provost ex officio a member of all faculty committees? Julie de Sherbinin expressed some concerns about how the appointed members would be chosen; Rob Weisbrot, less worried about denouncing than pronouncing provostization, was more concerned with the dilution of faculty expertise; and Neil Gross wanted assurances that others’ expertise was not excluded, since curricular distribution requirements have an impact in the institution beyond the curriculum itself. Sandy Maisel moved – not called – the question, which had the effect of both calling upon Joe Reisert as the Parliamentarian and moving him to the front of the auditorium to sort out the intricacies of parliamentary maneuvering. Ana Noriega’s raised the counter consideration that Director of the Libraries Clem Guthro was not present, but her comment, along with attempted contributions from Olivares and Stacey Sheriff, had to give way. The vote on moving the question, needing a 2/3 majority, was passed.
overwhelmingly but not unanimously. The subsequent vote on the amendment was then passed, again, overwhelmingly but not unanimously.

Discussion then turned to the amended motion. Cheryl Townsend Gilkes queried the Parliamentarian about tabling or deferring the motion, but Josephson moved this question. The vote on moving the question also passed overwhelmingly but not unanimously, a pattern that was finally broken when the vote on the motion itself, as amended, passed unanimously (or, at least, without any negative votes: there was no call for a show of abstentions).

IV. New Business

The next item on the agenda was the report of the Task Force on Shared Governance, so Maisel moved himself to the podium to preside over the discussion and called the nine other members of the Task Force to join him. The report was presented along with its 8 motions. The Task Force asked that the motions layover until the February meeting which will allow, first, for a month in which preliminary feedback can be gathered, simple errata can be easily corrected, and friendly amendments can be efficiently incorporated for re-presentation at the January meeting, and second, the requisite one-month layover for new business without preventing faculty action at the February meeting. Clever.

The motions have been separated to facilitate actions, some of which will trigger a falling dominoes series of changes in several places in the Faculty Handbook, all of which (it is hoped) have been identified and noted.

Raffael Scheck asked whether the plan was to address all of the proposals in a single meeting. Maisel replied that there have already been some changes to the document, there is time between now and its consideration for yet more, the separation of the motions should help, and the number of contentious issues is relatively small. And what do you think, Tappan then asked, are the most contentious issues? Maisel noted that since Bruce Maxwell’s “amazing minutes” for all but one of the meetings, along with Sandy’s own self-described as “less-than-amazing” minutes for that other one, are posted, it is possible for everyone to make her or his own judgment of relative contentiousness. A reasonable list would include the way that Division Chairs are elected, the addition of an IDS representative to the Promotion and Tenure Committee, scheduling divisional meeting between faculty meetings, and the Faculty Steering Committee. Such potentially highly contentious issues as faculty evaluation and compensation, which some tried to raise at the earlier meetings, fall outside the purview of the Task Force on Governance.

V. Committee Reports

The Committee on Mission and Priorities, Stone reported, met six times this semester. At two of the meetings, Greene shared plans about facilities. At two other meeting, the Committee heard presentations from representatives of academic programs – the Environmental Studies program, and the Art Department and
Museum. The other two meetings focused on initiatives from the administration, particularly with respect to the student experience and how Colby can compete with research universities for the best applicants. (Answer: Colby can offer intimacy, inter-disciplinarity, and connections to the world in ways that larger institutions cannot match.)

Tappan asked how the two academic areas that did make presentations were chosen. Kletzer responded that they were the ones who responded to the call for proposals.

VI. Announcements

Jim Sloat asked for feedback in connection with the Colby Liberal Arts Symposium. Last year’s CLAS had over 650 presentations and the planning for this year’s is underway, so suggestions are especially welcome now.


Val Dionne, as one of the coordinators for next year’s Revolutions theme, called for suggestions for a keynote speaker.

Maisel moved we adjourn. We did.

Submitted in accordance with, if not for the sake of, the duties of the Secretary,

Dan Cohen
Dec. 9, 2015