

Committee on Academic Priorities

Sociology, 2013-14 ÷ 2016-17, Chair 2016 -17

Economics, 2014-15 ÷ 2017-18

GSSWSR, 2014-15 ÷ 2017-18

Chemistry, 2015-16 ÷ 2018-19

Russian, 2015-16 ÷ 2018-19

Physics, 2016-17 ÷ 2019-20

April 12, 2017

Annual Report to the Faculty 2016-2017

The Committee on Academic Priorities membership for 2016-17 consisted of David Karen (Sociology, CAP Chair), Janet Shapiro (Graduate School of Social Work and Social Research), Michael Rock (Economics), Jonas Goldsmith (Chemistry), Tim Harte (Russian), and Liz McCormack (Physics). The Provost attended most CAP meetings by invitation. CAP is grateful the committee especially thanks Linda Butler Livesay for setting up meetings with departments, curating our Moodle website, and keeping us on track.

CAP meets once a week during the fall semester and twice a week in the spring. This year, in addition to meeting with departments and programs to discuss their position requests, CAP communicated regularly with the Curriculum Committee (CC) to exchange information and elicit their feedback. As Chair of CAP, David Karen served on the Advisory Council of the Faculty and was our representative to the Board of Trustees; Michael Rock served the second of a two-year term with the Strategic Advisory Group. Jonas representative to the College Budget Committee.

Before we present our recommendations on position requests, there are a number of issues that we wish to raise that will require ongoing dialogue with our faculty colleagues. Immediately below, as a preamble to our recommendations, we offer some reflections about our experience in deliberating about these critical issues.

forward to talking further with our faculty colleagues about how to balance the demands of our departments to help our students fulfill the major and minor requirements while satisfying larger institutional needs regarding 360 various concentrations, and other extra-departmental programming (e.g. Tri-Co in the City). Finally, we wish to engage our colleagues on the question of how we can best deploy our resources (and acknowledge our contributions) in the context of one of the most rewarding and time-intensive teaching moments: the senior experience.

In line with the Strategic Direction document and at the request of the President, CAP facilitated a series of conversations with the faculty about the role of engineering in the liberal arts and at Bryn Mawr. The conversations took place over the course of a few weeks in November and at our January meeting where the full faculty weighed in on the issue. Though we continue to discuss various options with Curriculum Committee, we learned that there are many ways that we can build on engineering components already in our curriculum (ranging from architectural foci in Cities to the many connections in Computer Science, Physics, Chemistry, etc.). We also concluded that, in integrating engineering components into our curriculum and meeting student interest both in the general topic and in our 3+2, 4+2, and 4+1 programs, we should strive to provide recommended pathways to the specific kinds of engineering programs that are most consistent with a liberal arts experience. Below, in the context of our response to a Physics position request, we make specific recommendations for devoting resources to meet this need. In addition, CAP recommends that the Provost contribute 1-2 additional courses to this effort.

(ES) was identified as being

In preparing for the full proposal meetings, CAP was pleased that CC was able to help us ask concrete questions about how new hires might be able to contribute to curricular coverage and innovation. At the same time, we were struck by how often CC asked questions related to staffing/resources and how often CAP anticipated exactly the curriculum-related questions that CC submitted. It was in this context that we wondered whether a re-thinking of the CC-CAP committee structure was in order.

CAP recommends that the Department of Classical and Near Eastern Archaeology's request for a tenure track position in the archaeology of the Eastern Mediterranean and of the Near East be approved at the beginning assistant professor level for the following reasons:

The proposed hire supports the ability of the department of Classical and Near Eastern Archaeology to sustain credible undergraduate and graduate programs. The area specified will help tie together the expertise of the other members of the department and allow it to present a more understanding that, with this position, the department will be leave-proof under normal circumstances. Further, it is the members of the department will work together to distribute equitably the effort of supervising graduate students. CAP also expects that the three continuing faculty members, with the input of their new colleague, will devote greater effort towards continuing to strengthen the undergraduate experience in Classical and Near Eastern Archaeology.

The Department of English has made a compelling case to CAP for this proposed position in
It literature, particularly as a reflection of a new, important direction in
the field of English literary studies and also as a reflection of the Strategic Direction of the College,
blishing and the recent arrival

Environmental Studies

The Bi-College steering committee of the Program in Environmental Studies (ES) submitted a
proposal to CAP and Curriculum Committee to establish a new Bi-Co Department of
Environmental Studies, create a major for Bi-Co students, and to hire an environmental social
scientist *and* an environmental humanist. Curriculum Committee will respond to the request to

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At the present time, there are only two full-time continuing faculty members (and one part-time continuing faculty member) in the Cities Department. A new faculty member has just been hired (as of March, 2017) and a search for a second new faculty member will occur in the 2017-18 academic year. CAP feels that Cities needs to wait until these new colleagues have arrived and integrated themselves into the department, before a future vision for the Department can be decided upon. It is only subsequent to those conversations, in which the two new faculty members must be deeply involved, that CAP believes Cities will be ready to pr

algebraist has left a significant gap in the mathematics curriculum. The Math department proposes that this new hire primarily teach undergraduate courses in Abstract Algebra (MATH 303/304) and Linear Algebra (MATH 203) as well as the graduate Algebra courses (MATH 503/504). In addition, this faculty member would periodically teach introductory courses such as Calculus, participate in the Senior Conference course (MATH 398), supervise student research and create elective courses in his or her area of interest/expertise.

In discussions with CAP about this position request, the issue of whether a CNTT might better serve the needs of the department was considered. The compelling argument was made that, while a CNTT might be able to teach the 100/200 level courses, such a faculty member would not be able to teach the more advanced Algebra courses required for Math majors, supervise students with algebra-focused research interests, or cover the needs of graduate students. It was also noted that no other current member of the department has the training/expertise to do these things optimally either.

CAP also discussed with the department whether it might be possible or useful to hire an algebraist on the applied side of the mathematics spectrum. The department thought that such a hire might be a possibility but was more inclined, if the position were to be approved, to conduct a more open search in hopes of both increasing the diversity of the candidate pool and being able to hire the best possible person.

CAP also expressed the concern that there continues to be a great demand for MATH 104 (Statistics) from our students and urged the Math department to think about how this position, in concert with some reconfiguration of faculty effort, could lead to more sufficient and more regularized offerings of MATH 104.

CAP recommends that the Mathematics Department's request for a tenure-track position in Algebra be approved at the beginning assistant professor level for the following reasons:

Both the curricular needs for an algebraist and the overall staffing needs of the Math department are compelling in this situation. However, in recommending that this request be approved, CAP also considers the department to be leave-proof. Further, CAP expects that the department will align their resources with the needs of both the College and the department in such a way as to be able to provide 3 or more sections of MATH 104 per year without having to rely on interim faculty. In composing the ad for this position, CAP recommends that the possibility of hiring an applied algebraist be explicitly mentioned.

Physics

The Department of Physics has requested a tenure-track position in any specialty area of experimental physics. This request was motivated by the news in December that a long-time member of the department would be leaving the College. To fill the curricular hole created by this departure, the Department proposes to hire a tenure-track assistant professor with a strong research profile.

CAP remains impressed with the work of the department in several areas. We are deeply
and grantsmanship. We are equally impressed

with the work the department has done to create a robust physics major for women, including the outreach and service work the department has contributed to the College. Finally, we are appreciative of the thoughtfulness and thoroughness of the proposal to CAP.

might be realized. CAP also encourages the Department to seek increased coordination with