

MEMORANDUM

Provost/Dean of the College

TO: **Colleagues and Students**

FROM: Academic Policy Committee (Paul Voice, Chair;
Voting Members: Steven Bach, Marguerite Feitlowitz,
Jonathan Kline, Ann Pibal, Sue Rees, Donald Sherefkin;
Non-Voting Members: Elizabeth Coleman, Elissa Tenny

SUBJECT: **Campus-Wide Discussions on Evaluating Student Work**

DATE: November 19, 2003

Following last week's discussion at the faculty meeting APC voted unanimously to organize and oversee campus-wide discussions on the topic of evaluating student work. A calendar of meetings will be published at the beginning of spring term.

1. These meetings will include both faculty and students. APC will meet with the faculty as a whole and also in discipline groups, and will meet with student representatives (SEPC) and with students in small groups.
2. These meetings will culminate in a proposal from APC to the faculty before the end of the spring term. (This includes the possibility that APC will recommend that the existing system of evaluation be maintained.)
3. The Dean's Office will produce a document for the beginning of next term that includes the history of evaluation at Bennington; what other similar schools have done; and an initial list of proposals constructed by APC for the purpose of initiating discussion. This document will be available to both faculty and students. It is expected that other proposals will emerge in the course of discussion.
4. Whatever the outcome of the process present students are exempt from any changes (if they wish to be).
5. The question of the transcript will be considered in the context of the larger discussion.

The aim of this process is to settle the question of what form the evaluation of student work should take. It is important to emphasize that responsibility for academic policy rests with the faculty who will ultimately decide this issue by voting on a proposal presented by APC, a faculty-elected committee. The APC recognizes that the topic of evaluation is deeply important and that there are likely to be sharp differences of opinion. For this reason the APC wants the deliberations to include both faculty and students so that the final proposal responds to the serious engagement and creativity of the entire Bennington community. The Committee believes that a process that is transparent and allows for all voices to be heard will result in the best outcome for our future students.