Faculty Meeting Minutes
October 11, 2017

Pres. Greene opened the meeting by greeting everyone. He announced that the minutes have been posted on the Provost’s website asking if there were any corrections or additions. Hearing none, the September faculty meeting minutes were approved.

The President announced that it was Margaret McFadden’s birthday and the Provost received a warm round of applause.

Pres. Greene ask everyone to watch for various emails announcing the college’s campaign launch and event downtown at the Opera House. There is to be a 5:30 p.m. start for the reception outside. Then everyone would be moving into the Opera House for announcements, music and a celebration of Colby. There will be a 10-day period of presentations on campus. This month’s Board of Trustees meeting will be somewhat light. They will discuss the size of the college and investigate what a modest increase in accepted students would mean.

Pres. Greene began a conversation concerning the faculty teaching load. He conveyed that conceptually, it would be possible to move to a 4.5 teaching load in the next couple of years. (as context, Middlebury College and Williams College are there now). The President recounted that 10 new faculty positions have been added in the last couple of years. Moving to a 4.5 load would be manageable in terms of resources, and in its impact on the curriculum more generally. (In contrast, moving to a 4.0 load would have an intense impact, if done abruptly.) A 4.5 load would help in faculty recruitment, and also make it easier to achieve a 4.0 teaching load in several more years. We will need to consider the impact on curricular changes and how we think about requirements - both distributional, and within majors, in terms of teaching loads. He added that in an effort to support the academic program, 20 new faculty support positions have also been added - an important item revealed through the faculty surveys conducted by the College.

Provost McFadden

Two important announcements:
1. Registrar Beth Schiller is retiring at the end of this academic year. She started in 1987 in the IT department. In 2006 Beth took over for then registrar George Coleman. She will be impossible to replace given her unique expertise and we will miss her. An extended round of applause was given for Beth.
2. Professor Gail Carlson has agreed to become the founding director of the Bach Environment and Climate Change Lab. Applause and congratulations.

PRESENTATION: Recruiting and Retaining an Excellent and Diverse Faculty
The Provost discussed preliminary findings from two data sets: the COACHE survey, and the recent Campus Climate survey.
COACHE Survey:
Retention is critical - our ultimate goal is to support faculty so that they can do their best work, both in the classroom and in their scholarship. The provost reviewed the results with Pres. Greene. The results have not yet been distributed. This has taken time due to the elusive and subtle nature of the data. The response in the survey to the work of the Provost’s office was not very positive. Provost McFadden voiced her commitment to turn that around.

- The survey found that the best aspects of working at Colby were:
  - Quality of our students
  - Quality of colleagues
  - Academic freedom
  - the “sense of fit” felt by faculty**
  - Compensation**
  **when these items were explored more deeply in the data, significant differences were found based on gender, race, and ethnicity.

- Worst aspects of working at Colby were found to be:
  - Teaching load
  - Spouse/partner hiring
  - Too much service
  - Geographic location
  Here too, differences were found based on gender, race and ethnicity.

Campus Climate Survey:
The Provost related that there was a lot of positive news to be found. Generally, faculty reported a sense of belonging. There were notable differences between male and female faculty, and between white faculty and faculty of color. These differences could also be tracked concerning “Having a voice on campus”, “Encouragement to participate”, “and “Establishing a work life balance”.

To summarize her presentation, the Provost underscored the administration’s concern for retention, faculty satisfaction in support. She said “We are listening,” and that she will report back again when she has had more time with data.

DISCUSSION:
Leo Livshits (MATH) – the way that gender/race is distributed is uneven. Are some of the effects related to academic discipline?

Stephanie Taylor (C.S.) - what about rank? We have these data but the longer you are here the less geography matters.
Bob Gastaldo (GEO) - what is the population of these categories (colleagues of different races, ranks, genders) on campus? We have the data but we need to understand the impact of these relative populations.

Provost McFadden – we need to figure out the best way to present the COACHE data. We will be sharing the full data on the Campus Climate survey.

Laurie Osborne (ENG) - what percentage of the faculty responded to the surveys?

Provost McFadden

- COACHE - 80% - the highest ever
- Campus Climate survey - 70%
- On many questions, the largest answer is “neither agree or disagree” so it’s a bit difficult to interpret the data.

Adrian Blevins (ENG) - I felt really ambivalent about my feelings last spring, but things can change. Last year maybe different than this year - so the data maybe fluid.

VP and Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid Matt Proto

Size of the College Report
Dean Proto conveyed that his entire staff is on the road. How can we ensure that Colby is a preeminent institution to attract the very best faculty and students? Our goal was to create a generalized plan, and the size of the college was an early consideration. What would happen if we increased or decreased our sized by 100 students, while maintaining our faculty/student ratio? Economically speaking, decreasing the size of our student body was actually found to be detrimental (= a loss of 6M, while adding 100 students would be only marginally beneficial (= an increase of 319K).

The number of applications in the admissions pool was critical. We asked how many students were looking for colleges that had < or > than 2000 students? Of those students, how many have a self-reported GPA of A- or higher? The data showed that 8000 applicants were interested in schools with < 2000 students, while 12,000 applicants were interested in schools with 2000-5000 students. There was clearly a cohort interested only in schools with the student body numbering more than 2000. Over the past 10 years Colby has seen a 1% gain in the size of our student body - lowest among our peers. (Williams 4%, Amherst 11%, Bowdoin 17%).

What increase in the number of attending students would create an environment that would attract the best, diverse pool of excellent students and faculty? The analysis revealed that 200 students could achieve this (without building a new dorm). This would be achieved over 8 to 10 years (adding approximately 15 students per year).

Guiding principles to increase the size of the College would be important:

- Must meet the academic mission
- Support curricular and scholarly breath
- Allow the college to recruit, retain, and support a global, talented faculty, student population, and staff
- Avoid the need for a new dorm
- Bring vitality to campus with sufficient populations to engage in the breadth of events and activities supported by the College

Any change in size should preserve our culture - the personal relationship between faculty, staff and students. It will also increase our visibility and our ability to highlight our accomplishments.

Jorge Olivares (SPAN) – this is great and I’m very glad to have this discussion because the slow increase of students has been happening but we were never formally told. I must voice a strong dissatisfaction with the prior Provost’s office. It’s been a six-year phenomenon in the Spanish department, that our tenure track positions have steadily decreased, putting us under great pressure. We have fewer tenure-track and more part-time colleagues. Spanish is not a foreign language, it is the second language of the United States. We must increase tenure-track faculty. Will Colby stay committed to hiring tenure-track positions and resist the erosion occurring elsewhere?

Pres. Greene - this is a really important point. The balance of tenure-track and non-tenured track is very important to get right. My recollection is that we are the most tenured that we’ve ever been in Colby’s history. The predominant model for us is still tenured and tenure-track faculty. Our shift has been toward tenured faculty but Spanish does appear to be an outlier, and it should be discussed. We need to have a thoughtful discussion - perhaps we could bring this data to another faculty meeting for a fuller discussion.

Sandy Maisel (GOV) - Admissions was very successful in bringing a larger class than expected to campus. What is the effect of that bump?

Matt Proto - there are 552 students on campus in their first year - last year 510 - previous year 500 - not including Salamanca/ Dijon students. We have a new dorm downtown and it’s our intent to bring our off-campus students back into campus dorms. We are looking at where we stand in terms of rooms, for we must manage this very closely. Each year we’ll be checking feasibility to sustain a positive impact.

Pres. Greene - Implementing this change in over 8 to 10 years may be too long. Perhaps a closer timeframe could help financially to accomplish things we’d like to do. (i.e. teaching load) The housing policy is important but not determinative. There are lots of options there. Breaking the cycle of off-campus housing (and its ill effects) is really important to establish a new culture. When we look at the size of each incoming class, who we want to have, it gets very tight (athletes, diversity, academic interests, etc.) A smaller class leaves off some of the students you really want. This is so important to the
sense of vibrancy on campus: hosting events that suffer from low attendance - this happens too frequently. We may have too many events and we need to look at that.

Erin Sheets (PSYC) – how does this intersect with financial aid? Will there be the same percentage of those receiving financial aid, or will there be an increase in full-pay students?

Matt Proto - our ratios will stay the same.

Charlie Conover (PHYSICS) – how many students are on campus now - we want to go to 2100?

Matt Proto - There are 1917 on campus right now. We might bring in 515-522 to allow for retention variables. We always work in ranges and a staged approach matters.

Pres. Greene - 550 might be more in line. Retention is critical though in making everything work.

Laurie Osborne (ENG) - is it possible to predict how it will work, having seen impacts on the curriculum of, for example, W1 courses?

Pres. Greene - The Biology, Economics, and Psychology departments are feeling the impact too. We have to do it over time so there will be an evening out of enrollment patterns. After 2008, we’ve seen a big change in enrollments. Hopefully our departments will become appropriately sized.

Bob Gastaldo (GEO) - what percentage of classes will be on a semester abroad?

Matt Proto - same proportion will be abroad.

Pres. Greene – DavisConnects will help provide off-campus opportunities in a variety of ways. The traditional semester abroad should stay reasonably consistent.

Old Business - none

New Business - none

Announcements

Travis Reynolds (ENV STUD) - Has taken over as president of Colby chapter of Phi Beta Kappa. Wanted all to know that Phi Beta Kappa offers an independent source of funding for speakers for student projects. We will be continuing the spring CLAS speech contest. It will henceforth be named the David A. Mills Speech Contest. Applause!! If there are any new faculty who are members of Phi Beta Kappa and would like to become involved, please contact me.
Adrian Blevins (ENG) – the Two Cent Talks are continuing downtown. Our first talk is entitled *Prose and Poet*: tomorrow night, Monica Wood and Stew Kestonbaum from 5:30 - 7:30 PM. A wonderful downtown cultural experience at the Apothecary.

Mark Tappan (EDU) – please look for two flyers 1) about workshop event on civic possibilities and why community matters, with Nicholas Longo. Held on Monday, November 13th in the Parker-Reed room. Lunch will be served. Longo will also be available for consultations during the day. Stay tuned for more information. 2) There will be another round of Civic Engagement Course Development Grants this year, administered by Alice Elliott.

Sandy Maisel (GOV) – moved that we adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 5:10 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Bevin Engman, Faculty Secretary