

11-7-2019

Faculty Meeting Minutes - November 7, 2019

Provost's Office
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Provost's Office, "Faculty Meeting Minutes - November 7, 2019" (2019). *2019-2020 Meeting Agendas & Minutes*. 5.

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Faculty Meeting Minutes - November 7, 2019

Abstract

Minutes of the Gettysburg College Faculty Business Meeting, November 7, 2019.

Comments

Appendix : Rationale: Motions from Faculty Grievance Committee

Minutes of the Gettysburg College Faculty
November 7, 2019
Mara Auditorium
Business Meeting
(Quorum 100; Attendance 105)

President Robert Iuliano called the meeting to order at 4:01 pm.

He noted that two students, Benjamin Pontz, for the *Gettysburgian*, and Patrick McKenna, for Senate, were in attendance.

President Iuliano began his report by announcing that four junior colleagues have earned tenure and will be promoted to associate professorships at the start of the 2020-21 academic year. They are Professor Mukherjee (Psychology), Professor Puckett (Physics), Professor Samji (History), and Professor Conceição (Mathematics).

He then discussed his priorities as he begins his presidency. They include getting to know the faculty, the administrative staff, and our students, and getting a clear view of the college before setting an agenda and beginning work on a strategic plan. He is deeply impressed by the conversations he has had with academic departments.

Three searches for crucial positions are now underway. One is for a Vice President for Development, Alumni and Parent Relations. Given the economic challenges facing higher education, we need to find someone ready to play a leading role in helping us find support for the college. A second search is for the Executive Director of the Eisenhower Institute. The president spoke of how impressed he is by the impact of the institute on the career paths of many of our students, and on recruitment. He envisions it assuming a still broader role in the future. He thanked, among others, Professors Birkner and Douds for their assistance with the search. The third search is for a Vice President of Enrollment and Educational Services. It will be difficult to find an able successor to Vice President Fritze, but we must do so. The ideal appointment will be of someone capable of cutting through the noise that surrounds college admissions, and of making our message audible.

Because it is so important that the faculty understand the possible causes and likely consequences of the demographic shift colleges must address, a later faculty meeting will focus on what we are facing and how we are responding. The president will also be speaking with the Forward Thinking Group on November 15 to assess how best and most productively to use time available for conversations with the faculty. He wanted to call attention to efforts we are making to attract students to our applicant pool. These include highlighting the history, place, and distinctiveness of the college. He has asked Professor Carmichael and Ms. Yates to convene a working group that will identify what distinguishes us.

The president then stressed that we need revenues outside of tuition dollars. There are a number of sources to explore: we might, for example, think about certificate programs, perhaps one in Information Technology. We need to ask, too, whether we are being as creative as possible to support the academic mission of the college. He urged people to put ideas on the table, and to think

expansively about what we might do. Such considerations are, however, only in an exploratory phase.

We also need to be concerned about two metrics. The retention rate of first year students is lower than it should be, while the eighty-four percent six year graduation rate lags behind that of many of the liberal arts colleges with which we compete. Vice President Ramsey and the Student Success Task Force are developing recommendations.

The president then observed that racist incidents persist as a problem the college faces; recent ones have made the problem all too graphic. The rate of reported incidents has not declined over the past several years. We must be sure that all students know that racial slurs are unacceptable. Yet our educational mission also requires that we go further than identifying what is intolerable. We must articulate a communal value of empathy. Realizing that the next national election has the potential to prove divisive, we need to do what we can to reduce friction. Better Angels, which has a Harrisburg chapter, will soon conduct a workshop; he thanked Professor Bohrer for his role in arranging it. We all need guidance in how to carry out charged conversations.

Provost Christopher Zappe, in his report, wished to pick up on President Iuliano's concerns, and spoke of our collective obligation to create a genuinely inclusive campus. He urged faculty members to set aside class time to insist on the college's most important tenets. Conversations about diversity and its importance to our mission and in classroom discussions, about the deleterious impact of racial slurs and racist attitudes on community, and about how students can influence one another to put an end to damaging behavior might be discomfiting, but would be helpful.

He then read the following memorial tribute to Professor Kim:

I would now like to honor Yeon-Su Kim, Associate Professor in the Sunderman Conservatory of Music, who passed away this past weekend after an extended illness. Yeon-Su was surrounded by her loving family, including her husband Eduardo, in a hospital outside Seoul at the time of her passing.

As the first violinist of the Cosmos Quartet, Yeon-Su delivered performances in Germany, Austria, and England, and worked in residencies under the Amadeus Quartet and the Tokyo Quartet. As a recitalist and chamber musician, she performed and taught in festivals in Austria, Brazil, England, Germany, Italy, Korea and the United States. She delivered performances on the BBC radio and the German National Radio.

Above all, Yeon-Su was an inspiring and dedicated teacher who was committed to her students and generous with her time. In 2016, Yeon-Su's outstanding teaching was recognized by her peers through the Luther W. and Bernice L. Thompson Distinguished Teaching Award.

According to one of her colleagues, Yeon-Su was the type of colleague with whom one could have highly engaging, wide-ranging discussions about music and life. Moreover, she has been described as an insightful musician whose depth of understanding was informed by a long acquaintance with art. Yeon-Su worked for the excellence of the Sunderman Conservatory

without drawing attention to herself. She will always be remembered as a very kind and talented person.

On a personal note, I will never forget the day that I delivered to Yeon-Su news of her successful tenure review. Given all that Yeon-Su had been through with her illness, it was one of the most joyful experiences of my career to communicate Janet Riggs's decision to grant her tenure and promotion to the rank of associate professor.

Members of the Sunderman Conservatory are planning a celebration of Yeon-Su's life, the details of which will be shared on a future date.

For now, I wish to extend my deepest sympathy to Eduardo as well as Yeon-Su's family, friends, colleagues, and students.

Would you please join me in honoring Yeon-Su's life as well as her lasting contribution to our campus community in a moment of silence?

Thank you.

The president then called for a quorum count, which succeeded.

Minutes for the meeting of October 17 were approved as submitted.

Professor Milingo introduced two motions from the Faculty Grievance Committee, both of which were circulated on the Faculty Governance Digest on November 6, the first (Draft Motion 1) proposing

that additional language be added to the *F(aculty) H(andbook)* which purposefully provides clear expectations to promote collegiality among the faculty. The wording of the following new paragraph can be inserted somewhere in Section IV A. 3.

Gettysburg College expects all faculty, at any level, to maintain the highest professional and personal decorum in interacting with each other. Faculty at all levels should foster standards of collegiality, honesty, and civility with students, administrative staff members, support staff members, and other faculty members.

Faculty members who experience difficulties with others should seek guidance from their chairs, the Provost, or an ombudsperson to resolve the problem(s). They may also avail themselves of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) (see Section VII. I.1.). The resolution of faculty conflicts should be guided by mediation and an understanding that a diverse faculty communicates in diverse ways. Collegiality and tolerance are essential for employees working together over the long term.

The committee also moved (Draft Motion 1.5):

that the statement concerning expectations of behavior for chairpersons (section IV. F. 8.) be removed from the faculty handbook.

The statement currently reads ...

IV. THE FACULTY MEMBER AND COLLEGE GOVERNANCE

F. Department Chairpersons

8. Personal Professional Performance

Provide professional leadership in the department; set the example for personal professional behavior in interacting with department colleagues, other members of the faculty, students, and members of the administration and staff; demonstrate professional competence in teaching, research, and other professional activities; participate in professional associations.

[The] Statement would now read ...

Provide professional leadership in the department; demonstrate professional competence in teaching, research, and other professional activities; participate in professional associations.

Please see the Appendix for the rationales.

Professor Milingo then reviewed the faculty charge to the committee, from 2017, to review the language of the handbook, the issue of how to address conflicts between colleagues being less clear than others for which we have policies. The two motions, she explained, go hand-in-hand: to remove some of the language for how chairs should comport themselves, while setting standards for everyone to meet. Yet the motion is worded innocuously, and not to be prescriptive. It belongs in a paragraph about recommended conduct.

Professor Funk asked whether the committee has clearly defined what constitutes membership in the faculty. Professor Milingo replied that the definition is in the Faculty Handbook. To a question about the meaning of a diverse faculty communicating in diverse ways, she responded that conflict can begin in differences, at times subtle ones, in communicative styles. Professor Barbara Sommer recommended putting a period after “mediation.” Arguing that “foster standards” is vague, Professor Lesser urged more explicit phrasing, but Professor Milingo noted the preference of the committee for a non-prescriptive approach. Professor Amster concurred with Professor Sommers’s suggestion, to end the sentence after “mediation.” Professor McCutcheon asked whether the reference to collegiality would add a criterion for tenure and promotion cases. Wondering about the implications of the superlative, Professor Neller indicated that is unlikely that anyone can always achieve the “highest” standards of decorum. Professor Milingo responded that the committee would consider a change to the language. Professor Neller suggested that an aspirational statement might be appropriate. In a response to Professor McCutcheon’s concern, Professor Milingo pointed out that collegiality is not listed in the handbook as a concern for the Faculty Personnel Committee, nor will

it be under the motion, which is focused on means of preventing conflicts. Provost Zappe reiterated that questions of collegiality are not part of pre-tenure, tenure or promotion reviews, and that the Personnel Committee agrees that they do not have a place in them.

Professor Hogan spoke of her uneasiness about the prospect of forced mediation.

President Iuliano pointed to the difficulty of amending the document on the floor he recommended that the Grievance Committee discuss the concerns raised during the discussion. He added that motions can also be acted upon today, but only by common consent. After Professor Wilson ruled that a straw vote would not be in order, despite some recommendations that one be taken—the motion would have to be withdrawn first—Professor Platt indicated he would oppose common consent. Thus the motions will thus hold over until the meeting of November 21.

Dr. Bradley then presented a report, *Keeping Campus Safe*, with a focus on people who pose a threat to themselves or to others. Someone intent on targeted or domestic violence, a mass shooting, or suicide usually leaves signs; members of a community can, with sufficient attentiveness, recognize them. While motives for violent activity are hard to identify, forms of strain—long term, uncontrolled, and acute—and a sense of isolation, that someone has no one to turn to, can often precipitate it. What the Federal Bureau of Investigation terms “leakage” refers to information that has gotten out, but that is often unrecognizable as relevant. In many cases of mass violence, especially on campuses, there were people who knew enough to avert disaster. Warning signs include a preoccupation with other shootings, an extreme focus on mass violence, excessive interest in another person, often in the form of stalking, and the stockpiling of weapons. People who carry grudges, and who cannot let go of them, can pose a risk. Serious and lethal incidents of domestic violence are typically preceded by a history of abuse.

She confirmed that there were fifty-two suicide attempts by our students last year, a figure so mind-boggling that she had to double-check it. People at risk of suicide typically engage in either active or passive ideation, the one involving rehearsals, and the other odd musings (“I wouldn’t mind being hit by a bus”). Each is worrisome. No jokes about suicide should be discounted; counseling asks that people who hear them take them seriously. While she has focused her remarks on students, she pointed out that the problem also affects members of the faculty, administration and staff. Indications that people are at risk include talking about how they wish to be remembered, or about how or when to end their lives. She pointed to a correlation between self-harm, cutting oneself, for example, and suicidal acts.

Domestic violence affects the student body but, as with suicide, is not confined to it in the campus community. It is cyclical and can trace back to jealousy; warning signs include the use of disparaging language. Sometimes assailants will begin throwing things as part of a pattern of escalation that can include locking someone out, abandoning another, perhaps in a dangerous location, and sexual assault. Physical abuse usually occurs at a late stage. Abuse can lead to a loss of self-esteem, which can articulate itself as excessive worry about not pleasing a violent partner. Indications of a violent relationship include wearing out-of-season clothes that might cover bruises. In the LGBTQ community, threats of outing and acts of bullying can be part of relationships that are deteriorating into violence.

Especially in an environment with so high a level of concern, it is appropriate to call either the Department of Public Safety or the borough police: it is better to be mistaken in acting on one's worries than in not doing so.

The president adjourned the meeting at 4:57 pm.

Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leonard S. Goldberg". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Leonard S. Goldberg
Faculty Secretary

Appendix
Rationale: Motions from Faculty
Grievance Committee

Rationale, Motion 1: The *FH* should clearly state expectations of behavior for all faculty members. Currently, we have no express indication of how the College expects faculty members to promote good interactions and collegiality.

Rationale, Motion 2: This motion is aimed at removing inconsistencies in the *FH* with respect to statements of behavior expectations. Currently the *FH* explicitly states expectations of behavior only for department chairpersons not for all faculty.