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Faculty Meeting Minutes - June 4, 2020

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Faculty Meeting Minutes - June 4, 2020

Abstract

Minutes of the Gettysburg College Faculty Business Meeting, June 4, 2020.

Comments

Appendix : Summary of Recommendations from the Gettysburg College Scenario Planning Teams June 2020

Minutes of the Gettysburg College Faculty
June 4, 2020
Remote Meeting
Special Meeting

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

In opening his remarks, he thanked people for making themselves available for a prolonged meeting, hoped that everyone was well, and asked that we recognize the pressure of the national context and its local impact. Questions about racism, structural privilege and police violence (catalyzed by the death of George Floyd), have moved to the foreground of everyone's consciousness. A number of students and alumni have written him in pain about their experiences here. The college is committed to addressing these issues. Timely and urgent as they are, today's agenda is focused on another crisis—the next steps we are taking to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic.

He asked for a moment of silence in memory of Professor Stillwaggon.

He reported that as of June 1, the college had received deposits from six hundred ninety five newly admitted students—just short of the seven hundred it hoped would matriculate. Some will change their minds; the class will not be as large as it now is; it will also be, if numbers hold, the most diverse class in our history.

He next took notice of the generosity of the community, evidenced in the support of the Gettysburg Fund, at the highest level this year in its history.

Today's meeting is to focus on concerns addressed by the various planning groups, including ones the work of which—and the membership—is not always conspicuous. They have submitted preliminary reports, but we are not at a point to make decisions about the coming year: much work and much analysis still lie ahead. We do not yet know, for instance, what spatial constraints we will have. He spoke to the board yesterday, and it is aware of the complexity of the problems the working groups are addressing. A rounded sense of the larger context is becoming clearer: both the commonwealth and the Center for Disease Control issued guidelines yesterday. His goal for a decision is July 1, but he hopes that we can arrive at one before that date.

Three main issues will inform any decision: should we return to a residential model in the fall? If we can, we will, because we are at our best when students and faculty are on campus together. Second, can we bring back all students, or just some? There will be tensions either way. A reduction in the number of students on campus will make social distancing easier, but will have significant academic implications. Third, how should we design the calendar? There are a number of reasons to favor a block system, especially if we cannot have all students here at any one time, but it will not be free of liabilities. By convening a group of faculty members to serve as liaisons, he hopes to start an ongoing conversation about how classes are going. After briefly sketching the agenda, he noted that Professor Kennedy will monitor questions submitted on the Zoom chat bar and direct ones there is not time to answer today to the appropriate working groups.

He briefly discussed the difficulty of keeping our guiding concern, with health and safety, aligned with others as society begins opening up again. We are at our best in class, and students are eager for what residential education uniquely offers. We need to keep institutional sustainability in view: the college can thrive in the long term if it responds effectively now.

It would be overly sanguine to plan on there being a vaccine available by the end of the calendar year, so planning needs to be for the whole of the academic year.

He asked that people remain mindful about what is not yet known: the arc of the virus, the criteria state government will eventually settle on, the availability of protective supplies that meets federal standards, the choices our peers will make. He stressed the value of flexibility: the environment does not allow us to be either reckless or rigid.

Vice President Ramsey and Chief of Staff Stuempfle discussed the work of the Scenario Planning Group.

Please see the Appendix for an overview of its considerations.

Vice President Ramsey noted that there are three models and two calendars under consideration. Each configuration is developed around the understanding that while fully remote instruction may be the safest option, it is not playing a prominent role in the plans residential colleges are making. And as we return to campus, people will need to keep a distance of at least six feet from one another, in all spaces, including residence halls and outdoor ones. The college intends on a ratio of five to one, bathroom fixtures to residents, in the halls (the ratios now range between eight to one and thirty-seven to one). Dormitories with long corridors and double rooms off of them are our densest living spaces. The college is setting aside singles for students who are immunologically compromised. There will be dedicated spaces, too, for those who need to be in isolation. There must be rooms for any emergencies that may arise. In order to meet these standards, we will need five hundred more beds than we now have. Dining services will set up tables to allow for safe social distancing; by adding takeout options, it should reduce crowding. The planning group estimates the loss of a few hundred classroom seats, and the loss of some of the smaller rooms. These losses, of available beds and of chairs, seem scaled to one another.

One option under consideration is to be fully residential, but that would depend on our increasing our capacity. We have arranged to use the seminary, but that only adds forty beds. We are looking to see whether there is available hotel space within two miles of the campus. Vice President Konstalid has sent out a Request for Proposal to see if the idea is workable. Conference rooms, meeting spaces, and off campus sites might help us meet the shortage of classrooms.

She then commented on the advantages and disadvantages of using uninterrupted fourteen week semesters, which are best for a rich academic experience for students, and for institutional sustainability, but which may not be our safest choice, nor is it one, if some students cannot be accommodated on campus, that will afford them the most satisfying residential experience.

Reducing the density of students in residence, however, is the second option. It would align well with a seven-week calendar, as it allows for a rotation among them. It provides the better option for health and safety, but will not be great academically, especially for those students who take classes remotely.

She surveyed other issues the planning group is discussing: the capacity of the health center and of counseling services; the financial impact of not being fully residential (perhaps as much as five million dollars in lost revenue). To a question about classroom capacity, about whether classes would be smaller, she answered that she did not have that information, but could say that added time between classes is likely to be necessary, for cleaning and if we need to rent space off campus. She answered a question about regulating student conduct by noting that getting students to comply with new rules will begin with education about what we expect of them. It is important to recognize that social distancing will not come easily. They will be asked to sign a document indicating their agreement to comply with new rules. Residential Advisors will remind them of their responsibilities. Flagrant violations can result in their being sent home. But we need to anticipate unintended mistakes and to be supportive when they occur.

Dr. Richard Keeling, an external consultant, from Keeling & Associates, reported on health and safety considerations. The return to campus will require caution and care; the greater the population, the greater the likelihood of an infection, and of it spreading. Masks, social and physical distancing, reduced contact, restricted gatherings, and the use of disinfectants can all work to mitigate risk. He warned against testing en masse as wasteful and not especially helpful, but advised that clinical and surveillance testing are effective uses of limited resources. The health center should be readied to do contact tracing. People suspected of having contracted the virus should go into quarantine, and those who are confirmed to have it should isolate themselves. He stressed the importance of protecting vulnerable individuals and their family members. He recommended devoting added resources to counseling services: the stress of the pandemic can lead to psychological distress. He noted the need to work in a coordinated way with local medical groups to treat infected students. He then listed several reasons why, once the college does reopen, it might have to return to remote instruction: state mandates, an outbreak on campus, insufficient medical supplies, repeated student violations of social contracts, a perceived decline in the quality of student experience or in the quality of the academic program, and an excessive number of withdrawals.

He responded to a question about what would necessitate quarantining someone, and about whether degrees of separation provide a helpful standard, by noting that so far contact tracing has not yet given an easily quantifiable answer. Nothing definitive, for instance, has emerged from studying transmission patterns in spring break clusters. He answered another question, regarding longer class times under a condensed calendar, by observing that as people spend increased time near one another, the risk of transmission also increases.

Assistant Vice President Lafferty offered an overview of plans for resuming residential life. It includes procuring needed supplies, setting up signs, online training for what to expect, and frequent communication. We should expect an expanded health care center, and teams trained for contact tracing. Some advanced screening can occur through an online portal; it is now available to students who have remained on campus. The college is also working on plans for the case management of symptomatic and infected students. Guidance on testing is available from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The screening of large numbers of people can

yield a misleading number, and would be a questionable use of a scarce resource. The college is identifying spaces for isolation and quarantine: it is not always practical for people who need to take such steps to remain in their rooms. Protective equipment and sanitizers will be available, and access to buildings, especially those with narrow corridors, will be controlled. People will need to wear masks. We should expect restrictions on travel; appropriate policies will depend on the calendar we settle on. An emergency response team will monitor things, and consult with state agencies as it needs to.

Professor Kauffman, speaking for the group looking at space management, emphasized that faculty, especially in their role as advisors, should reinforce the commitments students make through social contracts; we should stress that they have a responsibility to the community. Professor Lair, speaking for the group working on mitigation, pointed out that the guidelines the college is using are more stringent than those of the commonwealth.

Questions directed to Vice President Lafferty focused on protections for staff members and on recourse for those who get sick. He answered that people in “front line” positions will get temperature checks, and are expected to monitor their own health carefully. To another question, about privacy, he noted that all health care visits are treated confidentially, and that we adhere to HIPAA regulations, with the considerable protections they entail. He received a question about how to treat people who have contracted the virus but who are asymptomatic: by testing a random sample, we should be able to identify at least some of them.

Provost Christopher Zappe and Vice President Tosten reviewed the recommendations of the Academic Planning Group. Vice President Tosten pointed out that the group is able to get responses to its suggestions through the various academic divisions, the Johnson Center, and the Educational Technology office. All recommendations focus on health and safety. With no final decision yet made, he could still indicate what we should anticipate: an early start to the calendar; cancellation of fall reading days; on campus instruction complete by Thanksgiving; robust online offerings. He observed that a fourteen week semester will minimize the need for reworking the schedule; students seem to think it will be better for First Year seminars. The seven week model is conducive to lowering the density of people on campus, and will make pivoting from one form of instruction to another easier.

Provost Zappe advised that once the college settles on a calendar, departments will need to figure out what adjustments to make. The planning group has consulted with the academic divisions. The Academic Policy and Program Committee should consider whether circumstances call for a reduced graduation requirement for the faculty to decide on. Other schools, among them Amherst and Williams, have made such a choice. It would be ideal to minimize occasions for weekend travel, but doing so depends upon the model we choose. Finals, even with an early start, will fall after Thanksgiving if we have a fourteen-week semester. Regardless of the calendar, we need to improve online pedagogy, something that will be especially urgent if we are forced to return to fully remote teaching. The Johnson Center has scheduled a workshop later in the month; the skills it will inculcate will be invaluable, even for those who do not draw on them in the short run.

The provost then discussed course evaluations. While including those from last semester in personnel and performance reviews is optional, he believes that we should return to our standing policy during the coming academic year. They are especially important in tenure and

promotion cases. The Faculty Personnel Committee is aware of the added work people face in shifting to remote teaching.

Asked about faculty unwilling or unable to return to campus, Provost Zappe replied that he appreciates that there will be divergent views about the best policy and that he will work with people with underlying conditions. We have an obligation to provide an outstanding academic program to students in a spirit of excellence and integrity. He realizes there are faculty members with vulnerabilities; they can request exemptions from teaching in person. But he also recognizes that if too many people ask to teach remotely, the consequences would be bad for our students. Members at risk will receive assistance. Replying to a question about whether all departments would need to have courses in different formats, the provost said that they invariably would need to do so should we use two seven week blocks: not all students will be on campus simultaneously. Faculty who choose to teach remotely are likely to generate a sufficient number of remote courses for the curriculum to have the blend of offerings we'll need. He then responded to a question about what would happen to seniors who, should we reduce the graduation requirement, might not be able to complete the curriculum: it will be up to the Policy Committee to come up with a recommendation for the faculty to consider.

President Iuliano, taking a question about refunds to students not on campus, noted that the issue, about appropriate tuition charges for remote learning, is a national one, that it has become the subject of class action suits, and that the board will consider how to address it. We have refunded room and board costs for the final quarter of the year. He received another question about whether there would be a poll or a vote to identify faculty preferences, also about channels for responses. He pointed out that there are a range of channels available: people could contact faculty representatives on the planning groups, or discuss their concerns with either him or Provost Zappe. But the board must make the final decision; it will entail weighing the multiple concerns laid out during the meeting.

In closing, he asked for a moment of silence in memory of George Floyd. He then thanked those who have worked assiduously to help clarify what we should consider as we look to the coming months. There is, he iterated, no one with a premium of wisdom on the way to the best solution.

The president adjourned the meeting at 5:32 pm.

Submitted,

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

Leonard S. Goldberg
Faculty Secretary

Appendix

Summary of Recommendations from the Gettysburg College Scenario Planning Teams June 2020

Five working groups were established in mid-April to develop specific recommendations for college operations in the face of the Coronavirus for Fall 2020 and beyond. The working groups included:

1. ACADEMIC AFFAIRS TEAM
2. RESIDENTIAL LIFE, HEALTH AND CO-CURRICULAR EXPERIENCE TEAM
 - a. Health, Housing and Student Services
 - b. Athletic Programs
 - c. Co-Curricular Programs
3. INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS AND OFF-CAMPUS TRAVEL TEAM
4. BUSINESS AND INFRASTRUCTURE TEAM
5. EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND SAFETY TRANSITION

TEAM [ACADEMIC AFFAIRS TEAM](#)

Two academic calendar models proposed:

1) **The fourteen-week traditional semester model**

- Retain 14-week semesters in Fall 2020 and Spring 2021.
- Early start in Fall 2020 in order to complete in-person instruction by Thanksgiving.
- Students take four courses each semester, in-person, online, or using a hybrid format.

Conditions that would favor the traditional semester model

- Lower likelihood of COVID-19 impact.
- Lower need to reduce campus density.
- Students, faculty and staff engage in social distancing both on and off campus.
- Other COVID-19 mitigation strategies (repeat testing, reliable contact tracing, quarantining, etc.) in place.

Advantages

- Students believe this model is more conducive to learning in the First-Year Seminars.

- Least amount of work to implement over the summer, allowing resources to be focused on training and course preparation, including delivering courses in remote and hybrid formats (though extensive course re-registration will still have to occur).
- Flexible: could shift to remote learning environment at any time.
- Ideal if majority of students and faculty are on campus.
- Does not require a change in course length and intensity for students.
- Familiar framework for faculty and students.

Disadvantages

- Not ideal for semester-long remote instruction.
- Not ideal if the majority of students are learning remotely (i.e., during a 'partial residency model' where some students are on campus, and others learn remotely off campus).
- Not ideal for rotating subsets of students on and off campus during the fall or spring semesters.
- Faculty may preload difficult material in the early weeks of the semester in the event that instruction could be disrupted at any point.
- Lacks a formal segmentation of the semester and therefore relies on the ability of individual instructors to respond flexibly in the event of a suspension of on-campus operations. Pivoting at unplanned points could therefore be more stressful and labor intensive than between planned blocks of the four seven-week model.

2) The four seven-week blocks instruction model

- Four blocks per academic year.
- Each block has seven weeks of instruction.
- Students typically take two classes during each block, in-person, online, or using a hybrid format. Students receiving financial aid must take at least two courses during the first block of each semester to maintain full-time status.
- Early start in the fall semester in order to complete in-person instruction by Thanksgiving.

Conditions that would favor the seven-week blocks instructional model

- Higher probability of COVID-19 impact.
- Need to reduce campus density.
- Elevated concerns regarding students, faculty and/or staff engaging in social distancing both on and off campus.
- High proportion of the College's faculty are concerned about teaching students on campus.

Advantages

- Greater flexibility in time and instruction type.
- Formal structure for accommodating subsets of students on campus for pre-determined periods of time (i.e., in first block group A is on campus while Group B is remote, and vice versa in second block). This could have potentially significant retention, pedagogical, and financial benefits if it permits a larger percentage of students to have a more comprehensive residential experience.
- Offers a pre-determined pivot point (between blocks) to go fully remote in the event of a suspension of campus operations.
- Improved student and faculty motivation in both hybrid and remote course delivery: students need to focus only on two courses during shorter time periods.
- Adherence to strict conduct policies for students residing on campus may be easier to achieve in 7-week term vs. 14-week term.

Disadvantages

- Higher number of weekly contact hours for the instructors of high-frequency language, literature, First-Year seminar classes, as well as for the instructors in larger academic departments in the social sciences.
- Compressed timeframe is difficult for classes in which proficiency cannot be achieved quickly (e.g., arts, music, first-year seminars, writing intensive courses, research intensive courses, and laboratories in the natural sciences).
- Additional scheduling and re-registration needs (beyond re-registration that will be required in the 14-week model).
- If a second wave of COVID-19 occurs during the fall semester, the second group of students may have very little time or no time on campus in the Fall 2020 semester.
- Compressed timeframe could make it easier for students or instructors to fall behind in case of disease, quarantine, etc.

Additional Information

- If residential, start as early as possible in August, and complete on-campus instruction by Thanksgiving.
- Create maximum flexibility in course delivery, course offerings, and course scheduling.
- Establish robust on-campus and online course offerings across all academic programs.
- The College should ensure that faculty are equipped and ready to teach effectively in a remote environment should that become necessary.
 - Partnership among Johnson Center for Creative Teaching and Learning, Office of Educational Technology, and Musselman Library to promote faculty development.

- “June Pedagogy Institute” to provide faculty resources to plan for rigorous, pedagogically sound, and flexible instruction.
- Additional recommendations addressing faculty evaluation, course development, classroom adjustments, student learning development, development of a social contract, student course load, and support for faculty and staff with challenging circumstances.

RESIDENTIAL LIVING AND CO-CURRICULAR EXPERIENCE TEAM

Health, Housing, and Student Services Sub-Group

- **Scale capacity to meet public health guidelines**
 - **Multifaceted containment measures**
 - Screening – tailored screening protocols in place for students, visitors, employees, athletes (as needed).
 - Testing
 - Mass testing – accuracy, availability and advisability of mass testing is in question at this time but still being studied
 - Surveillance testing is essential
 - Rapid response and containment
 - Contact tracing – coordinated by Health Center in conjunction with DOH.
 - Isolation
 - Quarantine
 - **Necessity of strong policies for infection control, personal protective equipment, and hygiene**
 - **Expand accessibility of Health Center**
- **Manage population density on campus**
 - Physical (social) distancing.
 - Classrooms, administrative spaces, dining spaces.
 - Implement 6 foot guideline.
 - Install plexiglass where needed.
 - Re-consider time between classes.
 - Residence hall de-densification.
 - Building access and migration protocols.
 - Less intermingling of campus population.
 - Limit large group gatherings and events.
 - Reduce density through remote work protocols for faculty and staff and alternative shift schedules within campus offices.
 - Possibility of not being 100% residential for part or all of the year. The College is examining residential, dining and classroom capacity in light of population density measures.
- **Train and commit to following health and safety protocols**
- **Establish monitoring and response process**

Athletic Programs Sub-Group

If athletic competitions take place in the fall, areas to be addressed include:

- Pre-participation protocols
- Monitoring, testing, contact tracing, and positive case plan
- Athletic training room PPE, cleaning, and physical distancing
- Collaboration on campus, communication and education
- Mental health
- Sanitation, hygiene, and proper PPE
- Social distancing in locker rooms, meeting rooms, and equipment rooms
- Liability
- Practice and strength and conditioning schedules
- Competition schedules and team travel protocols
- Fans for home contests
- Intramurals and club sports
- Jaeger Center (Ortenzio Fitness Room/Multipurpose Room/Pool)
 - Sanitation
 - Social distancing
 - Limit on the number of participants in the facility at one time
 - Additional staffing for proper monitoring and cleaning

Co-Curriculum Programs Sub-Group

- **Modify First Year Orientation and extended orientation**
- **Academic Success of First Year Students**
 - Skill development and enhancement opportunities available through the FYS Program
 - Topics include study skills, note taking, time management, and Carol Dweck's concept of the Growth Mindset
 - Implement Student Success Advocate model
- **Career Engagement**
 - Develop a 4-day intensive program focused on sophomores
 - Program includes career identity, professional messaging, and building a professional network
- **Virtual co-curricular and Civic Engagement**
 - Build robust co-curricular offerings
 - Develop an integrated civic engagement plan

INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS and OFF CAMPUS TRAVEL TEAM

Recommendations

- Require all travel, both domestic and international, be registered via a common travel portal.
- Require all campus visitors to register via REX system.
- Implement revised guidelines for credit-bearing global study.
- Develop and implement travel policies for all campus community members.
- Establish Division Heads as first stage of travel request process.
- Support campus community members who do not want to travel.
- Encourage campus community to consider “virtual” field trips rather than onsite trips.
- Support methodology for first-year student arrival on campus.
- Ensure that Gettysburg College’s travel policies align with guidance from health experts.

BUSINESS AND INFRASTRUCTURE CONTINUITY TEAM

The Business and Infrastructure Continuity Team recognizes that inputs from the other planning teams, including revised forecast assumptions and estimates of incremental costs, will be required before budget impacts can be assessed and the Long Term Financial Forecast can be revised. This in turn impacts the Team’s ability to make recommendations towards a recovery roadmap. As a result, recommendations in this area are ***on hold pending new inputs from the other planning teams.***

EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND SAFETY TRANSITION TEAM

Since March 2020, the College has followed the Commonwealth of PA’s guidance for opening (red, yellow, and green phases). The Employee Health and Safety Transition Team provides the following recommendations as Adams County prepares to transition from the yellow to the green phase:

Summer

- Continue employee telework, where appropriate, until July 24.
- When in the green phase, employees no longer need divisional or supervisor approval to return to campus to work.
- Employees who choose or are required to come to work should clean and disinfect their workspaces any day they are in the office.
- Employees who come to campus should wear a face covering and maintain social distancing (6 feet).
- Limit the number of non-essential visitors to campus.
- Employee meetings/gatherings have presumptive numerical limits to be determined.

Fall

- Adhere to a phased return to campus after July 24 that will balance the de-densification of the employee population with the maintenance of the highest possible level of institutional productivity for the purposes of achieving the academic mission.
- At the discretion of each division, develop flexible workforce continuity plans which include telework options, alternating/hybrid work schedules, and staggered shifts.
- Abide by the health and safety guidelines outlined by the institution.
- Employee meetings/gatherings have presumptive numerical limits to be determined.
- Allow non-essential visitors subject to CDC and Commonwealth guidance.