

Faculty Meeting Agenda

Thursday, May 24, 2018

12:30-1:45pm

CAPA, Symposium Room

Faculty Announcements

Elections: **APC**
 FRAC

Enrollment Update & Retention Outlook

Zeke Bernstein, Dean of Research, Planning, and Assessment

Report of the Provost and Dean of the College

Isabel Roche

- Advising Initiatives
- Library Initiatives

Report of the Mellon Fellows

Sarah Harris and Kirk Jackson

Report of the College Steering Committee

Andrew McIntyre, Chair

Report of the Academic Policies Committee

Noah Coburn, Chair

Report of the Faculty Performance Review Committee

Sue Rees, Chair

Report of the President

Mariko Silver

Faculty Meeting Minutes

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Faculty present: Brooke Allen, David Anderegg, Lopa Banerjee, Barry Bartlett, Ella Ben Hagai, Josh Blackwell, David Bond, Kitty Brazelton, Nick Brooke, John Bullock, Andrew Cencini, Noah Coburn, Michael Cohen, Terry Creach, Hugh Crowl, Annabel Davis-Goff, Elena Demyanenko, Michael Dumanis, Marguerite Feitlowitz, Janet Foley, Michael Giannitti, Karen Gover, Camille Guthrie, Sarah Harris, John Hultgren, Jon Isherwood, Kirk Jackson, Dina Janis, Jonathan Kline, Ginger Lin, Mary Lum, Vanessa Lyon, Andrew McIntyre, Katie Montovan, Carol Pal, Aysha Peltz, Ann Pibal, Mirka Prazak, Kate Purdie, Jean Randich, Robert Ransick, Sue Rees, Dana Reitz, Noelle Rouxel-Cubberly, Kerry Ryer-Parke, Tim Schroeder, Eileen Scully, Susan Sgorbati, Stephen Shapiro, Betsy Sherman, Rotimi Suberu, Anne Thompson, Paul Voice, Debbie Warnock, Michael Wimberly, Ursula Wolz, Kerry Woods, Ikuko Yoshida

Others present: Paige Bartels, Zeke Bernstein, Kate Child, Sarah Clader, Duncan Dobbeltmann, Laurie Kobik, Amy Kuzmicki, Faith McClellan, Xenia Markowitt, Richard MacPike, Meredith Meurs, Noelle Murphy, Mandy Pappas, David Rees, Matt Rizzo, Isabel Roche, Mariko Silver, Oceana Wilson

Elections to APC:

- 1 year replacement chair position to replace Nick Brooke, Michael Wimberly was elected.
- 3 year alternate position to replace Michael Wimberly, Don Sherefkin was elected.

Elections to FRAC:

- 3 year position to replace Andrew Cencini, Allen Shawn was elected.

Admissions Update

Mariko reported on enrollment and admissions data:

- We are seeing record application totals and the admit rate is decreasing, meaning the College can be more selective in the quality of students admitted. This will be our fourth consecutive incoming class that is stronger than the previous one by all measures, including academic aptitude and preparedness across a wide range of disciplinary interests, and we are yielding applicants from higher level schools. Our applicants are including more of the following type of students:
 - More presidential scholars (according to our now rationalized and more rigorous ratings).
 - Higher SAT and ACT scores for those who report them.
 - More students from excellent high schools from which we previously have not attracted or have attracted only a single student.
 - We are also beginning to see the fruits of our work in shifting our reputation, in particular with private schools.
- Some draws are:
 - They see that our curriculum is strong and evolving; that we (our students) are engaging with issues of the day in myriad ways; that study here is rigorous and challenging, as

well as student centered and creativity-driven.

- We also continue to engage, as evidenced by the composition of our incoming class, our goal of having a domestically and globally diverse student body. Doing so allows our students to learn and create in a context that reflects the world they live.
- Bennington's engagement with the world, and the opportunities we provide to students in this regard, are signature differentiators in a very competitive higher education environment.
- Our students and their accomplishments reflect this remarkable, and still quite distinctive, education we provide them. We are continuing to advance and enhance Bennington, and putting the student at the center and preparing them for this complex world. With Delia Saenz's arrival in the fall, we will deepen our work in this ongoing skill development.

Discussions have begun (in many ways, including in the faculty only meeting) about how to engage fruitfully with our increasingly diverse community and how to facilitate success among all our students, taking into account that everyone we admit is capable despite differences in their approaches, their strengths, and their familiarity with our model of higher education.

Retention Outlook

Zeke started by stating that the data from student exit forms list “academic fit” is a large reason for students leaving Bennington. “Academic fit” may be better described as a sense of belonging. He opened up a discussion asking for faculty thoughts about why students might leave Bennington. Some feedback was:

- Faculty discussed that what goes on in the classroom isn’t always going to show in this data, and the data may not show the real reason for the departure. Faculty may have more detailed information on the real reason for leaving.
- Advisor check-ins are important data to be looked at with an exit interview for insight into the reasons for leaving.
- Sometimes it’s hard to pin down the reason as there are contradictions in what students might say in different forms of feedback (essays, forms, etc.). Sometimes the students present differently to an advisor versus to a faculty member (in class).
- Transcript comments are very insightful in telling who the student is when they arrive and leave.

It was asked, in what areas can faculty have an impact?

- Academic fit - faculty can help guide the student to find courses that fit their plan.
- Medical - help the student find the necessary support and help with psych services.
- FYF has made the resources for help more visible to students.
- We should find a way to “talk across difference” in a way that makes students feel safe.
- Inter-personal relationship building training would be helpful, learning how to be together, it was noted that Delia will be helpful in this area.
- Based on surveys filled out, our freshman state that their alcohol and drug use shifts within 45 days of entering college. Alternative programming is helpful, like “sober pizza”. Creating spaces designed to be free of alcohol and drug use. The Student Center could be a hub for this versus hanging out in the student houses.

- Xenia was asked to share data she gathers from students with First Year Forum.

Xenia stated that the need for mental support has risen in the last 5 years and it is a rising issue on all campuses across the country. What should we be doing as an institution? We are already ahead of other colleges as far as having no restrictions on the number of psych service visits we allow and we have more counselors than other schools, comparably.

Report of the Provost and Dean of the College

First Year Forum (FYF) - Katie reported that new advising initiatives are in detail in the Faculty Notes. New advisees for fall have been assigned, please meet with your new advisees before the end of term. If you have any questions regarding advising, see Katie.

Report of the Mellon Fellows

Kirk reported that FYF students have been assigned new advisors, these first year students have essentially lost their advisor and it's important to reach out and meet your new advisee to help them feel comfortable with the change. The group work in FYF has helped students with confusion and anxiety with writing the Plan. Sarah stated that the current Mellon grant ends in December, before then please send proposals to APC regarding tutorials, co-curricular courses, and advanced work. Faculty workloads are being discussed regarding advising and a proposal to CSC is being worked on for acknowledging and calibrating faculty workloads.

Report of the College Steering Committee

Andrew reported that the committee is working on budget discussions, faculty support, the relationship of APC to CPC. All voting for committees will take place in the second faculty meeting of the term starting in the fall.

Report of the Academic Policies Committee

Noah reported that the minutes of the APC meeting include all the feedback on tools for assessment. The three main ideas are: moving the senior essay and re-thinking what it looks like, instruction for course evaluations and reconfiguring tutorial forms, tying co-curricular potential into that.

Report of the Faculty Performance Review Committee

Sue thanked those who completed class visit reports and sent in colleague letters. Terry will request letters for those under review for 18-19 soon.

Report of the President

Mariko spoke about the budget, continuing from last month's discussion.

- There will be **no changes** in:
 - Faculty professional support.
 - Faculty lunch plans or Supper Club.
 - Salaries or retirement contributions.
- Area budgets will be the same as last year, with the following exceptions:
 - Reductions to speaker/guest lines of about 50% per area.
 - Trim down on catering where possible.
 - Possible temporary suspension of competitively-awarded leaves for 2019-20, we will make this determination in fall 2018, holding for now.

Zeke will be sending an email asking for thoughts on additional ways we can use our grants, this will be sent in survey form, please respond with ideas. Share what kinds of programs we could offer and don't be limited by your own area or your own interest.