

College of Arts and Sciences

Faculty Meeting Minutes

October 2, 2002

Dean's Report (also circulated electronically prior to the meeting)

Dean Johnson reported on the new advising program in which students register for a class whose instructor also serves as their adviser. The program seems to be working fairly well. There was some concern among some natural sciences faculty that students did not always select necessary prerequisites for some majors. These problems need to be worked out, but Dean Johnson hopes summer registration will continue. The registrar will meet with divisional deans and chairs to work out problems in the system.

Buildings: The renovation of Albany is on schedule and within budget, with completion set for mid or late December. Faculty will move from the Faculty Office Building and Appalachia into Albany during January, after the Dean's office moves. At that point, the Faculty Office Building will be deconstructed. Faculty will be in Albany through the summer of '04 when Howard Hall comes on line. The loss of 12 classrooms will result in a crunch; faculty are advised to schedule their classes for less popular times and in less desirable classrooms over the next 18 months.

Faculty are reminded to apply now to teach summer classes, an effective way of making extra money.

There are requests for seven new faculty positions, which come at a time of an increasingly serious financial outlook at the College. All requests were found to have merit. But, as a result of budget pressures, the position requests are being reexamined to determine whether they can be postponed for a year without seriously damaging the curriculum. The Academic Council was averse to postponing any searches, but if any searches had to be delayed, the two where the least damage would occur would be the Spanish and French positions. This should not be taken to indicate a bias against Foreign Languages. Rather, the feeling was that good adjunct instructors could more likely be found to teach introductory language courses than other courses that would be involved, the Council decided. These two postponements are still being discussed.

President's Report

- President Mooney praised the opening convocation and Nora Beck, Associate Professor of Music, for her speech.
- Sept. 11 discussions had a good turnout.
- The opening of new residence halls and the revitalization of the residential side of campus is going well.

- The Faculty Forum was less well attended than previous ones. Those who did attend engaged in a good conversation about teaching and the cultural changes, not just technological ones, facing faculty today.
- Human Resources will move to the Gatehouse, and eventually to Templeton, out of the Frank Manor's basement.
- The next Faculty Forum will concern the budget. The College's current budget situation is due to the reversals of the financial markets and the downturn in the economy. The pinch will be especially felt next year. Students are turning from private to public institutions; state systems are overflowing with applicants. Students are leaving Lewis & Clark for financial reasons. "Choices will have to be made" so we can restrain what we charge students and balance what we offer them.
- The Commission on Teaching and CAP have made a series of recommendations to the faculty; staffing and the direction of the academy need to be finalized budgetarily as well as academically. The recommendations will be situated in the context of budget and will be brought to the faculty for discussion.

Questions and discussion

Q: Is the College looking everywhere it can in order to save money in its budget decisions? The faculty is disturbed by the tendency to save by reductions in faculty staffing. Also, how much into the future do we need to do this kind of saving, i.e. not replenishing tenure-track lines? It is very worrisome that cuts are coming from tenure-track lines.

President Mooney: Yes, we are looking everywhere. The cut made to Foreign Languages was symbolic, in the sense that this was the first spending decision to be made. Further cost savings will be necessary. It should be kept in mind that this institution has had a fairly easy time compared to others and that there are fixed costs such as health insurance and utilities, which have been going up rapidly. The College's growth in the last decade has been fueled by endowment gifts, and our reliance on this has created a financial pinch.

Q: Capital improvements have effects on operating expenses. Does the current economic situation influence decisions about building projects?

President Mooney: Howard Hall is at issue. The cost of postponing would be at least

\$1 million. This is a great economy in which to build. Building attracts students and eventually expands the endowment. Buildings are financed in part by gifts and grants, necessitating their timely completion.

Q: Since the economy was in bad shape last spring, why are we making cuts to faculty searches now? What has changed?

Comments:

Ads went out already, some without the language of "pending final budgetary approval." Applications are already arriving, and people have made travel arrangements to MLA in New York for interviewing.

Such postponements are bad for the College's public image. They damage course quality, student retention, and faculty recruitment, and cause the loss of junior faculty who are demoralized by instability. The language of the cuts being "symbolic" is disturbing.

President Mooney: "Symbolic" meant that the savings are small compared to other cuts that might be made. They don't affect quality of instruction, if you study the evaluations for adjunct language instructors. Outstanding non-tenure-track faculty teach first-year language classes.

Comment: Adjuncts will be paid on a piecemeal basis without benefits; this is a real concern. The Spanish search has gone on for seven years.

President Mooney: In 1990, we had 1,900 students; now we have 1,700. The reduction was planned to increase quality. In addition, we have added 11 net new positions (including in the foreign languages department). The reduction of faculty course load should be considered. It has reduced the number of courses we can offer with tenured/tenure-track faculty.

Comment: 15-20 percent of searches fail because we compete with good schools. If we search for all seven positions, we'll have saved money anyway, since some will fail.

President Mooney: It's a "buyer's market" in academe; our searches won't fail.

Comment: We are inviting a higher turnover. We're facing instability. Adjuncts will commute from school to school and won't be on campus and available to students. Full-time faculty will bear the burden, and their advising load will be enormous. The effect on the department will be loss of variety to upper-level courses and fewer students coming in to Foreign Languages.

President Mooney: The positions are frozen, not necessarily eliminated. They will be discussed again at the end of the year.

Q: What changed between last spring and now?

President Mooney: Economic deterioration of the last quarter.

Mervyn Brockett commented that it was not known until three or four weeks ago what the effect of financial aid to students would be. It went up, which will remain with the College for the next three years. The market's downturn has reduced the endowment considerably.

Dean Johnson then introduced the registrar, who had some announcements.

Dell Smith reminded the faculty that Oct. 9 is the due date for changes to spring semester. Advising begins Oct. 23 and goes until Nov. 8 for Sp. '03. Advisees of faculty off campus need to be reassigned. A degree audit is sent to all seniors. The system is functioning fairly well, and the plan is to send a degree audit to all juniors by next February.

Dean Johnson then introduced the Dean of Admissions.

Mike Sexton emphasized the importance of the Web to recruitment. Sixty-three percent of students applied online. They are attractive applicants. The separate site for accepted students is also crucial.

Comment: Mike Sexton should be praised for the high quality of the current first-year students. Faculty applauded the work of the admissions staff.

Report of the Curriculum Committee

Richard Peck distributed a handout introducing a resolution on the celebration of the Martin Luther King, Jr., holiday. The proposal is for a half day of classes with the other half devoted to activities.

Nichole Alexander, President of the Black Students Union, reported that last year a petition was circulated concerning the College's support of Martin Luther King, Black History Month, etc. The lack of support detracts from the recruitment and retention of students and faculty of color. 469 signatures were collected. She went on to describe the planned activities to honor the memory of Dr. King.

Q: Will there be flexibility about the proposed activities?

Nichole: Yes.

Comment: Thank you to the proposers. But we shouldn't be teaching that day at all.

Richard Peck: The concern is that students won't show up on Monday.

Comment: We should ask Nicole about this.

Nichole: We would choose to have the whole day off.

Student: RA's could coordinate student participation in the greater Portland Community.

Student: At issue is when students move into dorms.

Student: One day is not enough to settle in. It would help to have the day off.

Comment: The College should consult the law school so we present a consistent image to the larger community.

Dean Johnson: Judgment by faculty in the past has been that if the whole day is taken off, there will be poor attendance for any events of recognition or honor of Dr. King.

Comment: Classes should be held, and their content should draw on the day's activities honoring Dr. King.

Richard Peck: There has been discussion of integrating the celebration into the Inventing America curriculum.

Comment: There should be concern that faculty are centrally involved. The virtue of the current proposal is that it draws faculty and students together.

There was some discussion of starting the semester earlier, such as on Friday; the drawback is that the semester will end too early.

Comment: The proposal combines acknowledgment with activities: what's more important? If we take the day off, we have officially and seriously acknowledged the day. This is an argument to make it an official holiday, and thus avoid coercion.

There was general agreement that the proposal should go back to the Curriculum Committee.

A student commented that this is very serious and should not be put on a back burner; action is needed now.

Comment: What about those of us who drive our kids to college?

Comment: Symbolism is more important than activities.

Comment: Have we compared with other schools? It's offensive to have class that day.

Comment: It's patronizing to assume students will take the day off. They have the right to choose.

Matt Levinger moved that the Curriculum Committee produce an alternate proposal for a full day off with optional activities.

Students suggested there should be remembrance planned to raise community awareness. Education on diversity will benefit the students, and faculty should support this.

Richard Peck accepted the motion as a friendly suggestion. The students are invited to return to the next faculty meeting, when the proposal will be discussed and voted upon.

Meeting adjourned approx. 5 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rishona Zimring, temporary CAS Faculty Secretary