

May 17, 2007

To: Joseph Urgo, VPAA and Dean of the Faculty

From: Committee on Academic Policy (Professors Boutin, Kanipe, Major, McEnroe, Sciacca, and Strout)

Re: Faculty Allocation Recommendations

This memo contains recommendations from CAP regarding allocation and reallocation requests from departments and programs received in spring, 2007. The decision of the trustees to limit the number of tenure lines to the current level severely constrains the ability of the college to respond to persuasive allocation requests in a timely fashion. When retirements or resignations (which are difficult to predict with precision) are the only means by which positions become available to add to a department or program, the allocation process can leave the college facing the prospect of having to weaken one strong program if it wishes to improve another. The CAP urges the Dean to work with the President (and the Planning Committee), and trustees to think inventively about temporary increases in the size of the faculty to give greater flexibility to the allocation process. Faculty demographics suggest that multiple retirements are likely in the next 5 to 15 years. Unlike this year, when we had one retirement and one resignation and thus little room to respond to several valid requests, the near future promises more flexibility.

We observe that to respond ad hoc to each of numerous retirements would be to miss an important opportunity to influence the future of the curriculum for decades. At the least, a temporary suspension of the "no new tenure lines" rule prior to a cluster of likely retirements could reduce the instability within a department that might otherwise have to fill several positions in a relatively short period of time. The decision last year to allow chemistry to replace a professor before his actual retirement proved a good example of how this idea might work. Other departments or programs might have creative ideas of how to replace a retiring faculty member with someone whose expertise is a valuable new departure for the department (and perhaps useful to other departments and program). Why not allow such a department to hire a few years early, with the understanding that its expansion is to be only for a few years? Regrettably, this planning might also lead to the notification to a department or program of a possible loss of a position; difficult though that news could be, at least the department or program would have time to plan how to deal with the loss, and might even be provoked into a process of self-study with positive results. It may be that in order to fund these pre-retirement hires, some departments that receive them will have to forgo hiring annual replacements for faculty on periodic leaves. Such hires may therefore be possible only in larger departments, but we would want the new planning and hiring policy to be nonetheless available to every department or program. Also it may make sense in some larger departments that consistently hire one or more visitors a year as leave replacements to instead hire an additional tenure line and forgo all annual leave replacements. Because both ideas have the disadvantage of reducing the number of courses offered in a department in those years when more than one visitor would otherwise have been hired, implementation will require careful

planning. There are many other ways to imagine what greater flexibility would look like; our goal is to urge the administration, the trustees, and the faculty to see the upcoming years as a challenge and an opportunity that can allow the college to respond in its curriculum to issues varying from where individual disciplines are changing to the introduction of the kind of curriculum that will make us appealing to the new demographics of potential students.

Africana Studies has requested to retain the tenure track position recently vacated by resignation. The CAP agrees that to be successful the program needs two positions, and we recommend that this position remain in Africana Studies. However, the CAP is also deeply concerned about the long-term stability of a program that since its inception has seen a good deal of faculty turnover. The CAP recommends that the Dean and Program faculty consult about ways to strengthen the connections of the Program to other departments and programs. For instance, at Amherst all faculty members in Black Studies have joint appointments in other departments. The CAP recommends that the Program faculty consider deferring their search for a year, in order to beginning a planning process, which might include self-study, possible conversations and visits with other programs, and possibly even an outside review. Should Africana Studies wish to spend 2007-08 in planning, the CAP recommends that the deferral of the tenure-track search not require a new request for the position. The CAP further recommends that the Dean and the Program Director consult about ways the Associate Dean can help with the Program's administrative responsibilities.

The **Department of Communication** requests a continuation of the term position that ends May '08, as well as a new tenure track line. CAP recommends that the four-year term position be renewed. However, since the Trustees have decided to limit the number of tenure lines to the current level, any increase in positions in one department or program would require taking a position from another department or program. CAP does not recommend moving a position to Communication. CAP acknowledges the burden that the high number of concentrators places on a faculty of only 2 FTEs, and suggests that the Department reexamine the number of courses required for the concentration. It might be worthwhile to investigate how other small departments have structured their concentrations to make use of resources outside the department, and to integrate and perhaps even crosslist relevant courses from their list of cognate courses that appears in their catalogue masthead. Reducing the number of required courses might serve as a viable way to ease the burden of the large number of senior projects. CAP notes that the Department's proposed change of format for the senior projects is a step toward improving the concentration. Because a national search demands much time and effort for a single faculty member, CAP further recommends that the chair consult the Dean's Office about ways that the Dean's staff could assist in the search.

East Asian Languages and Literatures (Chinese): The East Asian Languages Literatures Department requests a new tenure track position in Chinese. The Chinese Program is strong, and student interest is increasing. However, since the

Trustees have decided to limit the number of tenure lines to the current level, any increase in positions in one department or program would require taking a position from another department or program. The Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures has not yet filled the new tenure track position allocated to them last year. We recommend that the open position be filled before the Department requests additional positions; we also recognize that new faculty hires involve considerable mentoring from current faculty. Thus, The Committee does not recommend moving another tenure track position to Chinese.

The **Economics Department** requests to increase its number of tenure-track faculty lines by four positions over the next five to seven years. The justification is based on their extraordinarily large number of majors, the curricular needs of the Department, and their desire to strengthen the senior experience for economics majors. The proposal was well thought out and well crafted. The current position requested is in the area of Sustainable Development. A person filling this position would not only contribute to the Economics Department but to the broader college curriculum. In particular, such a person would be able to contribute to the Environmental Studies Program. The CAP is convinced that there are significant enrollment pressures on the Economics Department and that this position would be good for the college curriculum as a whole. However, since the Trustees have decided to limit the number of tenure lines to the current level, any increase in positions in one department or program would require taking a position from another department or program. We strongly support the proposal of the Department of Economics, but we are not recommending the movement of a tenure-track position from another department. Instead, we strongly urge the Dean of Faculty to create a new additional faculty position in order to enable the Department to pursue grant funding.

The **Department of English** has requested the continuation of the position in eighteenth-century literature, to be vacated by retirement. The Committee appreciates the Department's careful and thorough proposal; however, we recommend to the Dean that the position be placed on hold during the academic year 2007 – 08. We urge the Department to rethink how they propose to use the position, and to resubmit a proposal next year. While we do not guarantee that the position will remain in English, we are certainly positively disposed to the Department and impressed with the quality of their teaching, scholarship and service to the College.

The English Department made a strong argument for the centrality of historical coverage to their curriculum; however, the Committee questioned whether it is possible in a liberal arts college to provide complete coverage of every era. The Department also raised the issue of the importance of coverage of this specific century for the students' path through the curriculum; while there are specific requirements in the concentration for historical breadth, there is no requirement for just the eighteenth century. The proposal also stressed the potential for very creative combinations of the eighteenth century with colonial or sexuality studies, but expressed no strong preference for either. We noted that either of those was possible in combination with many other specializations outside the eighteenth century.

In the next few years, the Department anticipates no more retirements, and the probability of their competing successfully for an additional position in a time of zero growth in the faculty is slim. We recommend that the Department reconsider how this position might best be used (for example, Latino literature, creative writing, film studies). We urge them to confer with other departments about ways to coordinate an allocation request that might result in a position in English, but one which serves the curriculum of the College in wider ways. Of course, the members of the Department of English will decide for themselves next year how they propose to use the position. We believe that the continuation of their planning process and the chance to discuss the results of their outside review will provide the opportunity for the English Department to clarify their priorities.

The **Environmental Studies Program** requests a term position in Environmental Studies, for a person with a doctorate either in Environmental Studies or in Environmental History. They point to the fact that half their concentrators wish to focus on the social sciences and yet their offerings there are weak. The proposed term position would be appointed in the Environmental Studies Program, and would provide leadership for the senior program and teach several courses in E. S. Because they are so new to the curriculum, we feel that more experience might influence how they see their priorities. We question whether it is necessary to be equally strong in all three aspects (natural science, humanities, and social sciences) of the Program; they are already very strong in the natural sciences, and might want to rely more on that area. While the Committee recognizes that the new Environmental Studies Program has made a strong start, we must point out that we do not have a term position to reallocate to it at this time. We have, however, recommended the continuation of the Government term position that also serves Environmental Studies.

The **French Department** requests an additional term position. The French Department continues to attract students and is home to the exemplary program in Paris, which just celebrated its 50th year. Moreover, the Department contributes not only to French language and literature instruction but also to college initiatives such as the Sophomore Seminar. The Department argues for another position, without specifying the particular curricular content, by pointing out that current numbers limit their curriculum. At this time the Committee does not recommend moving a term position to French from another department. As discussed in their request, the Department might consider expanded use of Teaching Fellows or lecturers (these are not matters of allocation and are handled by the Dean) to perhaps relieve the strain on language instruction. The Committee also encourages the Department as it continues to study the introductory curriculum and as it plans for the future.

The **Government Department and the Environmental Studies Program** submitted a joint request that the existing term position in Government be converted to tenure track. The willingness of the Department to commit specific resources to the Program and to share decision-making in personnel matters is a model that deserves consideration in several places in the curriculum. We are aware of the heavy student load of the

Government Department and of the growing student interest in Environmental Studies, especially in the social sciences track. However, since the Trustees have decided to limit the number of tenure lines to the current level, any increase in positions in one department or program would require taking a position from another department or program. We do not recommend the reallocation of a tenure track position to Government. We do strongly urge the Dean to renew the allocation of the four-year term position to the Government Department, with the explicit requirement that a part of the duties of the position be service to Environmental Studies.

Hispanic Studies requests both an additional tenure track position and the conversion of a term position into a second additional tenure line. The department points out that it teaches significantly more students than other languages with proportionally fewer faculty. The new positions would also broaden coverage of the discipline. The CAP recognizes that language instruction is inherently faculty-intensive, and we are sympathetic to the enrollment pressures Hispanic Studies is facing, especially in upper level courses. However, since the Trustees have decided to limit the number of tenure lines to the current level, any increase in positions in one department or program would require taking a position from another department or program. We do not recommend the reallocation of any positions to Hispanic Studies. We note that it does not make sense to add untenured faculty until there are more tenured faculty to mentor them. We also urge the Department to present to the CAP a clearer curricular plan. For instance, the two intensive Spanish language courses have relatively low enrollments yet count as a combined three teaching credits annually; they could be replaced by two introductory Spanish sections and an upper level course, helping to reduce enrollment pressures. Although we cannot recommend additional tenure lines, we do recommend that the Dean consult with the Department on an annual basis about providing appropriate temporary support for language instruction. We also recommend that the Dean consider ways to provide additional administrative support for the new department chair.

The **Latin American Studies Committee**, Hispanic Studies Department, and History Department request a 4-year term position for Latin American/U.S.-Latino History. The CAP recognizes that Latin American Studies is an important part of the college curriculum and that it has lost access to critical courses due to changes in college personnel. The history of this program points out the difficulty of sustaining a program in which contributing departments have not made formal commitments to its curriculum. However, the Hispanic Studies Department is currently experiencing a significant change in personnel, which may alter this situation somewhat. At this time there are no resources for us to reassign to this position, and we do not recommend that an existing position be moved into Latin American Studies. The CAP encourages the requestors to see how the changes in Hispanic Studies affects the situation, and to confer with relevant departments to see if coordinated hiring for existing positions could be used to strengthen Latin American Studies.

The **Neuroscience Program**, in conjunction with the Department of Biology, has requested an additional position be added to Biology to support the Program. The extensive but somewhat unfocused proposal stresses the growing number of concentrators and the limited array of course offerings. Neuroscience is clearly a successful interdisciplinary program. However, it is too soon to tell if the increase in concentrators reflects a new level of student interest or the larger than typical sophomore class. Since the Trustees have decided to limit the number of tenure lines to the current level, any increase in positions in one department or program would require taking a position from another department or program. We cannot recommend an expansion of Neuroscience faculty at this time. We recommend that Neuroscience begin long range planning discussions with both Biology and Psychology about possible redefinitions of positions within those departments when positions become available through retirement, and that they especially address how the Program will balance courses from the several departments that contribute to the Program.