

Faculty Meeting Agenda

Thursday, April 26, 2018

12:30-1:45pm

CAPA, Symposium Room

Faculty Announcements

Elections: **APC**

Report of the Academic Policies Committee

Noah Coburn, Chair

Report of the College Steering Committee

Andrew McIntyre, Chair

Report of the President

Mariko Silver

Report of the Provost and Dean of the College

Isabel Roche

- Handshake preview
- Registration Updates and Reminders

Enrollment Update and Retention Outlook

Zeke Bernstein

Mariko announcements

Isabel announcements:

- Noah/CIEL role

Faculty Meeting Minutes

Thursday, April 26, 2018

12:30-1:45pm

CAPA, Symposium Room

Faculty present: Barbara Alfano, Brooke Allen, Benjamin Anastas, David Anderegg, Barry Bartlett, Ella Ben Hagai, Josh Blackwell, Tom Bogdan, Kitty Brazelton, Nick Brooke, John Bullock, Andrew Cencini, Noah Coburn, Michael Cohen, Terry Creach, Hugh Crawl, Annabel Davis-Goff, Elena Demyanenko, Marguerite Feitlowitz, Janet Foley, Michael Giannitti, Karen Gover, Camille Guthrie, Sarah Harris, John Hultgren, Jon Isherwood, Kirk Jackson, Jonathan Kline, Sherry Kramer, Ginger Lin, Mary Lum, Vanessa Lyon, Carol Pal, Ann Pibal, Jonathan Pitcher, Mirka Prazak, Jean Randich, Robert Ransick, Sue Rees, Dana Reitz, Noelle Rouxel-Cubberly, Kerry Ryer-Parke, Tim Schroeder, Eileen Scully, Susan Sgorbati, Stephen Shapiro, Donald Sherefkin, Betsy Sherman, Anne Thompson, Paul Voice, Michael Wimberly, Kerry Woods, Ikuko Yoshida

Others present: Paige Bartels, Zeke Bernstein, Kate Child, Duncan Dobbelmann, Laurie Kobik, Amy Kuzmicki, Faith McClellan, Meredith Meurs, Mandy Pappas, David Rees, Isabel Roche, Mariko Silver, Oceana Wilson

Elections to APC:

- 1 year replacement chair position to replace Noah Coburn, Noah Coburn was elected.
- 3 year position to replace Barbara Alfano, Nick Brooke was elected.
- 3 year alternate position to replace Michael Wimberly, Mary Lum was elected.

Report of the Academic Policies Committee

Noah Coburn reported that the committee has been working on the following:

- APC and FYF piloted an assessment form of the first year essay and thinking ahead toward the student's Plan.
- Finalized Plan Proposal Minutes edits/Plan Paradigm edits and changed the name to "Plan Meeting: Committee Assessment Form" instead of "Plan Minutes".
- The committee is discussing the role of the Senior Essay in the Plan Process and talking about making changes for next year to the essay structure.
- Taking a wider look at when we do assessment audits and how often we give feedback and try to coordinate this better. Zeke is working on an assessment audit to help analyze this.
- Reviewed the policy implications for the proposed MFA in Public Action.

Report of the College Steering Committee

Jon Isherwood reported:

- We have had visitors from a technology working group help assess needs, issues and priorities.
- Faith McClellan joined a CSC meeting to discuss "Life After Bennington" which she will give more detail on later in this meeting.
- David Rees joined a CSC meeting to discuss sexual misconduct and conceptual relationships and will be circulating a policy revision soon.
- The group is discussing changing committee voting to one time per term.

- Discussing the relationship between APC and CPC and better defining it. Also, updating the Faculty Handbook to clearly define the relationship between the two.
- Mariko discussed the budget and CSC is hoping to discuss further in the faculty-only meetings. The goal is to achieve transparency and faculty engagement on the subject.

Report of the President

Mariko Silver spoke about the current budget status after discussions with the CSC and reported the following:

- Financial History
 - Bennington has long wrestled with long term financial stability and has always been tuition dependent and current-use fundraising dependent. This is still true. We are undertaking efforts to change it, as you have heard over the last few years by building: (1) endowment; (2) greater stability in admissions. We are continuing to work on those things; some move faster, and some move more slowly, but the work is underway.
- Investments/Hiring
 - In the course of this work we are making strategic investments in staff (building endowment, student support services), facilities, reputation, partnerships, and faculty. We are not generously endowed and Advancement is working on engaging middle aged alum and developing relationships with them, which takes time. The percentage of staff hires in the last 5 years that are new positions is 21% (49 positions). (It was noted that only the "major" hires were considered). The percentage of new positions that are faculty support or student facing/student support is 47% (23 positions). Some positions actually produce revenue that helps to offset the cost. This is true with dining services (where more staff were needed with the increase in the student body and the temporary dining facility) and the 2 additional therapists in psychological services. There has been increased focus on first year students/student retention/student accommodations - thus an increase in staff in related areas. There has been an increase in health/psychological service needs of students and increased support needs in psych services.
- Higher Ed Environment
 - These are complicated times for higher ed overall, as well (Oberlin, Hampshire, Mt. Holyoke, all with more money, are all cutting and trimming, tightening etc). Net tuition is not up to costs. A small class size carries forward 4 years and this year's class (quality of student body and ability to pay) is improved, but will take 4 years to show. We are more dependent on tuition revenue in this phase.
- Cost Cutting and Ideas Welcome
 - Mariko stated some cost cuts have already been implemented, \$1.5M so far for FY19 (already \$700K in FY18). She stated that she wants everyone to be aware she's presenting an overview of where we are as of today. She is discussing in more depth with CSC, and asked to please also direct questions or ideas via CSC reps, and invites faculty to engage in the revenue generating programs growth and development conversations. Examples can include new graduate programs or add-ons to existing programs in the MFA Writing and Post Bacc.

Report of the Provost and Dean of the College

Isabel Roche introduced Faith who reported that Worklink is ending and the new platform, Handshake, is far enhancing. There are many benefits and it includes an employer network for all employers who pool in nationwide.

- Our current network of 1000 employers can now pull in from a national network of 200,000+ employers.
- There are many more resources and more access to paid opportunities. We are recruiting and pitching for employers to join us for FWT and gaining many new opportunities for students to choose from.
- Students are thrilled and the program is very intuitive.
- FWT welcomes any feedback.

Enrollment Update and Retention Outlook

Zeke reported the following keys to help improve upon and the importance of, retainment:

- - Helping students find a way in our curriculum. They may need guidance seeing how their Plan fits into the courses offered here at Bennington. He presented that graduation rates are increasing and work has been done on the Plan process and improved registration procedures, which may be contributing factors.
 - For future classes, FYF should impact retainment positively. He shared that second to third year student retention is lower than other schools comparatively and needs to be worked on.
 - Retention data is important and is looked at by parents and prospective students. The focus shouldn't be about retaining every student but supporting the students who really do belong here.
 - Isabel stated that although we were short on time it was important to continue an open discussion at the next faculty meeting on retainment thoughts and/or ideas. Also, to think about moments to help students see clearer why they could find what they are looking for here in their Plan and the curriculum. She stated that case studies will be presented to look at next time.

Announcements:

- Paige announced that the Robert Frost House re-opening is today and it looks great! This should be a great platform to engage the Bennington community. Next Thursday (5/3) is the opening to the general public.