

## **FACULTY MEETING MINUTES**

**May 9, 2018**

### **I. Report of the Secretary**

A correction was made to the April minutes – In his report, President Greene stated that the City of Waterville will apply for a TIGER grant – not that it has received the grant.

#### **President Greene**

We will be proceeding directly to Old Business in a moment. But first I would like to congratulate two faculty members recently promoted to full professor:

Hideko Abe

Andreas Waldkirch

In addition, Daniel Harkett was appointed Associate Professor of Art with tenure. Followed by much applause.

### **II. Old Business – Kim Besio**

Last meeting, we were debating AAC Motion # 1 concerning the Grading Guidelines. At the end of that meeting, an amendment was offered to change the word “ Exceptional” in the definition of an A grade to “Outstanding”. We can now debate that amendment.

#### **AAC Motion #1**

- Sandy Maisel (GOV) – I would like to amend the amendment to read “Excellent” rather than “Outstanding”. Seconded.
- The amendment to the amendment passed.
- The amendment itself passed.
- No further discussion occurred on the motion.
- A vote on the (amended) Motion #1 was conducted by paper ballot.
- Yes: 51; No: 42; Abstentions: 11
- Motion #1 passed (as amended).

#### **AAC Motion #2 - Discussion**

- Judy Stone (BIO) - I was chair for three years and it’s a lot of work. You meet with faculty to talk about their performance. It would make me uncomfortable to be provided with this information, for I would feel like I would need to act on it.
- Scott Taylor (Math) - What are the effects of its implementation? At Williams, departments with “high” grades did not change; departments with “low” grades raised them.
- George Welch (Math) - This information is already available to the chair. This provision sends an additional message.
- Garry Green (Art) - It puts the chair in the position of being the “boss”, which is not what we do. Our chairs rotate, but then the information is out there. Grades are so complex, the raw information is less meaningful than it implies.

- Sandy Maisel (GOV) - AAC intended that information to be discussed within the department for more transparency. It's hard on non-tenured faculty to figure out the criteria for grading. It was meant to be helpful.
- Bruce Maxwell (CS) – it's our way of communicating to the outside world, and to each other, about how well our students are doing. If we can be consistent we are more likely to be able to improve our courses. How does it relate to tenure? It's rarely come up at P&T in 2 years of discussions. I don't want it to impact tenure and promotion. What are we trying to solve? We need to connect it to learning goals and outcomes.
- Martha Arterberry (PSYCH) - I thought we used to do this and then it stopped. I found it very helpful when I was the new professor. It also helps improve consistency with numerous sections of the same course.
- Patrice Franko (ECON/GS) - In Economics, we've been doing it for years. It's helpful with multi-section courses. It's good to know a general policy or guideline so that repetitions can be kept more even. There are fewer "easy" or "hard" sections of class. Students play the sections and a reputation can attract weaker students. I would not include the identity of particular professors. I'd like to make a motion to change, *"The grading patterns of members of the department"* to *Grading patterns of the department"*.
- Amendment: *"This information shall include the grading patterns of the department/program, as well as, for the department/program, division, and the college."*
- Seconded
- George Welch (MATH) - What does this mean? In what form will this information come to us?
- Raffael Scheck (HIS) – I don't understand how this is making things anonymous if you include course numbers.
- Patrice Franko (GOV/GS) - If you did it by level, it would be anonymous.
- Martha Arterberry (PSYCH) - But if you did it only by level, you'd no longer know if you have uniform experience across sections.
- Lisa Arellano (WGSS) - This motion presumes that we "know something" – that grades are content rich or uniform. This is not true.
- Vote on the amendment
- Yes: 9, No: 39, Abstentions: 34
- The amendment failed
- Discussion continued on the (now unamended) Motion #2
- Neil Gross (SOC) - Could we move in the direction of "at the request of the department"?
- John Turner (HIS) - We have to be careful. It will become part of people's tenure evaluation whether we intended to be or not.
- Patrice Franko (GOV/GS) – It's already a part of it in the form of "expected grade" in the course evaluations.
- Tim Hubbard (HIS) - We actually use grades for Latin honors. Asymmetries across disciplines do affect outcomes.
- Raffael Scheck (HIS) – I agree with Patrice, that student comments about easy or hard grading cannot be confirmed, except by "expected grades".

- Martha Arterberry (PSYCH) - I second that.
- Laura Saltz (AS) - This information is already available. I was concerned early on about how my grades compared to colleagues' and I asked my chair. You can ask informally for a discussion with your chair - I don't want this to become a formalized part of P&T.
- Kim Besio (EAS) – Earlier, Mary Beth asked if we are assuming that high grades indicates low rigor. We don't know this to be the case. We should talk about learning goals before the grades are awarded.
- Lisa Arellano (WGSS) - I'd like to ask Rafael for clarification: Does he want this information for P&T?
- Scheck – In P&T, you have a lot of information about context and the pedagogy.
- A vote on Motion #2 was conducted by paper ballot
- Yes: 21, No: 79, Abstention: 3
- Motion # 2 did not pass

### III. New Business – none

### IV. Report from Faculty Representatives to the Board – Jen Yoder and Kevin Rice

- Jen Yoder – we attended the PPC and the Committee of The Whole at the April Board Meeting. PPC has focused on retention. We were divided into three working groups focused on faculty, student, and student-athlete satisfaction.
  - Students: about 40 students leave per year. Asked *why* through a questionnaire.
  - Student-athletes: Many questions about team culture etc. and looked at retention.
  - Faculty: Retention was generally not a problem, although female faculty and faculty-of-color report lower satisfaction. Some aspects were “tangible” (teaching load, childcare, spousal hire policies etc.) vs. “ intangible” (if campus culture led to perceptions of feeling valued and included).
- Kevin Rice - there was a presentation on our partnership with Bigelow Lab. Board asked terrific questions about the themes. Details continue to evolve. Saturday meeting on communication strategies for marketing, especially with social media – given by Major Garrett, Trish Wexler, Robert Hoopes - different strategies and contexts for communication.

### V. Report from the Task Force on Free Expression - Joe Reisert

- The members have been working for about a semester. They include: Joe Reisert, Cheryl Townsend Gilkes, Jim Behuniak, Aaron Hanlon, Russell Johnson, Raj Kane, Martin Kelly, Shalini Le Gall, Barbara Moore, Stephanie Rivera, Stephanie Taylor, Richard Uchida, Natalie Zelensky, and Hong Zhang.
- We gathered information and gained an appreciation for how complex an issue it is.
- We will be targeting more specific information soon and we are putting together a draft statement - would like to road test this in the fall.
  - Our core functions (scholarship and teaching) require free-speech. Speech that is not compatible with those functions should not necessarily be protected.

- We will be having small discussions with the Chairs and Directors and with Division chairs.
- We've been reviewing our policies to find any recommendations for change. Will try to make policies as transparent as possible, even though they are not in the legislative authority of the faculty.
- Questions:
  - Laura Saltz (AS) - What are the current regulations on free speech?
    - Speech - yes, but you may not threaten or harass.
    - Postering policy - anything but must be on the bulletin boards
    - Chalking – no hate speech
    - Banners
    - ITS policies
    - Event policies - we don't have them, but other colleges do
  - Kevin Rice (CHEM) - Are there discussions on how to adjudicate situations where the line is thin?
    - Reisert: not yet. We're still working on a broad statement of values.
    - In general we really want to protect faculty, staff, and student's free expression in the context of employment.
    - Gilkes: we did talk about "under what circumstances will this take effect?" looking for balance between legal requirements and ideals. Richard Uchida was a big help about what would be needed legally.
    - We also met with SGA.

## **VI. Report from the Provost**

Provost McFadden offered reflections on the end of her first year.

- It's been incredibly moving to see the broad picture of the work that everyone is doing. It's astounding. I'm humbled and inspired. You provide a spectacular job for our students. Thank you.
- Thank you for your generosity and understanding spirit in working with the Provost office full of new people.
- Thank you also to our four colleagues who will be retiring, for their many years of work:
  - Hannah Roisman
  - Yossi Roisman
  - Tamae Pringle
  - Ed Yeterian
 Prolonged and enthusiastic applause followed.
- Carlene Mandolfo – on Faculty Retreat
  - The retreat will be on May 24<sup>th</sup>
  - The most pressing issue: we have a rapidly diversifying student body. The retreat will offer support and focus on these demographic changes. Campuses everywhere are dealing with these changes and opportunities, and are mounting large campaigns to address diversity, equity, and inclusion. We will lay a foundation for this discussion and work. Carol Hurney will lay the foundation for continuing conversation.

## **VII. Announcements**

- Winifred Tate - special election on June 12 in Waterville. Absentee and early voting will start on Monday. Additional recall elections, including for the mayor. Happy to answer any questions after the meeting.
- John Turner - Ramadan starts on Tuesday evening. Muslim students may be fasting - please be mindful of this.
- Bevin Engman - I'd like to invite you to attend the Senior Art Exhibition opening tomorrow afternoon at 4:30pm. Come support the work of our senior artists, and celebrate the end of the semester.

Sandy Maisel moved to adjourn  
Meeting adjourned 5:15pm

Respectfully submitted,  
Bevin Engman  
Faculty Secretary

**AAC MOTION #1 (as amended and approved by faculty vote):**

**The following grading guidelines shall be adopted. The guidelines themselves shall be published in the Colby College Catalog, the Faculty Handbook, and the Student Handbook. The “Notes” included below shall be published in the Faculty Handbook.**

**Colby College Grading Guidelines**

**A**

**Excellent** work in meeting the goals of the course, in mastering the course material, in critical analysis, in written and oral communication, or in other forms of creative expression, within the context of the course expectations.

(The grade of A+ is awarded only in very rare instances when a student exceeds the highest reasonable expectations for undergraduates.)

**B**

**Very Good to Good** work in meeting the goals of the course, in mastering the course material, in critical analysis, in written and oral communication, or in other forms of creative expression, within the context of the course expectations.

**C**

**Satisfactory** work in meeting the goals of the course, in mastering the course material, in critical analysis, in written and oral communication, or in other forms of creative expression, within the context of the course expectations.

**D**

**Minimally acceptable** work in meeting the goals of the course, in mastering the course material, in critical analysis, in written and oral communication, or in other forms of creative expression, within the context of the course expectations.

(While the grade of D counts as a passing grade for any individual course, a student receiving D grades in multiple classes may be at risk of falling below the minimum 2.0 GPA required for graduation.)

**F**

**Seriously deficient** work that is not acceptable.

No credit is awarded.

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Notes: Faculty members are encouraged to include language in their syllabi articulating what these guidelines mean in the context of a particular course.

These guidelines do not specify any quotas for the number of students who may be awarded an A (or other grade) in a class. To maintain an appropriate balance in grading, we should offer sufficiently challenging courses and grade them such that high-performing students receive high grades, intermediate-performing students receive intermediate grades, and low-performing students receive low grades. Our best-performing students will then receive grades that distinguish them and low-performing students will receive a realistic assessment of their performance.