

**FACULTY MEETING MINUTES**  
**Wednesday, November 11, 2020**  
**4:00 p.m.**

I. Report of the Secretary

No corrections to the minutes of the October meeting were submitted.

II. Reports from College Officers

A. President Greene

So far this semester we have conducted 75,000 PCR COVID tests. As of today, we have no active cases and no one in isolation or quarantine. It is remarkable that everyone is safe — thank you all for your efforts!

Only 6% of campuses in country have brought back all of their students. This wouldn't have been possible without you.

I am pleased to announce six new appointments to endowed chairs:

- Martha Arterberry, Clara C. Piper Professor of Psychology
- Chandra Bhimull, Audrey Wade Hittinger Katz and Sheldon Toby Katz Associate Professor of Anthropology and African-American Studies
- Adam Howard, Charles A. Dana Professor of Education
- Liam O'Brien, Charles A. Dana Professor of Statistics
- Bill Sullivan, Whipple-Coddington Associate Professor of Geology
- Das Thamattoor, J. Warren Merrill Professor of Chemistry

I'd like to share some information about our compliance with COVID protocols.

- 99.5% of students get their tests done within a day of their scheduled slot. The other 0.5% lose their ID privileges, Security will chase them down if necessary as well.
- There have been seven serious compliance issues thus far (visitors, out-of-state travel). Consequences for this can include removal from campus.
- Only about 50% of students report symptoms daily using the Co-Verified app. We need to work on that and will do so in January and February. This was very useful recently when some students had a fever (not COVID-related). Faculty/staff Co-Verified usage is about 2/3.

We're in a very good position as we're coming to the end of the semester. I'm so grateful to all of you.

B. Provost McFadden

Congratulations to faculty with new endowed chairs. Thank you to all faculty for your commitment to our students and your efforts during this challenging semester.

We are actively engaged in processes to establish a Colby day care center that will open in the fall. It is long overdue. We don't yet know any details but will keep you updated.

III. Old Business  
Motion from the Course Evaluation Committee

Judy Stone, moderator: Please use the blue hand to be recognized rather than the chat function. Please introduce yourself with your affiliation.

Bill Sullivan: A few changes to the motion have been made, based on feedback from the October meeting. We have added "my/I" to four questions for the sake of consistency and personal focus. If approved, this motion will replace the existing evaluation form with the new questions and will remove numerical values associated with categorical responses because they are statistically meaningless. Faculty will be able to add up to five questions of their own design.

Tamar Friedmann: Info about class standing can completely de-anonymize the form. How do we handle that?

Bill: That is not a change from the existing form. Students can choose not to respond, and in the new form they will be about to select "prefer not to answer."

Carol: faculty should feel free to explain to students that they may wish to take this option.

Judy Stone (as faculty member): Are the questions separable from the reporting procedures in this motion? I am particularly concerned about not reporting response distribution relative to the department, division, and college. Some instructors don't know what a typical distribution looks like and might misread their results. P&T sometimes compares candidates with one another, which is inherently problematic but would benefit from more general comparative data.

Bill: Yes, the two parts of the motion could be separated, but it would not be a friendly amendment. The proposed reporting procedures follow best practices, that one should not compare responses across the college because courses differ widely in their content, pedagogy, and audiences. Department chairs should sit down with new faculty to discuss evaluations each semester. I can't control how P&T operates, but those comparisons may warrant conversation.

Duncan Tate: I would like to see distributions for department/division/college. Otherwise department chairs also don't understand what the data mean.

Jen Coane: Why are we still doing course evaluations at all given the fact that they are profoundly biased and don't measure what they're supposed to. Why fix a flawed instrument when the concept is flawed given the role that these evaluations play in

promotion? The impact is also disproportionate in very problematic ways. I no longer look at my evaluations, because they are useless.

David Freidenreich (as faculty member): How should individual faculty members, department chairs, P&T etc., interpret the data conveyed through these reports?

Bill (responding to Jen): I agree that evaluations are biased against everyone who isn't a handsome, young, white man. The link between evaluations and learning outcomes is disputed. My understanding is that Colby started evaluations in response to student demand. Although I might personally support getting rid of course evaluations, my committee can't make that motion.

Carol Hurney (responding to David): The literature points to a limited future of course evaluations as an instrument. Course evals should give faculty formative feedback and should not be used for evaluative purposes. Faculty should be compared to themselves. They should reflect on their teaching and strive to improve.

Laura Seay (as committee member): We all agree that evaluations should not be used for promotion and tenure purposes but rather should be used for personal improvement. Only AAC can change how evaluation instrument is used. Our task is to improve the instrument as best we can.

Cheryl Townsend Gilkes: The most helpful aspect of evaluating teaching on P&T is student letters. Evaluation forms sometimes contain enragingly inappropriate content.

Jen Coane: Since course evaluation committee believes that evaluations shouldn't be used for P&T purposes, how do we make that change? If we keep using them, why aren't we explicitly teaching students about implicit biases and their impact on course evaluations? I've also heard about the value of students letters – it would be great if faculty could see them.

Raffael Scheck: When I served on P&T, we all knew not to take evaluations at face value. No instrument can be taken uncritically, including student letters (not statistically relevant) and peer evaluations (selectively written).

Margaret McFadden: This revision of the course evaluation form is part of a broader and more systematic reflection on how we promote and assess effective teaching. Other changes will involve discussion with P&T, which plans to consider the issue this spring. This motion is one piece in a broader process. At the moment, I would not recommend getting rid of evaluations entirely.

Martha Arterberry: I find course evaluations to be very helpful. The more you work with them the better you can interpret them. I support continuing our practice. We need comprehensive feedback from students in some way. I support the new form.

A vote was taken on the motion: 119 yes, 7 no.

The motion passed.

#### IV. New Business

##### Motion from the Academic Honesty Committee

Rebecca Conry: This motion changes the composition of the academic review board so as to exclude the professor who brings the report of dishonesty. Instead, the faculty member will have a chance to make a case. Students and parents object to fact that faculty member who brings the charge also votes on it.

David Freidenreich (as faculty member): What do peer institutions do? What are best practices?

Rebecca: No peer institutions involve faculty member in the decision making process.

Cheryl Townsend Gilkes: Could you give an example about when the review board might disagree with the faculty member bringing the charge?

Rebecca: Sometimes the professor doesn't sufficiently appreciate the student's perspective. Sometimes the committee disagrees over whether a particular act is negligence or dishonesty. Students on the review board are sometimes reluctant to ask probing questions with the reporting faculty member present.

Carrie LeVan: Would the reporting faculty member still be in the room?

Rebecca: No.

Raffael Scheck: Would the reporting faculty member be able to appeal the decision?

Rebecca: Yes. If the student makes a statement, faculty can respond. If there's new evidence or procedural irregularities, either party can appeal.

Charlie Orzech: It's problematic if the accused is in the room but the accuser is not.

Rebecca: In fact, the student is not present either, so now neither side will be present. Now the committee will consist of two students and two faculty, all of whom are disinterested.

Tamar Friedmann: Do students have a chance to speak with a committee member about the process?

Rebecca: Yes, they meet with me. Students also work with their class advising dean, including by developing a worst-case scenario plan. In addition, they meet with the academic misconduct dean.

There was no new business from the floor.

#### V. Committee Report

##### Report from the AAC on S/U Anonymity

Russ Johnson: AAC was asked to examine the issue of anonymity for S/U declarations. Currently, faculty don't know when students make such a declaration. We believe that it would be practically impossible to make this change this semester because the decision itself isn't due until the final day of the semester. In the future, when the deadline is earlier in the semester, it's possible but AAC does not recommend a change: faculty should treat all students equally throughout the semester. The AAC unanimously supports the current policy.

## VI. Announcements

Carol Hurney: The last faculty Mumble of the semester is tomorrow, 3:30-5:30, Silberman Lounge.

Motion to adjourn: 4:58.

Respectfully submitted,  
David Freidenreich, faculty secretary