

*Committee on Academic Priorities*

Jane Hedley, *English*, 2012-13 – 2015-16, *Chair* 2015-16

David Karen, *Sociology*, 2013-14 – 2016-17 (*on Leave* 2015-16)

Michael Rock, *Economics*, 2014-15 – 2017-18

Janet Shapiro, *GSSWSR*, 2014-15 – 2017-18

Jonas Goldsmith, *Chemistry*, 2015-16 – 2018-19

Tim Harte, *Russian*, 2015-16 – 2018-19 (*on Leave Semester II*)

# BRYN MAWR

April 13, 2016

## **Annual Report to the Faculty 2015-2016**

The Committee on Academic Priorities membership for 2015-16 consisted of Jane Hedley (English, CAP Chair), David Karen (Sociology: on leave AY 2015-16), Janet Shapiro (Graduate School of Social Work and Social Research), Michael Rock (Economics), Jonas Goldsmith (Chemistry), and Tim Harte (Russian: on leave second semester). The Provost attended most CAP meetings by invitation. CAP is grateful for the administrative and clerical support provided by the Provost's Office, and 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 met with the Curriculum Committee (CC) and with Haverford's Educational Policy Committee (EPC) to exchange information and elicit their feedback. As Chair of CAP, Jane Hedley served on the Advisory Council of the Faculty; Janet Shapiro was our representative to the Board of Trustees; Michael Rock served the first of a two-year term with the Strategic Advisory Group. Hedley participated in external reviews of Bryn Mawr's Athletics and Physical Education Department, the Health Professions Advising Office and the Bi-Co Program in Comparative Literature.

CAP also facilitated the submission and review of position proposals for two new faculty lines, one in STEM and one in International Studies. We received a number of proposals that were thoughtfully and persuasively formulated, identifying areas of critical need and speaking to the emergence of new fields of study within and beyond existing departments. Our recommendations concerning these new positions will be presented in an addendum to this report.

A further area of concern for CAP this year has been the program in Environmental Studies (ES), which has been understaffed and, from a curricular standpoint, lacking in stability, continuity, and focus. Notwithstanding the relatively high number of undergraduate courses with an environmental focus that are currently offered, including courses at Haverford and Swarthmore,

and despite a high level of student interest, we have only two faculty members whose primary teaching commitment is to the ES program, and thus to staffing its core components, advising potential majors, and mentoring the senior experience. This year several key contributors to the program had leaves of absence or were severely constrained by the competing needs of their own departments. Additional staffing is clearly needed, and securing the funding necessary to add an ES position to the faculty has been a stated goal of the current financial campaign. CAP feels strongly, however, that to search for a new colleague in ES will be premature until the ES steering committee has a clearly articulated rationale for the program's curricular priorities in light of the faculty resources already present within the Tri-Co. The ES steering committee has been engaged on and off throughout the year in discussion of how to shape a new major in Environmental Studies, Environmental Science, or both, that would bring the program's staffing needs into focus and thereby lay a solid basis for future position requests. We are encouraged by the progress that has been made this year toward producing a "mission statement" for Environmental Studies at Bryn Mawr. It is our hope that ES will be in a position to submit a position request to CAP next year.

Other CAP business included meeting in the fall with the Educational Policy Committee (EPC), our counterpart committee at Haverford. At this meeting, as well as exchanging information about impending position requests at both colleges, we discussed how CAP and EPC, respectively, do their business. EPC does the work of Bryn Mawr's CAP and Curriculum Committees: the review process for departmental position requests begins a good deal later in the year and is a simpler, faster process than ours. But although we are very much in favor of making our faculty committees more efficient and streamlining our committee structure, the members of CAP came away from that conversation unconvinced that Haverford's approach is one we should emulate. We still think it's worthwhile to have two separate committees, Curriculum Committee (CC) to monitor the undergraduate curriculum, review its key components at intervals and stay abreast of curricular innovation within departments, and CAP to review new position requests with an eye to the academic priorities of the College, writ large.

That having been said, we also see real benefit from involving CC in CAP's position review process, as we have now done for several years. Jane Hedley and Tim Harte met during the fall semester with interim CC chair Anjali Thapar to re-open the question of what would be the optimum way to structure this involvement. In part because CC had to begin its work late this year, pending the election of several new members, we decided to go with the same arrangement as last year, whereby CC weighed in on all new position proposals early in the second semester and sent a representative to each of CAP's spring meetings with departments. From now on, we think it will be preferable for CAP to seek advice from the Curriculum Committee in the fall, right after "letters of intent" come in from departments and programs. At that point a discussion of the curricular implications of the position requests that are in the offing will be timely and helpful, both to CAP and to requesting departments—more so, we think, than asking CC to be involved in reviewing finished proposals in the spring.

CAP's chief business, this year as in the past, was to review 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 accommodate sabbatical leaves without additional staffing); the history of previous requests; and the College's commitment to increasing faculty diversity. This year the Curriculum Committee, which has been exploring the possibility

of adding a diversity requirement to the undergraduate curriculum, asked all departments whose position requests were under review to speak to their implications for enhancing curricular diversity. All position requests were evaluated according to these parameters and, in the case of the CNTT request, according to established guidelines on the nature of CNTT appointments. In this report we describe each position request, address its implications for the long-term academic priorities of the College, and announce our recommendations to the President concerning its implementation.

In light of the College's ongoing commitment to faculty diversity, all searches are expected to make every effort to reach a broad and diverse pool of applicants. In addition, the Committee on Appointments (CA) recently developed a procedure for conducting opportunity hires where positions have already been approved. This year the Physics department used this procedure to fill a position that was approved last year in anticipation of an upcoming retirement. This is the third tenure-track appointment that has been made by means of a procedure which is thus already paying off for the College in its ongoing effort to enhance faculty diversity.

### **Postdoctoral Fellowships**

This year we invited departments and programs to locate postdoctoral fellows through the Consortium for Faculty Diversity at Liberal Arts Colleges who could bring diversity to the College in areas where full-time, tenure-track positions are likely to open up within the next few years. Several departments did so. As a result of this effort we will have a CFD fellow next year in Middle Eastern Studies; a second postdoctoral appointment, in Social Psychology, was authorized but not achieved. The Consortium's data-base will continue to be a valuable resource for increasing both faculty and curricular diversity, and as the Psychology Department discovered this year, departments can help to strengthen its roster of candidates by contacting key graduate programs in areas that are or will be of interest, going forward. It will continue to be important for CAP to work closely with departments in pursuit of a shared understanding of our goals and priorities with respect to diversity.

Several departments submitted proposals to host a Bucher-Jackson Postdoctoral Fellowship in the Sciences. A fellowship has been awarded to a specialist in biological chemistry for a one-year appointment in the Department of Chemistry, with the possibility of a one-year renewal.

### **Responses to Position Requests**

CAP received position requests this year for six tenure-track (TT) and one continuing non-tenure-track (CNTT) positions, from six departments and programs: the Arts Program in Creative Writing, the English Department (which requested two positions), Geology (for a CNTT position), Growth and Structure of Cities, History of Art, and Russian. A request from Physics to re-visit the TT position request that was approved last year became moot when the opportunity hire that had been the stated goal both of that request and of CAP's recommendation for the timing of its implementation was successfully concluded in December.

All departments and programs were directed by the "request for position" template that is used to structure position requests to seek collaborative input from faculty in allied fields at Bryn Mawr

and at Haverford. Two of these position requests came from departments that also had a member serving on CAP: to avoid conflicts of interest, CAP followed its usual policy of excusing that member from consideration of his or her own department's position request.

CAP is scheduled to meet with the Committee on Appointments (CA) in early May, after these recommendations have been acted upon by the President and the Board of Trustees. The two committees consider the transmission of information from CAP to CA to be of critical importance to the search process. Given the College's 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 each search pool.

In response to CAP's recommendations, President Kim Cassidy 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 Annual Report at a later date.

CAP will publish an addendum to this report concerning the new positions in STEM and International Studies for which applications were invited earlier this year; that addendum will also include any other matters that have arisen subsequent to the distribution of this report.

### **Arts Program in Creative Writing**

The Creative Writing Program (CWP) requested a tenure-track (TT) position for a poet with a specialty in a secondary genre such as playwriting, literary translation and/or memoir. The intent of this hire would be to complement the position currently held by Associate Professor Dan Torday, a fiction-writer, who also directs the Creative Writing Program and curates the Arts Program Reading Series. For a program of its size, the Creative Writing Program at BMC offers an impressively broad range of courses. Since the departure of its other TT faculty member in 2013, this program has been heavily staffed by visiting adjunct faculty teaching one or two courses each. Adjunct staffing is valuable up to a point, in that it exposes student writers to different ways of practicing a writer's craft, and Philadelphia-area writers are often very willing to teach in our program on a per-course basis. That said, the program also needs continuing members to anchor its curriculum and mentor its students over time. With the addition of the proposed TT faculty member adjunct teachers would be needed less often, leave coverage for Torday in his administrative capacity would be assured, and the Reading Series would be better supported as well.

The CWP is committed to providing a broad range of courses for undergraduates at BMC, with the goal of fostering the development of writing ability across the curriculum, among students of varied academic interests and backgrounds. The proposed TT hire would support the CWP's capacity to offer new courses such as "Poetry as Performance," "The Visual Novel" and "Writing for Radio" in addition to continuing its full range of other offerings. Another stated goal of this proposal is to attract candidates from underrepresented groups, with a view to strengthening both curricular offerings and mentorship of students within the program. In their proposal and the listening meeting with CAP, the Arts faculty described the many ways that the CWP supports the undergraduate curriculum, including its promotion of creative thinking,

problem solving, communication skills, and cultural awareness. All CWP courses are writing intensive. In addition, they described how a TT position in poetry and a secondary genre would enable the CWP to participate in the 360 program, make more Praxis opportunities available for students, and contribute two courses to the ESEM program every year.

The CWP faculty reports that for a majority of their courses, many more students pre-register than are able to be accommodated. Priority is given to Independent majors, CW minors, and CW concentrators within the English major. At the same time, the CWP works systematically to accommodate as many other students as possible, with the goal of ensuring that no student is “lotteried out” of the same course two years in a row.

**CAP recommends that the Creative Writing Program’s request for a tenure-track position in poetry with a specialty in a secondary genre be approved at the level of beginning assistant professor for the following reasons:**

The CWP has demonstrated the importance of a vibrant program in Creative Writing through the high level of student interest in CWP courses and the success of the Arts Program Reading Series. With the loss of one of its two tenure-track faculty members in 2013, this program has had to rely heavily on adjunct staffing. The advent of a second tenure-track member would lessen the reliance on adjuncts, create a more leave-proof program, and ensure a more stable context for student mentorship and advising.

## **English**

The English Department submitted a request for two tenure-track (TT) positions: one in the area of poetry and poetics, with a specialization in African American and Afro Caribbean poetry, and one in cultural studies with a specialization in children’s and young adult literature and speculative fiction.

The English Department is anticipating the retirement, by the end of AY 2016-2017, of two senior TT faculty members whose specializations are in Renaissance and in Eighteenth Century literature; both have regularly offered courses in poetry and poetics. The recent departure of the department’s Shakespeare specialist led to a position request for a search this year that has already yielded a scholar of “Global Shakespeare.” The department proposes that the two TT hires they have requested this year be deployed to contribute toward the coverage of poetry and poetics but also toward a more “future oriented” curriculum that is responsive to student interests and reflective of developments in the field.

Having been asked to re-think and re-submit its proposal for a poetry position last year, the English faculty reflected on CAP’s suggestion to broaden the “temporal reach” of a prospective hire in poetry. The poetry position proposed this year, while reflecting a trend in the field to focus more on genre/methodology than on a particular period or era of scholarship, is targeted to finding a scholar who would be able to engage the “long history of African American and Afro Caribbean poetry and poetics.”

The second position requested, in cultural studies with a specialization in children’s and young adult literature and speculative fiction, represents a new direction for the English Department

that reflects student interests as well as emerging trends in the field. The goal of this position is to be able to support students' intense interest in these texts with the historical, theoretical and analytical frameworks that enable scholarship. A recent bequest to Bryn Mawr College of a 10,000 volume collection of British and U.S. children's literature emphasizes the emergence of this field of study as a potential area of scholarship.

**CAP recommends that the English Department's request for a tenure-track position in the area of poetry and poetics, with a specialization in African American and Afro Caribbean poetry be approved at the beginning assistant professor level for the following reasons:**

The English Department has demonstrated that the proposed position in poetry is key to maintaining a curriculum that has dedicated courses in poetry and poetics. The faculty conceptualizes the TT hire in poetry as anchoring their "investments in genre and form, and in geography/ethnicity".

**CAP recommends that the English Department's request for a tenure-track position for a scholar of cultural studies with a specialization in children's and young adult literature and speculative fiction not be approved at this time, for the following reasons:**

By the end of the 2016-2017 academic year, a total of 3 TT faculty members will have joined the English Department and Creative Writing Program as a result of hires this year in English and next year in both English and Creative Writing. CAP believes that it would be useful to complete the hiring process of a TT faculty member in poetry studies and have an opportunity to reflect on the breadth of capability brought by this new hire, as well as by the recent TT hire in Global Shakespeare, in further thinking through how best to shape an additional TT position in the English Department.

## **Geology**

The Geology Department submitted a request for a continuing non-tenure track (CNTT) position, occasioned by the departure of their first-year laboratory coordinator. The teaching responsibilities associated with this position have been re-designed to serve the needs of the new curriculum that Geology is in the process of constructing for its majors. In addition to the supervision of three or more lab sections of the introductory Geology course (GEOL 101), the requested faculty member would teach the lab portions of GEOL 203 (Earth History) and GEOL 205 (Sedimentary Materials and Environments), and a Quantitative skills or Focus course at the 100- or 200-level. When the tenured faculty members teaching GEOL 203 or GEOL 205 are on leave, this CNTT faculty member would also teach the lecture portion of GEOL 203/205. With this position, the Geology department maintains its commitment to being leave-proof, except under extraordinary circumstances.

In conceiving of this position and its responsibilities, the department focused on being able to effectively support their new curricular configuration. Not only would the position as newly configured leave-proof the department; it would also—insofar as this colleague's teaching responsibilities would include the lab portion of GEOL 203—free up another member of the department to develop and teach a "superlab"-type course (similar to courses already being offered in Biology and Chemistry). The possibility of requesting another tenure-track faculty

member instead of a CNTT was discussed with CAP, but the department concluded that it was more advantageous to strengthen their present situation, as opposed to adding a TT faculty member with a new research and teaching focus. While this proposed CNTT hire would be teaching a portfolio of courses somewhat different from that of prior CNTT faculty, the position would conform with established guidelines for CNTT appointments in that there would be no formal research expectations and it would not include 300-level teaching.

**CAP recommends that the Geology Department's request for a continuing non-tenure track position at the lecturer level to teach introductory labs, portions of the Earth History and Sedimentary Materials course sequences, and additional course(s) where appropriate, be approved for the following reasons:**

Over the past decade, the department has demonstrated a need for this position: previous CNTT faculty have supported robust enrollments both in major and non-major courses. This teaching effort, which the College appreciates and values, would not be able to be sustained without this CNTT hire. The courses this individual would teach would not only support the department's new curricular direction but would also allow for more flexibility around faculty leaves than the department has currently.

### **Growth and Structure of Cities**

The Growth and Structure of Cities Department has requested a tenure-track (TT) position for an architectural historian or historian of planning and urban design at an advanced assistant or early associate professor level. The intent of this position is to provide a TT faculty member to anchor the study of the evolution of the urban built environment. This faculty member would teach the core foundation course, Form of the City (CITY 190), would share responsibility with other department members to provide continuous coverage for required 200-level courses, and would be expected to develop advanced content in his or her thematic/geographic areas of expertise. The Growth and Structure of Cities Department also discussed the need for this faculty member to support their Senior Seminar, including supervision of senior theses. The department is hoping to attract candidates who have been trained at degree-granting institutions in Latin America, Africa, Asia, and Europe as well as the United States, but who are able to thrive as teachers and scholars at an American liberal arts college.

The need for the proposed position is especially urgent in light of recent and anticipated faculty departures, to enable course coverage, leave coverage, close supervision of majors, and participation in the 3/2 program in city and regional planning with the University of Pennsylvania. Even with this position the department would not be entirely leave-proof, especially if they are also to continue their commitment to College programs such as the 360 programs, the program in International Studies, and the Emily Balch first-year seminars.

The Growth and Structure of Cities Department is considering the addition of a methods requirement to the major; with that in mind, a successful candidate for this position would be able to contribute to the teaching of research methods and theories, and would be able to work with the design studio. She or he would be expected to develop connections with other institutions (regionally, nationally and/or internationally) and facilitate the development of internship opportunities to support student preparation for a variety of career tracks. While

successful candidates may bring skills such as GIS, the department is not searching specifically for this content and suggests that the College may do well to partner with other Philadelphia-area institutions that have strong content in this area.

The department is strongly committed to interdisciplinary work and hence to collaboration with other BMC departments; the Cities major is itself interdisciplinary, requiring as it does four courses in an “allied” field. The department is also committed to maintaining a global perspective, in line with a primary strategic objective of the College; more extensive coverage of non-Western cities is therefore needed, as well as more contemporary analysis.

In discussion with CAP and the Curriculum Committee, Cities faculty emphasized the department’s fundamental commitment to addressing diversity in its courses with regard to issues of race, class, sexual orientation, age, ability, gender and migration/global status. The core course in Urban Culture and Society (CITY 185) was able to be used to satisfy the social justice requirement at Haverford, and therefore seems likely to meet criteria that are currently under discussion for a diversity requirement at Bryn Mawr.

The department has proposed to search at the level of an advanced assistant or associate professor. There is a considerable gap in rank and career stage between the department’s most senior and junior members; a more advanced appointment would address this lack of balance, and yield a colleague who could step into certain kinds of leadership and service roles sooner rather than later.

**CAP recommends that the Growth and Structure of Cities Department’s request for a tenure-track position specializing in architectural history or the history of planning and urban design be approved at the beginning assistant professor level for the following reasons:**

The Growth and Structure of Cities Department has demonstrated the need for a tenure-track appointment in this important area to support and maintain a vibrant program. In the wake of recent and anticipated faculty departures, this appointment will reduce the department’s reliance on adjuncts, create a more leave-proof program, and provide much-needed continuity in student mentorship and advising.

Notwithstanding the case that can be made for a more advanced appointment, a beginning-level appointment would afford this new colleague needed time to become acclimatized to the College, and to a program that is distinctive and unique. This could be especially important for a new faculty member who lacks prior experience with higher education in the United States.

## **History of Art**

The History of Art Department submitted a request for a tenure-track (TT) position in the area of Chinese Art. In the past several years, the History of Art Department has been beset by two retirements, one of them unexpected, and the death of a third department member. Their two most recently hired members bring areas of expertise that reach beyond the purview of European/Western art history. With this third proposed hire, the department aspires to a geographic footprint that stretches from Western Europe through Byzantium, along the Silk

Road, to South Asia and China. The department's specialists in Modern Art and Film Studies, already have a global focus (as does the scholarly work of the College's new Director of Museum Studies). The proposed new position in History of Art would be for a scholar of Chinese art and material culture, from its origins up to modern times. While there is currently no scholar of Chinese art in this department, this area of specialization is not unknown at Bryn Mawr; Alexander Soper, a well-known scholar of Asian art, was a member of the faculty for many years in the 1940s and 1950s.

As part of a process of thinking through its future needs and directions that began some years ago, the department hired an interim faculty member in Chinese art whose courses were well received by both graduate and undergraduate students. The department also indicated that the field of Chinese art was among the "hot" areas in the discipline and that many of the best young scholars are in Chinese art. CAP inquired as to whether other geographic areas of focus had also been considered. The department explained in response that given the focus of its other current members on Byzantium, on South Asia, and on Europe from the Renaissance to the present, a scholar of Chinese art would be optimal from the standpoint of seeking to create a coherent program at both graduate and undergraduate levels: geographic diversity is valuable, but so too is intellectual interconnectedness.

**CAP recommends that the History of Art Department's request for a tenure-track position in Chinese Art be approved at the beginning assistant professor level for the following reasons:**

In recent years the department has been able to mount only a skeleton curriculum, even with interim hires to teach important courses. This position would facilitate the provision of a diverse and rich curriculum at the undergraduate and graduate level, and would secure adequate staffing for mentoring the department's PhD and AB/MA students. It would bring an exciting new area of emphasis to the department that would complement those of the department's other members and could be expected to attract students at all levels. It is clear that the department has given extensive and thoughtful consideration to where it wants to go and how it wants to get there, and this position is an integral part of that plan.

## **Physics**

The Department of Physics, whose request for a tenure-track position (subfield open) was approved last year, asked CAP to re-visit the time-line stipulated for the "quiet phase" they had already embarked upon, whose goal was to locate diversity so that an opportunity hire might be able to be made. (CAP had recommended that the department spend three years in this endeavor, and that they stand ready to re-visit the question of whether a tenure-track or a CNTT position would better serve their needs before mounting a full-on national search.) By the time CAP was ready to begin its review of this year's proposal, the search's "quiet phase" had been successful: in December the department welcomed into its ranks an astrophysicist who is also an alumna of the College.

**CAP wishes to congratulate the Physics Department: we are delighted that the search process devised by them to increase the likelihood of a diversity hire has been successfully followed through to its desired conclusion.**

## **Russian**

The Russian Department has requested a tenure-track (TT) position in Russian language, literature and culture. Candidates for the proposed position would hold the PhD in Slavic Languages and Literatures, speak Russian with native or near-native fluency, and be capable of offering Russian language courses at all levels as well as English-language courses on Russian literature. Expertise in nineteenth-century Russian literature would be especially desirable, as would an interest in contributing to other programs at the College such as Comparative Literature and International Studies.

Although Swarthmore has one specialist in Russian language and literature and Haverford offers courses in Russian history and economics, much of the burden of sustaining a small but viable Russian major (one that graduates six or seven majors per year, from Bryn Mawr and Haverford combined), as well as providing courses in Russian literature and language for other interested students, falls on the Russian Department at Bryn Mawr. The need for the proposed position is especially urgent in light of impending retirements, including that of Haverford's professor of Russian history, whose Russian specialization is unlikely to be replaced. Another important consideration is the need to maintain the vibrancy and visibility of our prestigious Flagship Program in Russian language and culture. Going forward, the Bryn Mawr department would be fully staffed with two TT faculty members, one continuing CNTT member, and one adjunct faculty member supported by the Flagship Program.

Given the stature of Bryn Mawr's Department of Russian and the prestige of the Flagship Program the department expects to receive numerous applications from candidates with native or near-native fluency in both Russian and English. Preference will be given to candidates who demonstrate a significant commitment to scholarly research and publication and have experience teaching Russian language, literature, and culture. Ideally the search would yield a promising young scholar of 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian literature. The department's commitment both to the Flagship Program and to developing a AB/MA program that includes a year of study in Russia makes it essential, however, that both of its tenure-track faculty members participate every year in the teaching of first- and second-year Russian.

**CAP recommends that the Russian Department's request for a tenure-track position in Russian language, literature and culture with a specialization in 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian literature be approved at the beginning assistant professor level for the following reasons:**

CAP is impressed with what this department has been able to achieve with limited resources: the Russian Department is justifiably proud of the coherence of its undergraduate program. Both in that context and from the perspective of the department's plan to develop a 4 + 1 AB/MA program, it will be advantageous to have a second TT faculty member in place as soon as possible.

This position is recommended for approval subject to the understanding that both of the department's tenure-track members will teach Russian language on a regular basis, and that the department will continue its valued commitment to the ESEM program.