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Faculty Meeting Minutes - April 16, 2020.

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Faculty Meeting Minutes - April 16, 2020.

Abstract

Minutes of the Gettysburg College Faculty Business Meeting, April 16, 2020.

Comments

Appendix 1 : Letter from Provost Zappe on Available Resources

Appendix 2 : Rationale: Faculty Governance Committee Motion

Minutes of the Gettysburg College Faculty
April 16, 2020
Remote Meeting
Business Meeting
(Quorum 100; Attendance 156)

President Robert Iuliano called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm.

He thanked Dr. Remy and his team for enabling our last meeting, and first virtual one, to go as seamlessly as it did. Dr. Remy provided an explanation of how this meeting, conducted as a videoconference, would proceed. The quorum count and anonymous voting will both be done through a polling feature available on the Zoom platform we are using.

President Iuliano offered his good wishes to the community and expressed his hope that everyone was well. He observed that social distancing, for all the difficulties it entails, is dampening the spread of Covid-19 in the area. The rate of infection is, however, only expected to peak between mid-May and early June, so he urged people not to ease up on the precautions they are taking. The college leadership is paying careful attention to Governor Wolf's policies. He called attention to a *Gettysburgian* article by Benjamin Pontz, who, along with Patrick McKenna, for Senate, is one of two students planning on sitting in on today's meeting. Mr. Pontz takes note of the national skepticism about remote learning, and about whether students are getting their money's worth as they are kept from their campuses and classrooms. In it he argues, against such doubts, that students are getting an especially valuable education in how to adapt quickly and in a creative spirit to unforeseen circumstances. Meeting and handling present stresses are exactly what liberal learning is for. The president thanked him for the eloquence of his reflections. He is optimistic that we will see things through successfully, and will do so because of the traits—adaptability and resilience—that the article celebrates.

The president then reported that Vice President Fritze has offered to defer her retirement for another year, an offer he has gladly accepted. Her experience and expertise are welcome and needed as we recruit our next two matriculating classes. He lauded the contribution she has made, particularly as a member of President's Council, during the current emergency and characterized it as invaluable. He asked for a round of virtual applause.

He next, regretfully, announced the cancellation of all on-campus summer programs. If the decision may seem to some people premature, it does allow those affected by it to make alternative plans. It does not affect students who can work on projects remotely and under faculty supervision.

He pointed to the customary success we have with Get Acquainted Day, originally scheduled for this weekend, when we can greet admitted students on campus. Admissions has responded to the shift to a new venue creatively, with a series of programs—including videos and online panels, many with avid participation of faculty members—meant to introduce them to what the college has to offer. Personal connections are perhaps the most powerful way to draw students here; he urged

people to take advantage of the opportunity to develop such relationships, if remotely, as opportunities to build them arise.

The president then spoke of a town hall he has held through Facebook, and of his holding open office hours. Through them, and through surveys students have taken, he has been able to arrive at several conclusions. Students fully recognize and genuinely appreciate the work that has gone into reshaping the semester; he thanked everyone, especially the library and information technology staffs, for the remarkable effort that has earned so appreciative a response. Nonetheless, some students are finding that as their time in isolation grows, they are struggling to remain engaged and motivated. He urged the faculty to vary their pedagogical routines, and to give students a change of pace. We need to help them over the finish line. He thanked the faculty for staying in contact with their advisees.

His report then shifted its focus to remarks about prospects for the fall term. He shares the hope that we will be back on a normal schedule, but we must plan for contingencies. The Forward Thinking Group has met to discuss what we should do if we cannot return to residential learning by next semester; its focus is on the process to follow in arriving at critical decisions and on how best to involve the faculty in deliberating them.

He is working with President's Council and with the trustees on financial planning. While we cannot yet do more than guess at what our fiscal picture will look like, we must plan on a strong need for financial aid from an admitted class that is especially strong. The yield is still unknown, and until it is, whether we will be able to meet the budgeted class size remains uncertain. He expects to have and share a clearer sense of our position in the coming weeks.

In closing, he acknowledged that many people feel weighted down in a fraught moment. The pandemic has left higher education in a still more unsettled state than it was already in before it struck. The picture may be gloomy and filled with difficult challenges, but we have navigated turbulence throughout our history. We can again do so by working together, with a focus on meeting the needs of our students. We will emerge vibrant and strengthened. Enforced separation from one another, with students unable to be with us on campus, can heighten our understanding of what it means to be together.

Provost Christopher Zappe, in his report, thanked the community for rallying to assure students a high caliber education. He asked that advisors make certain that their returning students have registered for classes for next year and that they call to check on how they are managing the stresses they now face. He has compiled a list of resources that should prove helpful. Please see Appendix 1.

He provided the names of members of the Financial Aid staff whom students should contact if they are facing economic hardship: Kathryn Adams (for students with last names beginning A through L) and Amy Wilkinson (M through Z). He noted the usefulness of iGrad, the online program provided through the Linda and Mort Creech '61 Endowed Fund for Student Financial Literacy. He spoke of the various worries our students are facing: in particular, ill loved ones, bereavement, tensions within households. The counseling staff has put together a guide to resources of which they should be made aware. He called attention to a survey circulated by Professor Brandauer regarding teaching resources the faculty is making use of, and about their well-being.

He knows that there are members of the faculty who are anxious about pretenure and promotion reviews currently underway. The Faculty Personnel Committee is working diligently, and he will contact those undergoing them as soon as it is possible to do so.

President Iuliano called for a quorum count, which succeeded.

Professor Andrew Wilson introduced the following motion on behalf of the Faculty Governance Committee:

to convene a Faculty Governance Review Commission in academic year 2021/22.

For the rationale, please see Appendix 2.

Recalling the amount of time Professor Jameson spent, as co-chair of the last review commission, seeing its thirteen motions through the faculty, Professor Wilson observed that the next review is likely to entail a similarly protracted process. Should it begin next year as scheduled, it will overlap with the curriculum review, numerous motions from which are also likely to come under consideration in the 2021-22 academic year, and leading to an unwieldy and impractical calendar. The Governance Committee thus advises waiting a year; doing so will also enlarge the pool of candidates eligible to serve on the Commission. Given the number of variables that determine nominees, it will be difficult to identify eight tenured people, especially without having to turn to some who are already burdened with governance obligations. As faculty members now on sabbatical return to eligibility, it will be easier to create a slate. He then displayed a chart indicating where everyone is in the governance cycle and noted where to find it.¹ The group of potential nominees is restricted by the large number of its members who are now on serving on committees. Between stipulations regarding division, rank, and gender, and the impact of the retirement incentive program, which will also chip away at the number of tenured faculty in the next two years, postponing the work of the commission by a year is advisable.

He stressed the importance of the review and noted that one of the issues the Governance Committee will ask the Commission to consider is the one he has just addressed—the difficulty of staffing various bodies. The agenda of the Commission could very well include looking at ways of merging the responsibilities or trimming the size of our standing committees, and also taking up the question of equity, given the unequal distribution of the governance workload.

Professor Kittelberger asked whether the requested delay would have implications for our next Middle States review. Professor Wilson answered that there will be no direct overlap: that review is still three years away. But it is possible that proposals from the Governance Commission will still be under discussion then.

After President Iuliano asked whether there was common consent to proceed to a vote, Professor Kevin Wilson briefly explained how determining it would work: unanimous approval would need to

¹ Gettysburg College/Faculty Landing Page/Moodle/Gettysburg College Information, Provost's Division/General—Faculty Governance Cycle.

be registered through the polling feature on Zoom. Dr. Remy advised that there were several votes in opposition, so the president ruled that the motion will be held over until our next meeting.

The president then asked Professor Swigger to discuss plans for shared governance as we face critical questions during the coming months. She said that Faculty Council plans to meet over the summer, and, noting the likelihood of several faculty meetings during that time, asked that people reserve some Thursday afternoons for them. A calendar of anticipated meetings will go out soon. She solicited ideas that people might have to meet contingencies as they arise. Professor Swigger closed her remarks by noting that the agenda for the closing meeting will be built around valedictories, and that the motion on the floor might have to be deferred beyond it.

President Iuliano called attention to a request from Professor Weise, in a posted message, that those who voted against the motion be given a chance to explain their reasons. Professor Andrew Wilson invited those with questions about the proposal to direct them to him before we meet again.

The president then offered some closing thoughts. Underscoring his opening remarks, he expressed enormous gratitude for the remarkable effort the college community has made in rising to meet the demands of an extraordinary situation. He appreciates how faculty who have had suddenly to juggle and transform their courses have succeeded in helping students adjust to learning how to learn online. And they have done so while accommodating themselves to the new reality of home confinement. He commended the energy and effort people have put into confronting a significant challenge. He urged colleagues to listen to a roundtable conversation Professors Brandauer and Calvillo recently held with two students. It reveals the deep sense of connection students feel toward the faculty. He encouraged members of the community to speak with him during his office hours. We should learn as much as we can from this experience, and, if necessary, draw on it to guide us through the fall term. Those with thoughts about how to face what is before us should share them either with Provost Zappe or with him. He stressed how determined he is to help make the remaining weeks of the term as good as can be for our students.

The president adjourned the meeting at 4:40 pm.

Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leonard S. Goldberg". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long, sweeping underline.

Leonard S. Goldberg
Faculty Secretary

Appendix 1
Letter from Provost Zappe on Available Resources

Dear Faculty Colleagues,

Once again, I want to extend my sincere gratitude for your adaptability to the Covid-19 pandemic and your ongoing efforts to ensure that our students continue to have a quality Gettysburg education. As I mentioned in my remarks at the last faculty meeting, many of our students are encountering extraordinary challenges as a result of the events of the past few weeks.

At this time, I ask each of you to do the following this week: (1) Check to make sure each of your advisees has registered for classes and contact anyone who has not; (2) Reach out to every advisee to check in on how they are doing – just knowing you care means a great deal.

Under our model of advising, faculty are the first point of contact. It is very important to continue to reach out to students in your classes and advisees who may not be taking part in class activities or responding to email. Like us, students are experiencing an increase in email and the most effective means to contact them may be via phone. Contact information for students can be accessed through the Faculty Center. For students who are difficult to contact, please inform the Office of Academic Advising so they can support you in your efforts. In addition, you may find the following resources helpful in your work with students:

Financial Issues - Many students and their families are encountering financial disruption from the pandemic, and may reach out to you for advice on financial aid. Please direct students to their Financial Aid Counselor. For students with last names beginning with A-L, Kathryn Adams '01 kadams@gettysburg.edu is the appropriate person to contact and for those with last names beginning with M-Z, Amy Wilkinson awilkins@gettysburg.edu is the Financial Aid counselor.

In addition, through the vision and generosity of the Linda and Mort Creech Jr '61 Endowed Fund for Student Financial Literacy, the College is providing and promoting campus-wide access to iGrad, a comprehensive, online financial well-being resource designed to help students, alumni, faculty, and staff develop or improve on their personal finance skills, available through <https://www.gettysburg.edu/admissions-aid/financial-well-being/>.

Emotional Well-Being - The current environment is stressful for all of us and many of our students are facing particular challenges coping with remote learning, less than ideal home dynamics, ill loved ones, and uncertain finances. The Counseling staff has put in place an excellent resource, "Emotional wellness and Covid-19" that can be accessed at <https://www.gettysburg.edu/offices/health-counseling-services/counseling-services/emotional-wellness-covid-19>.

I also realize that this situation presents significant challenges for all of us, and I encourage you to take this brief survey from JCCTL Director Josef Brandauer that asks how you are all doing and a few questions about teaching resources: <https://forms.gle/g798AQUBdhnTr3ep6>.

Finally, I hope that you find these resources useful as our community faces this challenge. I also thank you for showing compassion and understanding for our students as they work to get through this difficult time.

With best wishes,
Chris

A

Appendix 2
Rationale: Faculty Governance Committee Motion

According to the Faculty Handbook (page 76, 24th edition), faculty governance reviews should be undertaken by an elected Governance Review Commission every six years, or sooner:

"[the charge of the Faculty Governance Committee is to] review the operation of the governance structure as described in the Faculty Handbook and determine the date upon which a new governance review commission shall be elected—no later than six years from the date of adoption of this motion."

The last governance review was in AY 2014/15, with resulting motions brought to the faculty in 2015/16. The report of the 2014/15 Governance Review Commission can be found on the "Gettysburg College Information, Provost's Division" Moodle page, under "Information for October 1, 2015 Faculty Meeting".

We propose that the next Governance Review Commission be convened in AY 2021/22 rather than 2020/21 (i.e. seven years after the last) for the following reasons:

1. A Curriculum Review Committee has been convened for AY 2020/21, with resulting motions scheduled to be brought to the faculty in AY 2021/22. If both the curriculum and governance reviews occur in 2020/21, the Faculty Governance Committee (FGC) believes this could result in an overwhelming number of motions being brought to the faculty in AY 2021/22. The last governance review resulted in 13 proposed motions.
2. The pool of faculty available to serve on committees in AY 2020/21 is unusually restricted, due to a small cohort of faculty returning from sabbatical (see the Faculty Governance Cycle chart, "Gettysburg College Information, Provost's Division" Moodle page), and multiple mid-term retirements from committees. Elections to a Governance Review Commission would require fielding ballots of eight candidates. FGC's preference would be to field candidates with extensive prior knowledge of committee work, hence tenured faculty. FGC notes that there are not enough tenured faculty available to field eight candidates this year (to serve in 2020/21) without requiring already burdened individuals to add to ongoing committee assignments. A larger pool of faculty will be available to serve in AY 2021/22.

FGC affirms that a governance review will be needed in 2021/22 due to ongoing issues, notably:

- the difficulties of finding faculty members to serve on some restricted committees (i.e. those restricted by division, rank, and gender)

- a reduced pool of tenured faculty for the next several years due to high rates of retirement long-standing inequities in the distribution of committee work