

Committee on Academic Priorities

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Michael Tratner, *English, 2008-09 – 2011-12*

Toba Kerson, *GSSWSR, 2010-11 – 2013-14*

Arlo Weil, *Geology, 2010-11 – 2013-14*

Grace Armstrong, *French, 2011-12 – 2014-15*

Tamara Davis, *Biology, 2011-12 – 2014-15*

B R Y N M A W R

20 April 2012

Annual Report to the Faculty 2011-2012

The Committee on Academic Priorities (CAP) membership for the 2011-2012 academic year included Alison Cook-Sather (Education, CAP Chair), Penny Armstrong (French and Francophone Studies), Tamara Davis (Biology), Toba Kerson (Social Work and Social Research), Michael Tratner (English), and Arlo Weil (Geology). The Provost attended most CAP meetings by invitation. CAP gratefully acknowledges the support provided by the Provost's Office, with a special thanks to Linda Butler Livesay.

During the Fall semester, CAP met once per week, and in the Spring semester twice per week. This year CAP met with the President to discuss the faculty role in setting campaign priorities and with the President, the Dean of Graduate Students, and the Provost to discuss the progress of the graduate programs in Physics, Chemistry, and Math toward meeting the new criteria set for their continuation as the final stage in the process set forth by the Task Force on Balancing Mission and Resources. We also met with the Institutional Researcher, the Registrar, and the Assistant Provost to discuss streamlining the process of generating and gathering data that departments and program use in making position requests. Three members of CAP participated in a meeting with Addis Creson to discuss how the College might reposition itself. Finally, we met with the Dean of Graduate Studies to discuss the position requests submitted to CAP this year and with Haverford's Educational Policy Committee (EPC). As Chair of CAP, Alison Cook-Sather served on the Chair's Advisory Group and represented CAP on the Thinking Forward Group. Penny Armstrong served as a representative to the Board of Trustees.

Following up on the approval from faculty at the April-2011 faculty meeting to proceed with exploring how the Working Model for Balancing Innovation, Institutional Goals, and Sustainability might be implemented, early in the fall semester the Provost invited a member of CAP and a member of the Curriculum Committee to join her and the Chair of the Faculty as the 2/2+ Working Group. Michael Tratner from CAP, Michael Allen from Curriculum Committee, and David Karen, as Chair of the Faculty, worked with the Provost throughout the year to formulate guidelines for departments to use in mapping out how they might move to a 2/2+ model and integrated faculty feedback into the process of exploring this option.

Postdoctoral Fellowships

Through the Consortium for Diversity, Erika Marquez was hired as the Post-Doctoral Fellow in Sociology for the 2011-2012 and the 2012-2013 academic years.

The Bucher-Jackson Fellowship was not awarded this year. The holder of the post-doctoral fellowship left after the 2010-2011 academic year, and the fund needs to build up again before we can hire another fellow.

A search for a post-doctoral Fellow in the Humanities was authorized three years ago, at which time there was a successful search. The death of the person hired necessitated a new search by the three programs involved (Film Studies, Gender Studies, The Latin American, Latino and Iberian Peoples and Cultures). That search is currently underway.

Revisions to the Process of Submitting and Reviewing Position Requests

As a result of reflection on our own experiences with CAP in the past and feedback from other faculty members, CAP experimented this year with putting some new structures and processes in place with the goal of improving routine interactions with proposing departments and programs and developed a set of steps for collaborating with Curriculum Committee.

Interactions with Departments and Program Submitting Position Requests

We implemented all the proposed revisions we shared with the Faculty at the October-2011 faculty meeting:

General guidelines:

- Acknowledge that CAP is charged to take an institutional perspective regarding all issues and encounters. Recognize and be intentional about bringing together CAP's necessarily institutional perspective and the departmental/program perspective, which is much more deeply informed by the particular needs and hopes of the department/program, but may also have a different institutional focus.
- Always have two members of CAP present at meetings with departments (and ideally have more than one member of the department or program present at those meetings).
- Strive, whenever possible, to ensure timely communication.

Guidelines for requests brought to CAP:

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Conduct “listening meetings” prior to the official visit to CAP of the proposing department or program: The two members of CAP primarily responsible for shepherding the proposal through the review process attend a department meeting (or set up another meeting) to hear from members of the department or program, in conversation (as opposed to writing) what they are proposing, how they understand it to meet their needs and the larger needs of the College, etc. Goal: to try to understand, from the department perspective, what the proposal is about and try to help the department strengthen the proposal.

Share notes for listening meeting with CC representative.

Receive input from CC regarding position request.

Before the formal meeting between CAP and departments/programs/individuals, CAP and CC send response/questions in writing, so people can prepare and not be taken by surprise by the questions CAP/CC raise.

Include positive statements at the beginning of any communication, then move into concerns to ensure that acknowledgment of positives is not lost when the focus is on concerns or problem solving.

Ensure that messages to departments, programs, and individuals are crafted carefully such that they do not come across as abrupt or inconsiderate (the effort to be direct and business-like can prompt departments to feel defensive).

Cooperation with Curriculum Committee

Many of the revisions outlined above were created and undertaken in collaboration with Curriculum Committee. When the Faculty By-Laws were changed to call for more cooperation between CAP and CC, no clear guidelines were created to guide that cooperation. Both “consultation” and “cooperation” have been variously interpreted in different years and under different circumstances. Two unusual processes unfolded since this change in the By-Laws that further complicated the cooperation process: (1) The Curriculum Renewal Working Group (CRWG) was formed to reconceptualize distribution requirements, and a good deal of focus on curricular work and innovation emerged through that group’s process, and (2) CAP was charged with the task of both identifying priorities for the future of the College and identifying 6-8 faculty lines that would not be returned to the pool. Both of these processes contributed to a growing understanding of how CAP and CC can cooperate and consult with each other.

Continuing the effort to find the most productive forms of consultation and collaboration, the Chairs of CC and of CAP had several meetings during the Fall, informed by discussions within each committee, to develop procedures to promote greater cooperation between these two committees. The two committees piloted the following steps and guidelines, which were described in a document included in the packet for the October-2011 faculty meeting:

- In the Fall, CAP provided CC with a list of faculty position requests and a schedule of initial conversations about each proposal received.
- CC assigned a faculty member of the committee to serve as a CC representative for each proposal for a new position CAP received.
- That representative read the proposal submitted by the department or program and summarized the curricular elements of the proposal for the whole of CC.
- The CC representative and CC as a whole generated responses to share with CAP, which were integrated into a letter sent to each department or program in preparation for the formal

November 16-December 20:

- CAP works with Curriculum Committee to develop list of questions/foci for formal meeting with CAP and CC representative

January-March

- CAP and CC representative conduct formal meeting with departments/programs

Responses to Positions Requests

This year CAP reviewed requests for three continuing non-tenure track (CNTT) and eight tenure track (TT). In reviewing this year's proposals, CAP continued to emphasize the importance of considering the long-term benefits of each request to the department or program that requests a position and to the College as a whole, with the expectation that all departments and programs would consult and collaborate with allied fields both here and at Haverford College as they developed their requests. CAP developed a new template to both encourage and support this emphasis. Some proposals initiated the conceptualizing of the request in collaboration with other programs and departments. Others followed the old model of forming their requests and then sending them out to ask for letters of support. This range of approaches suggests that we are still in the process of shifting from one model (department-centric) to another (addressing both departmental/programmatic and College-wide needs) and need more time to make this shift.

CAP examined each position request in terms of its relation to the College's mission and academic priorities, its contributions to short- and long-term departmental and disciplinary directions, its impact on overall faculty resources at Bryn Mawr and in the Bi-Co, including our capacity to respond to sabbatical leaves, opportunities to enhance the diversity of our faculty, the history of previous requests from the department or program to CAP, and in the case of CNTT requests, the established guidelines on the nature of CNTT appointments.

Two of the position requests that CAP received this year came from departments who also had members serving on CAP. To avoid a conflict of interest, CAP followed its usual policy of excusing the CAP member whose department's request was being discussed from all discussions of the proposal and from participating in making the recommendation regarding that request.

CAP is scheduled to meet with the Committee on Appointments (CA) on May 3, 2012, after CAP's staffing recommendations have been approved by the Board. At this meeting, we will jointly review and approve advertisements for the approved searches, which will come under the auspices of CA at the end of the academic year. The two committees consider the transmission of information from CAP to CA of critical importance for the search process.

In our solicitation for position requests this year, as in previous years, CAP emphasized that all requests must identify how the position has been defined so as to attract candidates from underrepresented groups. Continuing this commitment to enhancing faculty diversity, we have explicitly asked departments with approved searches to use language in their job ads that will maximize the number of applicants from underrepresented groups in the search pool.

In response to CAP's recommendations and our subsequent discussion, President McAuliffe has indicated her agreement (pending budgetary review). At her request, CAP has communicated these decisions to each department and program. As has been the custom, the President will provide a formal response to the CAP Report at a later date. CAP will also provide an addendum to this report that includes issues addressed subsequent to its distribution.

Anthropology

The Anthropology Department requested approval to conduct a search for a tenure-track (TT) position in anthropological archeology. They indicated that the area of research focus for this position would ideally be on an agriculturally based culture in Meso/South America and/or North America, an area that is under-represented at Bryn Mawr. No such anthropologist exists at Haverford or Swarthmore, and the courses offered by this hire would complement the curriculum at Haverford nicely. They suggested that this position would connect with many departments and programs, and would allow the Anthropology Department to continue to support the minor in Environmental Studies.

CAP, the CC representative, and Anthropology faculty discussed the heavy commitment of faculty resources to the capstone experience in the department, which comes at a curricular price: Lower level sections must either be capped or thwart the close student-faculty interaction one expects at Bryn Mawr. Given the expectation of continued large numbers of Anthropology majors, Curriculum Committee encouraged Anthropology to consider how they might balance student needs between the capstone and other stages in the major with an eye toward possibly making changes in the staffing of their senior capstone experience. Both Curriculum Committee and CAP asked the Anthropology Department to consider how to effectively co-anchor, along with the Classical and Near Eastern Archaeology Department, a potential interdepartmental archaeology major coursework path.

CAP does not recommend that the Anthropology Department's position request be approved at this time for the following reasons:

Although CAP recognizes the needs of the Anthropology Department and is not suggesting that those needs be ignored, other considerations must be taken into account as well. The first is that we are working at a time of limited College resources and have asked faculty to re-imagine curricular approaches and research supervision within that fiscal reality. While the position as conceptualized would afford the possibility of sharing courses across departmental lines, that is not the same as deeply rethinking past practice and existing structures to actively create new pathways for students. CAP's and CC's concerns about the heavy resource implications of the Department's current approach to thesis supervision suggest the need for reconceptualization of current practice to address not only departmental but also wider institutional, faculty, and student needs. The second consideration is that Classical and Near Eastern Archeology will be losing a position with the departure of one of their department members. It is therefore essential to consider how existing resource allocations can best be deployed both to sustain important curricular emphases and to imagine new directions that are responsive to the evolution of disciplines and to student interest. Members of the Anthropology Department and others, particularly interested faculty in Classical and Near Eastern Archeology, have not had yet engaged in the collaborative development of a proposal that would serve both Anthropology Department and College-wide needs.

CAP welcomes the resubmission of a position request next year — one created in collaboration with interested members of Classical and Near Eastern Archeology. Such a reconceptualization would need to be situated with the larger College-wide revisions to balance innovation and sustainability that we consider when evaluating faculty position requests and demonstrate engagement in a collaborative process of sustaining and further developing areas of the curriculum in both anthropology and archeology.

Biology

The Biology Department requested approval to conduct a search for a tenure-track (TT) position in the area of Genomics/Informatics at the level of Assistant Professor. This new position would fill a curricular and research gap in the Department and could potentially be funded for several years by a grant proposal to the Howard Hughes Medical Institute. In light of the Biology Department's high enrollment pressures and commitment to contributing to other programs at the College, this position would also help the Department maintain necessary staffing levels. After careful consideration of the new directions biological investigations are taking and the importance of preparing students in modern biological approaches, the Department determined that the addition of a genomicist would enhance its course offerings and provide new opportunities for collaborations both within the Biology Department and more broadly across the curriculum. There is little offered in this area in the Tri-Co and what is offered is not often open to Bryn Mawr students.

The Biology Department engaged in extensive and well-documented efforts to collaborate with other departments in the conceptualization of this position. There were, however, challenges of collaboration in preparing this position request, and CAP would like to gather further input on how we might better support the cooperative approach to crafting position requests (see discussion of revising procedure for submitting position requests on pages 5-6 above).

CAP, the CC representative, and the Biology Department discussed the importance of maintaining the neuroscience concentration in neural and behavioral sciences and sustaining a focus on multiple areas: evolutionary developmental biology, computational biology and biochemistry. Regarding cooperation across departments within the Colleges, we discussed the development of bi-departmental concentration in biochemistry and cooperation within the larger Tri-Co, and regarding the Biology Department's contribution to the post-bac program, the department affirmed that, "All members of the Biology Department are committed to teaching the post-baccalaureate students."

Regarding the costs associated with this position in terms of space/renovations, we discussed that such funds are not available at this time. While the lack of renovation funds is not a barrier to CAP in approving the request for a position in genomics, the Biology Department needs to decide whether to proceed with the search without immediate funds available for renovation of lab space or wait until funds can accrue to pay for the renovation.

CAP recommends that the Biology Department's position request be approved for the following reasons:

CAP recommends the approval of a search for a tenure-track (TT) position in the area of Genomics/Informatics at the level of Assistant Professor because of the needs this position will

meet both within and beyond the department. With this position request, the Department has transformed an unanticipated loss into an opportunity to reconceptualize the emphases within the program. CAP recognizes that a shift in focus to include genomics is important in terms of staying current in the field, satisfying student interest, and preparing students for careers and graduate study. This hire will also position the department well to collaborate with colleagues in other departments on campus and in the Bi-Co. Finally, the Biology Department has regularly contributed to the College curriculum and to several important programs, including the ESEM program, multiple concentrations, and the postbac program. CAP recommends that a search be approved for a candidate at the beginning Assistant Professor level. With this position, Biology will continue to be leave proof under most circumstances.

East Asian Studies

The East Asian Studies Department (a Bi-College Department) requested approval to conduct a search for a tenure-track (TT) position for a candidate with one of the following emphases: 1) literature (with visual culture a desired plus), similar to that held by a tenure-track colleague who has resigned or 2) a more broadly described position in Chinese culture. The Department maintains that, without this appointment, it will no longer be able to function or to sustain a major.

CAP, the CC representative, and East Asian Studies faculty discussed the importance of involving the proposed TT faculty member in the teaching of advanced language (200-level) in order to bring this position in line with comparable ones in other departments teaching language/literature/culture. The Department proposed that one such course could be taught, despite their fears of reducing the candidate pool. In response to these fears, CAP suggested an alternate scenario wherein the numbers of language course sections (some under-enrolled) be revisited, thus making more effective use of the newly hired CNTT (2012), existing non-TT faculty, and the proposed TT appointment. CAP also asked the Department to think further about how it identifies itself, i.e., as offering Area Studies or a language/literature/culture model. If they choose to consider themselves an Area Studies program, we discussed how the Department should seek further commitment from outside faculty to teach courses that they could tag for East Asian Studies.

CAP recommends that the East Asian Studies Department's position request be approved for the following reasons and under the following conditions:

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French and Francophone Studies

The Department of French and Francophone Studies requested approval to conduct a search for a Continuing Non-Tenure Track (CNTT) position in French whose primary task would be coordinating the first and second years of their intensive language sequence and teaching in both years of that sequence. This person would fill other language instruction duties when necessary and appropriate and in accordance with CNTT guidelines. This request represents a conversion of an existing interim position and thus a reduction in the number of courses taught per year from six to five.

CAP, the CC representative, members of the Department of French and Francophone Studies discussed and clarified the differences in the intensive and non-intensive tracks, the need for the person in the requested position to be able to coordinate the entire intensive sequence at Bryn Mawr and the intermediate intensive course for Haverford, and the need for the person to help with the development of new courses for supporting the majors.

CAP recommends that the Department of French and Francophone Studies' position request be approved for the following reasons:

The attention to and success of intensive French language instruction both at Bryn Mawr and Haverford and the development of new courses for supporting the majors is consistent with the College's need to use resources most judiciously to stabilize ongoing offerings and, at the same time open multiple pathways for students. CAP appreciates the Department of French and Francophone Studies' thoughtful efforts to balance their commitment to excellence in language instruction and literature with their addition of Francophone studies. These efforts reflect the changes in the world and expand possibilities for cross-departmental collaboration. In keeping with the new guidelines for CNTTs, the person hired for this position will be responsible for language instruction (skill development), which may include transition courses between language courses and language/literature/area studies courses that still emphasize language instruction, but not be assigned or take on responsibilities outside the parameters of the CNTT as newly defined. French and Francophone Studies will continue to be leave proof except in unusual circumstances.

History

The Department of History requested permission to conduct a search for a tenure-track (TT) assistant professor in Modern Europe, broadly defined from WWI to the present, without geographical or topical restriction. The immediate impetus for the request was the loss of their current Modern European historian, but they proposed to use the position to continue their efforts to expand their program's connections to many other departments and programs at Bryn Mawr and Haverford. They argued that Modern European is one of two areas (Modern American being the other) that students most seek out in the History Department, and it is an area with many intersections with other disciplines on campus. The Bi-Co has historically depended on Bryn Mawr to cover this area.

CAP, the CC representative, and the History Department faculty discussed the question of uneven enrollments in history courses, and possible ways that this new position could be defined in order to expand student interest in some important but less subscribed parts of the history curriculum. We

also discussed whether it would make sense to frame the position in ways that would assure that it connected to certain growing areas of the College, such as Middle East studies. The Department suggested that it would be better to cast a wide net, because they would be more likely that way to find the person who could best serve College-wide goals. They said they would be sure to consult faculty from other fields as they evaluate candidates, as they have in the past.

CAP recommends that the History Department's position request be approved for the following reasons:

Modern European History is a field of great importance to the History Department and to many other departments and programs in the College and in the Bi-Co, and it is of great interest to students. For this reason, it is crucial that the candidate hired have research interests that will engage a diverse group of faculty and students. The History Department has been working to make its program serve and make use of many areas of study within the College and Bi-Co, and it will use this new search to continue expanding its curriculum. CAP expects that the History Department will directly involve other departments at all stages of the search. CAP recommends that a search be approved for a candidate at the beginning Assistant Professor level. History will continue to be leave proof except under unusual circumstances.

Mathematics

The Mathematics Department requested approval to conduct a search for a tenure-track (TT) position in statistics. The Math Department currently lacks expertise in statistics, which precludes statistics instruction beyond an introductory level, and there is a need in the Department to offer intermediate and advanced statistics courses. Equivalent institutions employ at least one statistician. The Department suggested that a statistician could design new introductory statistics courses to better serve the needs of students at the College and could also participate in the design of interdisciplinary statistics courses. In addition, enrollments in Math are very high. A hire in statistics would be expected to contribute to departmental staffing needs by teaching one core course in the

beginning Assistant Professor level and that the ad specify that the candidate be knowledgeable about contemporary empirical research and methodologies and have expertise in cognitive science.

Russian

The Russian Department requested approval to conduct a search for a CNTT in Russian language, literature, and culture and with a background in Russian linguistics or Second Language Acquisition. This request arose for three main reasons: 1) the Department's longstanding desire to make more permanent the position currently held by an adjunct lecturer in the Russian Department for the last six years, 2) the Department's need for a continuing faculty member who can help implement on-line learning modules for Russian and oversee the Flagship grant the department currently holds; and 3) the recommendation by CAP that, with the Department's loss of 1 FTE recommended by CAP in the spring of 2011, the adjunct lecturer position be converted to a CNTT position.

CAP, the CC representative, and members of the Russian Department discussed the shift in emphasis the Department intends to make toward Russophone studies, including potential reconceptualization of the major toward a more integrated model that draws on different departmental offerings. This discussion included identification of other pathways that the Russian Department can imagine for their majors, for example, in collaboration with International Studies, Linguistics, Comparative Literature, and Environmental Studies. In addition to stabilizing language instruction, the CNTT position would free up tenured faculty to teach in the ESEM program and to increase contact between first-year students and TT faculty.

CAP recommends that the Russian Department's position request be approved for the following reasons:

language for the major. In addition, the Department requested a second position at the CNTT level to replace a colleague in an interim position, who has taught 2-4 courses per semester.

CAP, the CC representative, and Spanish faculty discussed various issues, including the desirability of finding a Latin American specialist who would fit well with the existing specialties of BMC English faculty in Latino/a literature and HC faculty in the Spanish department. BMC colleagues argued that they need above all a Latin American specialist to balance the Department's two specialists in Peninsular literature and culture to respond to students' demands for cutting-edge work in Latin American topics. When apprised of the difficulty, for financial reasons, of expanding the numbers of TT/CNTT faculty, Department members were unanimous in selecting the TT Latin American position as the most pressing need to fill. The Department rejected the notion raised by External Reviewers that an appointment in applied linguistics should be their next hire on the grounds that the Reviewers were looking at a four-person tenured department, not at the current profile of three TT members. CAP, the CC representative, and members of the Department discussed at length concerns about enrollment discrepancies between language courses and upper-level courses. The Department responded that several of the most advanced courses regularly recruit significant enrollments, although it recognizes that others are under-enrolled. CAP, the CC representative, and the Department discussed what means might enable the strong language-level enrollments to become equally robust at the level of advanced enrollments, leading more students to minor or major in Spanish.

CAP recommends that the Spanish Department's position request for a Tenure-track position in Latin America Studies be approved. At the same time, we do not recommend that the CNTT position also requested by Spanish colleagues be approved.

CAP recommends the approval of the position in Latin American Studies that responds to departmental needs and student interests; thus, the hire should help produce more robust enrollments in advanced courses as well as a greater number of majors and minors. We believe this position can contribute in important ways to synergies with Latin American, Latino and Iberian Peoples and Cultures (LALIPC), Film Studies, Comparative Literature and English. The presence of a fourth TT colleague should allow the Department to participate regularly in extra-departmental teaching and generally be leave-proof. CAP recommends that the search be approved for a candidate at the beginning Assistant Professor level.

CAP appreciates the creative efforts of Spanish colleagues in moving to offer all levels of Spanish each semester; at the same time we join them in awaiting data about the effects of this new practice and of the new language requirement on numbers of students in language who will continue. Given that Spanish is already well supported with two CNTT faculty, this uncertainty would argue for waiting before considering

a model for the future of the program. The “boutique” model that has emerged will involve building around two TT directors, two staff personnel acting as technical directors, a 2/3 FTE position in design, and a few courses taught by adjuncts each year. The chair of the Program feels there needs to be stability to allow for the Program to engage in long-term planning, and so requests that the overall model that has been developed be approved, though he recognizes that it will take some years to fully implement that model.

CAP met with the program chair several times, and also sent a representative to meet with the outside review committee. These discussions considered four different models and agreed that the boutique model outlined in the position request is the most plausible but involves some increase in staffing that is problematic in an era in which the College is trying to reduce costs. CAP, the CC representative, and the Chair of Theater discussed the ways a second TT director could provide continuity when the Chair is on leave but also can complement the kinds of theater currently produced and so expand the range of the program.

CAP recommends that the Theater Program’s position request be approved for the following reasons and under the following conditions:

CAP supports moving toward the boutique model, with a few conditions: (1) the staffing model ensures that Goodhart is actively available and usable by all constituencies on campus, and (2) the new TT position should provide coverage of some courses that have been regularly taught, and that coverage should result in some savings that can then be applied to support the increase in staffing of the design position. In other words, the newly converted TT position is not an expansion of the Theater Program; it serves to address existing needs within and beyond the Program. CAP recommends that a search be approved for a candidate at the beginning Assistant Professor level.