

**FACULTY MEETING MINUTES**  
**Wednesday, May 13, 2020**  
**4:00 p.m.**

The minutes from the April faculty meeting have been posted. Any corrections may be sent to the Faculty Secretary.

I. Report from Provost McFadden

Thank you to all for the work that you're doing, and I hope you can see the light at the end of the tunnel.

The recipient of the 2020 Charles Bassett Teaching Award (selected by Class of 2020) is Cheryl Townsend Gilkes. Cheryl will address the senior class on Friday, May 22, at 11:00 via Zoom. All are welcome to attend.

Reminder from Registrar Lindsey Nelson: senior grades due on Wednesday, May 20, at 5:00 pm. We will vote on the degrees as usual next Friday and mail out the diplomas as soon as possible thereafter.

This year's Condon Medal recipient, selected by the Class of 2020, is Bethashley Cajuste. She is a Questbridge Scholar with an independent major in Global Health who has been a force for good on campus. She has worked extensively within the Pugh Center. Please remember that this information is confidential, as Bethashley does not yet know that she will receive the award.

- This selection was unanimously endorsed by the faculty.

58 faculty members have volunteered to participate in 10 working groups to plan for the coming academic year. Each group was charged with a specific scenario to explore and will submit its report in the form of a template. We will discuss the results at next Friday afternoon's faculty retreat, 12:30-4:00. The retreat will be composed of two parts.

- Part one: Reflections on remote teaching.
- Part two: Discussion of results of the planning process.

Carol Hurney and her counterparts at Bates and Bowdoin are planning a CBB workshop entitled "Learning from Our Remote Past." The workshop will include morning workshops, sessions for faculty with similar interests/experiences, and college-specific gatherings.

II. Report from President David Greene

Pay It Northward campaign: the goal is to help seniors get a good start in the job market.

- 10% of students who previously had job offers lost them due to the current market

- There is lots of evidence that students who graduate into a recession experience long-term reductions in salary, health, etc. We want to prevent that.
- We've already received 400 opportunities, including 200 full-time opportunities (jobs and fellowships).
- We've received a lot of press on this initiative.

We want to get Colby into national conversations, which is key for recruiting faculty, staff, and students, as well as improving our reputation. We've had a number of positive stories over past 6 months.

Most of our time is focused on campus readiness for the fall.

- In mid-March everything was about rapid, urgent transitions. It was a hectic time.
- April was a time to make sense of the chaos and figure out how to function at a high level in this new reality. Thank you for all you did to accomplish this on the teaching front.
- May has been about finishing off the semester and preparing for next year. We are now thinking about safety protocols to open the campus for the fall semester.

Circumstances are very challenging as we're missing so much information. We don't know where we'll be in terms of public health, medical advances, etc. in the fall.

There are 10 different groups at work addressing the following topics: academic space and support, student support and accommodations, operating protocols (cleaning/disinfection), supply management (cleaning agents, PPE, etc.), medical preparedness, housing, co-curricular issues, international programs/immigration, communications, employment/legal/privacy.

Testing will likely be an important issue. Testing supplies are now becoming increasingly available, and we're exploring all options. We have growing confidence that we will be able to provide sufficient testing, but we don't yet know what that means.

We will need to have quarantine housing set aside, most likely by leasing a hotel for the year.

We're not sure whether we'll be low on students or high: We expect 1,800-2,200 on campus (we have 1,900 beds). One option we're exploring is to turn the Lockwood hotel into a student residence for the semester or year. We're also considering other properties we own.

Co-curricular activities present another big question. How would civic engagement work? What about student clubs and athletic teams?

International programs and immigration issues present another challenge. Can international students come to the US? If so, from where? What happens to our first-year Salamanca and Dijon students?

One of the working groups is addressing employment/legal/personal information/privacy issues. Ongoing testing and contract tracing on campus raise serious privacy issues we need to address. What do we do with respect to individuals at elevated risk?

Our hope is that by late June or early July we'll know what's happening in the fall. We are looking at a whole range of options, from an on time start to a delayed start.

If students can't share dorm rooms, that would limit the number of students on campus. We have 1,400 total rooms.

In sum, there's a lot of uncertainty and no simple way forward.

Many schools face an existential crisis. They are promising to be back in the fall because they fear losing students. No one can actually make that commitment yet.

I'm working with other Maine college presidents to create statewide guidelines for opening campuses. These proposals will go to Gov. Mills for her review.

We're following guidelines from the state, CDC, scientists, etc.

The threats that many institutions are facing are severe. It is uncertain if schools can enroll a class for next fall. It is unclear if they can actually be in session.

Colby, in contrast, had almost 14,000 applications and our highest yield ever: 44%. That will likely put us in the top 5 nationally of liberal arts colleges. We now have 604 deposits, which far exceeds our goal of 550–560 members of the class of 2024 on campus in the fall semester. Normally, 10% of students who submit deposits in fact don't enroll. So far, that melt hasn't occurred, perhaps because other schools went to their wait list early. Our financial aid is also especially attractive, and those students don't have the same options elsewhere.

All the statistics indicate how great our incoming class is: 11% first-gen, 14% Pell recipients, 33% of US students are students of color; 12% international students; median SAT of 1460, ACT of 33. Now we need to get them here.

Our admit rate stayed down below 10%, while rates at peer institutions rose. Other schools haven't received nearly enough students, but we aren't in that place.

Some schools are beginning to enact severe cutbacks, such as halting all payments to retirement accounts. We are not doing that. Others are cutting staff and non-tenured faculty. We aren't doing that either. Others are freezing and cutting salaries, furloughing

staff. We're not furloughing or cutting, but we aren't sure yet whether there will be any salary increases.

We've done an exceptional job with our financial management. The bottom line is that we expect to end the 19/20 fiscal year with a balanced budget, one of the few colleges to end up in that spot. This has a huge long-term benefit because it means we'll get better interest rates on any loans we take out.

If we're back in the fall, we'll be fine financially. If we have to delay, we'll be okay. Cash flow will become difficult if we start in January, but we could do it.

The appetite from students for online learning is low. If we go to online learning in fall, we should expect far fewer students than we currently have, and a very different cost structure. That would severely harm our finances.

The cost of testing and hotel rentals are significant, but we'd still be better off financially if we can bring students back to campus. The key question is "can we do it safely?"

In the end, I'm confident that we'll get through next year with sound finances.

The Board of Trustees agreed with our process of focusing on our educational program, not making cuts, and doing everything we can to be back on campus safely in the fall.

This may mean that we need to change when we start the year. If we decide to start in September remotely and transition to in-person in the spring, that would change our financial fundamentals.

Let me share with you our plans for the Commencement weekend. Many thanks go to the marshals, to Karlene Burrell-McRae and Andy McGadney, and to students for their planning efforts.

- The Last Lecture by Cheryl Townsend Gilkes will still take place on Friday.
- A short ceremony will take place on Saturday when baccalaureate would have happened.
- There will be a longer ceremony on Sunday, both live and taped, to mark the moment when students would have graduated.
- The real graduation will take place some time next year, when it's safe.

### Questions and Answers

COVID-19 testing at Colby will be coordinated with Maine CDC, but the testing itself will happen privately with CDC certification.

Can buildings be retrofitted to address air filtering/circulation?

Probably not in most buildings. Airflow issues are going to be important, and we're looking at that issue.

We are not laying anyone off at the moment. We will never be in a moment where we both give raises and lay people off.

Could we quarantine students on arrival?

We're looking into that. Testing will be key to any in-person system. We'll also need to develop a different code of conduct. We would have a much less porous campus with respect to visitors. We wouldn't have visitors, friends, tours, etc. We need to keep the broader community safe too.

Does the College have provisions for childcare if necessary?

We're certainly aware of that as an issue, we're not sure yet what the solution might be. It is unlikely that Colby could be open if Maine public schools are not open.

Are hourly staff or community members involved in working groups?

Facilities and Dining staff are on the relevant working groups. Note: we kept on our Bon Appetit dining staff, unlike most universities that furloughed dining staff. Many of them have been very helpful on a community project to feed families in Waterville. Our Facilities team has been working half time but getting paid full time.

Working groups will address issues of delivery workers, etc.

We will have at least some on-line courses under any scenario. We'll have to figure out who can be on campus, who needs to teach remotely, etc.

If we got to the point of considering salary cuts, that will include senior administrators.

We will accommodate all faculty, staff, and students based on their individual needs.

Students whose family financial circumstances have changed are able to file for financial aid or request additional aid. So far, there have been fewer changes than one might expect. That could change, though.

Will masks be required?

We're not sure what the situation will be, but it seems plausible that masks will be one part of the plan.

How are the two of you doing emotionally?

Margaret: I think we're fine. We have a great team, very supportive.

David: We're facing major macro challenges, but being on Zoom all day is especially soul sucking. We're all working extended days on unprecedented challenges, but the level of support has been extraordinary. I know that you are also facing unprecedented challenges. I'm grateful to be in Maine at this time, to be at Colby given its fundamentally different approach to the circumstances. We're doing the right thing by protecting our people and educational program and by trying to get people back here in the fall.

What will happen regarding recruitment and admission of future entering classes? Current outreach efforts to high school sophomores and juniors are already being affected. I'm shocked by how high our yield was (for the class of 2024) given that no admitted students could visit the campus this spring. I expected a detrimental impact on the current entering class, but apparently it helped. We'll see what happens next.

What are our plans for increased mental health support for students and for faculty/staff?

A positive outcome of this crisis has been an increase in the range of mental health consultations that weren't previously available. We will still have counselors on campus, but the rise in telehealth will likely continue for the long term, including counseling. Our students can now access a much broader counseling network, including through writing, texts, etc. We're working with multiple counseling platforms for students and will continue to do so.

Perhaps 10% of our faculty is over the age of 60, but they would not be the only ones who might need to teach online. There are lots of reasons why that might prove necessary.

We are holding off on some new hires until we know what's going on in the fall. We have offices for all new faculty, even though we have not committed to hiring all of them yet. We are honoring all VAP hires for which contracts have already been signed. A few VAP searches that were not completed by late March have put on pause until we know more about the fall semester situation.

Students currently on campus who can't easily return home, as well as international students who are not on campus but can't get back to their countries, will continue to receive support from the college. In many cases, students who go home would not be able to return. We're going to be as accommodating as we can so that they can continue.

What is the anticipated melt for an online semester?

It could be at least half, which would represent at least 25% of total income. It would be better to delay the start of the semester.

We know that some kinds of faculty research simply can't proceed at the moment, and we will accommodate that. We also want to support whatever research faculty can do.

For students that are currently out of the country, we are in touch with each of them, and they are making their own decisions.

We don't know yet what the process will be for deciding who teaches in person and who should teach remotely. We'll need to decide on a case-by-case decision.

Academic ITS staff have 12-month contracts and will be available to help this summer.

David: If all American universities move online, perhaps the melt will be smaller, but I expect many students would opt out. Despite your heroic efforts, student expectations of a college education experience can't be met through online platforms. We would lose a significant percentage of students regardless. The demand for what we do on campus is very powerful. We are also far better able to control the learning environment on campus. Students are far more motivated and far less distracted on campus. But if we're in that situation where the world is shut down next year, it's hard to predict behavior.

We'll need to figure out how to revise the course offerings for next year once we have a clearer sense of where we're going.

We'll need to be nimble in moving from in-person to remote because that may well happen for any number of reasons.

Could students be on campus with all remote classes?

That's hard to imagine. If we can have 2,000 students on campus, then we can teach classes in person.

We don't know what the budget challenges for next year will be and that could affect student employment. But we'll be sure to support core parts of our educational program, including the writing tutors.

Are there CBB synergies we could benefit from?

The CBB Provosts are meeting regularly, as are the presidents and the VPs for Finance. There is strong interest in online collaborations, e.g. cross-registration in remote learning courses. We are exploring collaborations on testing, supplies, etc.

Can unspent faculty research funds carry over to next year?

No. Please don't spend endowed funds you have. If you absolutely need to, please have a conversation with me (Margaret).

How is our endowment?

Overall, it's okay. The markets have bounced back. We started the year at \$870M, and we are at about \$800M now. What happens between now and June 30 is unknowable. Our goal for the campaign is \$550M by the end of this fiscal year, and we anticipate reaching that target. The Colby Fund will be down, but overall giving has been terrific. We estimated this will be among top 3–4 fundraising years in the College's history. We anticipate some tough sledding ahead given economic circumstances.

We're thinking about how spaces match curriculum, how reduced-density classrooms affect the course schedule, etc.

We're in the process of sorting out the guidelines for instructional accommodations to faculty, but if we're back, the general expectation will be in-person instruction.

The process of gaining greater clarity has been non-linear, but we're learning a lot. Please be patient. The longer we can wait and the more info we can gather, the better we'll be. Please be flexible and willing to adapt over the coming year with good-faith efforts on the part of all. We won't be able to make decisions much before late June/early July. We also know that we may need to make further changes after that time. We're going to make the very best decisions we can with a priority on the health and safety of all.