

**Faculty Meeting Agenda**

March 30, 2017

12:30-1:45pm

CAPA, Symposium Room

**Faculty Announcements**

**Elections:**      **APC**

**Report of the Provost and Dean of the College**

Isabel Roche

- Faculty Searches
- Retention Update
- Benningtonwork review

**Report of the College Steering Committee**

Paul Voice, chair

**Report of the Academic Policies Committee**

Nick Brooke, chair

**Report of the Mellon Fellows****Report of the President**

Mariko Silver

- Admissions

**Controversial Speakers / Free Speech on Campuses: Two Case Studies**

## **Faculty Meeting Agenda**

March 30, 2017

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### **Meeting Minutes**

**Faculty present:** Barbara Alfano, Ben Anastas, David Anderegg, Crina Archer, Lopamudra Banerjee, Barry Bartlett, Ella Ben Hagai, Josh Blackwell, David Bond, Nick Brooke, Rebecca Brooks, John Bullock, Noah Coburn, Michael Cohen, Terry Creach, Elena Demyanenko, Thorsten Dennerline, Michael Dumanis, Janet Foley, Camille Guthrie, John Hultgren, Jon Isherwood, Kirk Jackson, Dina Janis, Jonathan Kline, Vanessa Lyon, Richard MacPike, Amie McClellan, Andrew McIntyre, Erika Mijlin, Katie Montovan, Karthik Pandian, Ann Pibal, Jonathan Pitcher, Kate Purdie, Jean Randich, Robert Ransick, Sue Rees, Dana Reitz, Jenny Rohn, Noelle Rouxel-Cubberly, Kerry Ryer-Parke, Tim Schroeder, Eileen Scully, Susan Sgorbati, Allen Shawn, Donald Sherefkin, Betsy Sherman, Kimberly Van Orman, Justin Vasselli, Paul Voice, Bruce Williamson, Michael Wimberly, Ikuko Yoshida

**Others present:** Zeke Bernstein, Jamie Babic, Kendra Ericson, Laurie Kobik, Heather Faley, Xenia Markowitt, Meredith Meurs, Tessalyn Morrison, Noelle Murphy, Isabel Roche, Mariko Silver

### **Faculty Announcements**

#### **Elections:      APC**

- Kate Purdie was elected for a 3-year position to replace Mary Lum
- Sarah Harris was elected for a 3-year position to replace Tim Schroeder

#### **Report of the Provost and Dean of the College**

Isabel Roche

- The first Kensinger Meeting was awarded to Elena Demyanenko, Susie Ibarra and Susan Sgorbati to host an interdisciplinary group on improvisation. The purpose of these meetings is to gather scholars around topics of interest of faculty members and can take various forms.
- The Director of Undergraduate Writing Initiatives search has launched. Finalists for the Director and Curator of Usdan Gallery search were on campus this month and recommendations from the search committee will be forthcoming. The faculty position in Cognitive Psychology was not filled, and a 1-year visitor will be hired in the interim.
- Retention Update:  
Zeke spoke about the trend in enrollments and the anticipated class of 700-730 students. Retention rates are largely above average. Graduation rates have been improving and have reached 70% and is projected to reach 77%. The goals of the retention lab are to see why students leave and stay at Bennington. Zeke urged faculty to fill out the mid-term advisee check-in survey.

#### **Report of the College Steering Committee**

Paul Voice, chair

- The committee has been talking about the types of faculty position appointments in an early effort to look at the handbook. Salary reports, healthcare, and retirement will be discussed next Wednesday at the Faculty-only meeting.

## **Report of the Academic Policies Committee**

Nick Brooke, chair

- The Needs Assessment Survey has been sent out and is due April 6th. APC is working on rolling out programs on the capacities and will be moving the First Term Reflection Essay to the second term. The committee also continues to work on the faculty handbook and is working with SEPC on defining their role in general and in the midst of classroom conflicts. SEPC will be handing out information about the midterm discussions.

## **Report of the Mellon Fellows**

- The Mellon Fellows have been working on the topic of advising and are now going to be piloting a first year advising pilot program “learning communities” where first year students (15) meet with a faculty member and upperclassman student to cover advising topics more uniformly, allowing faculty to work with students they feel most comfortable advising, and allowing administrative communication to happen more effectively. There will be 5 learning communities launched for next year. More information will follow regarding how this will feed into work on the second year and what role the Advising Hub will play in advising.

## **Report of the President**

Mariko Silver

- The College welcomes Jude Higdin E.D.D. who will serve as the new Director of Information Technology.
- The College is negotiating health insurance rates with Blue Cross Blue Shield to settle on a premium rate. Mariko would like to hear what priorities exist among faculty members regarding the budget for next year.
- Admissions:  
There was a record breaking applicant pool (1455). The admissions team traveled to 24 countries, 35 states, and 171 schools this year. BenningtonWorks is expected to be bigger this year, and yields 48% of students (versus 27% overall). Faculty participation is a key component to the success of this event.
- Terry Creach reviewed the BenningtonWork schedule.

## **Controversial Speakers / Free Speech on Campuses: Two Case Studies**

Mariko Silver

- Mariko reviewed two case studies (Reed and Middlebury) to talk about how we can prepare for presentations from controversial speakers so that they are productive. At Reed, Kimberly Pierce was invited to talk about her film Boys Don't Cry and was faced with verbal and written threats from students. At Middlebury, Charles Murray was invited to speak and was interrupted by protesters. Before his visit, hundreds of alumni had signed a letter condemning the visit.
  - Questions/comments: Is there a policy around free speech at Bennington College? It seems like more of an issue about who has the authority to speak, rather than whether or not they should have free speech. Could the faculty member be more plugged into the perspectives of students? It's worth exploring how we approached the recent presentation with the speaker Sarah Schulman. There was an effort with her to have students read her texts beforehand. There could be more dialogue on how to deal with conflict and still be angry but not be surprised or destructive.