Faculty Meeting Minutes
March 9, 2016

I. Report from the Secretary.

No one who read the minutes from last meeting registered any objections, so they were accepted as posted.

II. Reports from College Officers

A. The President’s Report – President Greene began by leaking word of the line-up of Commencement speakers and honorees, in advance of the official announcement on March 10: Arianna Huffington, co-founder, president, and editor-in-chief of the Huffington Post Media Group, will be the Commencement Speaker; Valerie Jarrett, Senior Advisor to President Obama, will speak at Baccalaureate; and also receiving honorary degrees will be Lars Peter Hansen, winner of the 2013 Nobel Memorial Prize in Economics and Edison Liu, President and CEO of Jackson Laboratories. The nomination and selection process in the future will include more vetting from the faculty.

Greene then turned to the topic of replacing Jim Terhune as he steps away from his service as Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students. What will we need from someone in that position? High on the list of priorities is someone to help integrate the academic and residential lives of our students and ameliorate the so-called “Two Colby” (a.k.a., the Day-Colby/Night-Colby or Work-hard/Play-hard) Problem in which the civic, residential, and academic dimensions to campus life end up in a competition detrimental to all. Perhaps what is needed is a “Dean of the College” rather than a V.P. for Student Affairs, someone to oversee and coordinate the myriad aspects of campus life, including civic engagement, overall diversity, and working with the Provost. Several colleges and universities have adopted versions of this model. Cheryl Townsend Gilkes asked how this would differ from the position once held by Earl Smith (the only “Dean of the College” Colby has ever had), and how adding more responsibility would help. Greene replied that the responsibilities would be different, not simply more: the overall culture of the campus cannot be left to piecemeal management. This would be a senior position reporting directly to the President. The search firm Isaacson Miller has been engaged to assist with the search and they will work with a search committee that includes Professors Nathan Chan, Russell Johnson, Margaret McFadden, Erin Sheets, Mark Tappan, and Andrea Tilden.

As part of his report, President Greene opened for discussion the Target of Opportunity (TOP) Initiative (in a departure from the published order of business). First introduced at the January 2014 faculty meeting, the program is designed to
jumpstart Colby’s efforts at increasing diversification of the faculty by providing a
by-pass around the normal allocation of positions, the first stage in recruiting and
hiring. However, TOP will not solve all of our diversity problems, but it can be a
piece of a solution. One target of opportunity hire has been made so far.

In a letter to the President and Provost, now shared with the entire faculty,
the History Department articulated a number of concerns and questions about the
initiative, and provided a framework for further discussion. Laura Saltz asked about
how TOP proposals get accepted: who makes these decisions? Is there outside
input? Lori Kletzer said there is a “review committee” not a “search committee” –
TOP bypasses that stage – that includes an outside member, similar to regular
search committees. Julie de Sherbinin asked whether the practices (and pitfalls) of
similar programs at other schools have been studied. Greene and Kletzer both said
that TOP is in line with the programs with which they are familiar. Joe Reisert, in
line with question 6 from the History Department, asked about the effects for a
department that makes a TOP appointment when it comes to subsequent allocations
of faculty positions and other personnel decisions. These will have to be treated on a
case-by-case basis, Greene answered. Certainly, some TOP appointments could be
made with future retirements, openings, or replacements in mind; others may be in
response to curricular needs; some will be represent expansions in the FTE of the
college. It would be naïve to think that TOP hires will take place in a vacuum, so it
becomes incumbent on departments to have this conversation with the Provost at
the start. First Veronique Plesch, and then Saltz, asked how TOP applications from
several departments will be adjudicated. We have not as yet had the problem of too
many proposals, Greene noted, so that would be a welcome development. The
initiative was introduced last year with a proposed set of 5-7 new lines. Dale
Kocevski asked about what counts as diversity. In astronomy, for example, the
gender imbalance is much more skewed than in many other disciplines. Greene
invited departments to make their cases. Tanya Sheehan requested a step-by-step
walk-through of the process. Kletzer referred her to the memo of April 2015 (a copy
was included in the information packet provided for this meeting), but noted that
the program has been in a “slow-down” (but not under suspension) pending this
discussion.

Bob Gastaldo raised the issue of faculty support for TOP hires. Without
additional support, new hires could dangerously exacerbate pressures on existing
resources, such as the already cramped laboratory space in the natural sciences.
Marilyn Pukkila added that the same problem of space and resources for new faculty
affects the library, so Clem Guthro requested that departments and programs inform
the library of the needs of new hires. Greene acknowledged that support and
services will face serious challenges: we will need to be creative in the short-term.
There will be a comprehensive space-study, with the likelihood that it will
eventually lead to a new lab building, perhaps 5-7 years out. Liz McGrath brought up
the question of spousal support, a problem for any hires but something that could be
especially acute in recruiting for TOP. Yes, Greene answered, this is a chronic,
complicated issue and one that the College must be more responsive to moving
forward than it has been in the past. With dual-academic career partners, there may
be limited options within the College, but possibilities should be considered on a
case-by-case basis. Greene mentioned adding staff to the Provost’s office to assist dual-career couples, particularly on the staff side or with positions at other colleges in the area. Dual-career is not something we can ignore but neither is it something specific to TOP. We also need to be sensitive to the danger of exploiting TOP hires after they are here, de Sherbinin noted, by asking them to carry the excessive burden of serving as “diversity representatives” on too many committees or having to fill too many roles as models and mentors. Elizabeth Leonard wanted to know how curricular needs, enrollment distributions, and diversity of political thought enter into the allocation process. Greene addressed the curricular piece: if there are areas that we are not covering that we need to cover, that could indeed be part of the case made for a TOP hire. Kletzer took on diversity of political thought, citing Eric Rosengren’s recent visit to campus: it is something that is often taken care of by insuring that there is an appropriate diversity of backgrounds and perspectives.

II. Reports from College Officers [Part 2]

B. The Provost’s Report – Provost Kletzer had several announcements to make:

1. We are starting a space-utilization survey, so we should not be alarmed by strangers apparently casing the joint. (Second thought correction: we can be alarmed, but we should not be surprised.)

2. She then thanked the 77% of us who have already completed the COACHE survey while gently asking the other 23% to join the majority (with the possibility of less gentle nudging in the offing).

3. Margaret McFadden will take over for Paul Greenwood as the new Associate Provost. She will be responsible for curricular matters, one-year hires, Jan Plans, the Overseers Program (in tandem with Andy McGadney), as well as serving on the Task Force on Distribution Requirements (as an elected faculty member now and ex officio when in her new position).

4. Respect and gratitude were expressed for Greenwood’s contributions and that he stayed for 5 years in a 3-year stint.

5. The announcement the Provost was going to make on the upcoming “Doghead” festivities was pre-empted by Kerill O’Neill, citing his Irish citizenship and the proximity to St. Patrick’s Day. He encouraged faculty to speak of the need for respect for non-drinkers and the dangers of excess for drinkers.

6. The search for a director for the Center for Teaching and Learning is well underway and now at the stage where it is also under wraps, so this announcement is that any substantive announcement will have to get the label “forthcoming.”

7. As a follow-up to the e-mail that Jim Sloat sent around regarding support for students with learning differences, Kletzer referred the faculty to Barbara Moore. There are significant new resources in place, and the path to those resources goes through the Dean of Students Office.

8. Data on faculty salaries were presented, broken down by gender and rank. The analysis concluded that after adjustments for department chair stipends, any remaining statistically significant differentials across gender lines were almost fully explained by years-at-rank.
IV. Old Business

The second motion from the Task Force on Shared Governance, postponed from the February meeting to this one, was now on the table. Martha Arterberry offered an amendment to split the motion into two pieces, in order to isolate the question of adding a tenth member, representing IDS, to the Promotion and Tenure Committee. It was accepted as a friendly amendment by unanimous consent. The first part, concerning all other aspects of the P&T ballot and eligibility to serve as an outside member of a tenure review committee, was PASSED with no discussion, no dissension, and only a smattering (=7) of abstentions. The second part of the motion, about implementing IDS representation, was the work of Fleming and Mark Tappan, with help from Arterberry, Greenwood and members of ACFPP. Arterberry asked how many people would be eligible for this IDS position. Mary Beth Mills, as ACFPP chair, answered that there were 12 faculty positions wholly in IDS, 4 more positions in IDS with joint appointments in the Social Sciences, and one faculty member serving as an IDS director who does not have an IDS appointment. Thus, the potential list of names on the ballot for the IDS member of P&T would be proportional to the other Divisions. After Greenwood ran up the stairs to deliver the microphone (while muttering, just loudly enough for everyone in the auditorium to hear, “You watching this Margaret?”), Fleming pointed out that Mills’ numbers represented the maximum scenario because of rotations off of the committee and possible excusals. The motion PASSED with no opposition and one shy of a full smattering of abstentions.

Before turning the last page on the Task Force for Shared Governance, Sandy Maisel reported that the Student Government was now fully on board with the changes. Lydia Moland expressed hope that there would now be some transparency in what can be offered as “good reasons” for individual excusal from the P&T ballot and other shared responsibilities.

The second piece of old business, the Academic Affairs Committee’s motion for the creation of an Astrophysics concentration within the Physics major along with an Astronomy minor, now took center stage. In response to Arterberry’s inquiry about the number of courses required for the new concentration, Duncan Tate said 13, just one more than the Physics major. The motion PASSED unanimously.

V. New Business

There was no new business nor was there any complaint about that fact.

VI. Committee Reports

Clem Guthro, reporting for the Library Committee, reviewed the recent history of library budgets. While the total budget has been relatively flat for the past eight years, that is quite positive relative to many of our peer institutions and we
have run a deficit in only one of those years. Journal subscriptions are responsible for the lion’s share of the budget – approximately 62% – and increases in subscription packages tend to increase between 3–7% annually. Nevertheless, strategic budget management has been successful in allowing us to sustain the necessary levels of academic support. By moving more journal subscriptions to “single format” and making such cuts as eliminating redundant microfilms, cutting subscriptions to under-used journals, and moving some subscriptions to pay-per-view, minimizing duplications with Bates and Bowdoin, we have avoided more drastic cuts in holding or services. Is there a way, Dean Albritton asked, to track journal usage? Yes, and that information has been, and will continue to be used in making decisions.

Space is also an issue, particularly at the Bixler Art and Music Library. With input from the Art and Music faculty, about 10% of the holdings have been identified as available to be moved to Miller or the storage facility, and that process is underway.

Paul Josephson asked whether the President, perhaps in concert with others, could pursue political action with respect to anti-trust violations by the oligopoly of the 5 major academic publishers. And can we get the Trustees to budget more for acquisitions? Getting Congress to take any action seems to be well nigh impossible during an election season, Kletzer said (without adding that the next election season seems to start even before the last one ends), and while budget setting is within the responsibilities of administration/management (while shared with the trustees), there are all sorts of creating competing pressures on the budget given the variety of community needs, and few of them likely to diminish in the near future. There are trade-offs and a need to establish priorities.

Arterberry, reporting for the Nominating Committee, updated the faculty on the transition to the new shared-governance procedures, highlighting the use of staggered terms and how the new divisional affiliations will be implemented. Nominations for committee openings will continue until Friday afternoon. The following members of the faculty have asked to have their names removed from the Promotion and Tenure Committee ballot:

Tariq Ahmad
Chandra Bhimull
Audrey Brunetaux
Jen Coane
Lynne Conner
Ben Fallaw
Frank Fekete
Jill Gordon
Jan Holly
Arne Koch
Benedicte Mauguiere
Luis Millones
Kerill O’Neill
VII. Announcements

Kerill O’Neill announced a reading by Reginald Dwayne Betts, *Bastards of the Reagan Era*, here in Ostrove Auditorium at 7:00 tonight.

VII-b. Praeteritio

No announcement was made concerning any faculty-staff Mayflower Hill March Madness, so none will be recorded here. Consequently, there are no details to report (e.g., that if there were such a pool, completed brackets would be due by noon on March 17th).

Maisel moved we adjourn.

Hereby completing the relevant illocutionary act,

Dan Cohen

Faculty Secretary

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