The Committee on Academic Priorities (CAP) membership for the 2010-2011 academic year consisted of Pim Higginson (French and Francophone Studies, CAP Chair), Anjali Thapar (Psychology), Michael Tratner (English), Alison Cook-Sather (Education, Chair Elect for 2011-12), Toba Kerson (GSSWSR), and Arlo Weil (Geology). CAP would like to thank Provost Kim Cassidy who attended most meetings as well as the Provost’s office for their support. CAP would especially like to thank Linda Butler Livesay for helping coordinate CAP business throughout a particularly busy year.

The following report focuses on what has traditionally been regarded as CAP business, and it is one of two documents that CAP has produced in Spring of 2011. There is a separate report on CAP’s charge that describes the “Working Model for Balancing Innovation, Institutional Goals, and Sustainability” for the future of the College as well as the staffing reductions of 5-8 positions that CAP was charged with effectuating.

During the both Fall and Spring semesters, CAP met, on average, three to four times per week. In addition to these regular meetings, the Chair of CAP served on the College Budget Committee and the Chairs Advisory Group. Anjali Thapar served as a representative to the Board of Trustees, Arlo Weil served as the CAP representative to the Curriculum Committee, and Alison Cook-Sather represented CAP on the Thinking Forward Group. Alison Cook-Sather, Pim Higginson, Arlo Weil, and Provost Kim Cassidy also attended the Mellon-funded Alliance to Advance Liberal Arts Colleges (AALAC) 2011 Assembly (entitled “Connecting Liberal Arts Education to the Real World”). Other attendees to the meeting held at Vassar College were groups from Amherst, Barnard, Carleton, Denison, DePauw, Furman, Grinnell, Harvey Mudd, Haverford, Macalester, Middlebury, Oberlin, Pomona, Reed, Rhodes, Scripps, Smith, Swarthmore, Vassar, Wellesley, Wesleyan, and Williams.

Through the “Consortium for Faculty Diversity at Liberal Arts Colleges” of which Bryn Mawr College is a member, CAP invited departments to submit applications to host a “Consortium for Faculty Diversity” fellow. The Consortium is a program hosted by DePauw University that seeks to increase “… the diversity of students, faculty members and curricular offerings at liberal arts colleges with a particular focus on enhancing the
diversity of faculty members and of applicants for faculty positions.” Programs or groups interested in hosting a minority postdoctoral fellow were to review applications available in the consortium database and, upon identification of a potential candidate, to submit a statement of interest describing the department’s, program’s or group’s vision for this fellow’s expected experiences and contributions at Bryn Mawr College. We received letters supporting three candidates — from the departments of Mathematics, Spanish, and from a partnership between The Graduate School of Social Work and Social Research and the Department of Sociology. CAP thanks Don Barber from Geology and Environmental Studies for agreeing to direct the search. Two candidates were brought to the campus and one offer was extended and accepted by Erika Marquez, PhD, University of Massachusetts. Professor Marquez’s primary appointment will be in the Department of Sociology, but she will also be affiliated with the GSSWSR.

This year CAP reviewed requests for 5 positions, of which 2 were continuing non tenured-track and 3 were tenure-track. In reviewing this year’s proposals, CAP emphasized the importance of considering the long-term benefits of each request to the department or program that requested a position, as well as to the College as a whole. This consideration included the expectation that all departments would consult and collaborate with allied fields (both here and at Haverford College) as they developed their requests — an expectation supported by the new form CAP developed for departments and programs to use in submitting position requests. In going forward, CAP recommends that members of interested departments (outside the requesting department) take an active role in the search process, both in the initial stages of examining dossiers and, most particularly, as the short-list of candidates is established.

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 disciplinary and transdisciplinary directions; its impact on overall faculty resources at Bryn Mawr and in the Bi-Co, including our capacity to respond to sabbatical leaves; its potential to enhance the diversity of our faculty; its relation to the history of previous requests from this department or program to CAP; and, in the case of CNTT requests, its adherence to the established guidelines on the nature of CNTT appointments.

In our solicitation for position requests this year, 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 that are approved in moving forward with their 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 decisions and our subsequent discussion, President McAuliffe has indicated her agreement (pending budgetary review) with our recommendations regarding these position requests. 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.
political science

the political science department submitted a request for two tenure-track positions and asked CAP if there was a method to regularize the position of the long-term adjunct currently employed by the department. Facing the impending retirements of senior colleagues Marc Ross (who will be retiring at the end of the 2011-2012 academic year) and Steve Salkever (who will be retiring at the end of the 2012-2013 academic year), political science requested positions in the area of comparative politics and in the area of political theory, with an emphasis on ancient political thought.

political science specified that the political theorist should have a primary expertise in ancient political thought and a secondary competence in modern/and or contemporary political thought. The comparative politics position should be filled by someone who works on approaches or in areas of the world currently under-represented in the Bi-Co curriculum. Also, the department suggested that they wish to search for the person in comparative politics next year, and for the political theorist in 2012-13. In order to plan for both retirements now, the department wishes to have both positions authorized this year. The political science department also asked that one of the two positions be of open rank.

the department noted that the discipline of Political Science is divided into four subfields, but that it is a challenge for small departments to cover all four subfields and the global breadth of comparative politics. After Marc Ross’ departure, the Bi-Co will have three comparativists teaching Western Europe, Latin America and Africa; therefore, the department plans to hire someone working on Asia, Eastern Europe, or the Middle East. While the department would want to be particularly attentive to candidates who work in underrepresented geographical areas, they want to keep the area of specialization open.

In answer to a point made in a recent external review of the department, the department noted that most graduating PhDs today employ “mixed methods,” in which quantitative approaches are combined with other methods of inquiry. For this reason the department thinks that anyone they hire should have some competence in quantitative methods. This being noted, the department does not wish to artificially narrow the candidate pool by making quantitative methods a specific requirement. The department also noted that Haverford has just hired someone who will teach a quantitative approaches course that will be open to Bryn Mawr College students.

The second position, in political theory, would have a focus on the nature, structure, and aims of political life and of political institutions. Because ancient political thought represents the foundation from which contemporary theory emerges, the department sees its coverage as essential. Nevertheless, the department aims to find someone who could teach competently in at least one other period besides ancient. It also added that it is much easier to find someone with a primary expertise in ancient who can teach other periods than the other way around.
CAP reviewed the department’s proposal and supporting documentation, including its long-range plan. During the first meeting with Political Science, CAP asked the department to further clarify its position with respect to its ongoing yearly reappointment of an adjunct faculty member. CAP was particularly attentive to the College’s policy of moving away from such hires as permanent solutions to ongoing staffing problems. CAP also noted the external review’s recommendation that the department rethink its continued reliance on adjunct support.

The department responded that one solution would be to request a seventh position that would combine the ability to teach comparative courses and courses in international politics/political economy. If this were possible, the department would be willing to limit the area of substantive focus to the Middle East, or to other areas currently underrepresented in the Bi-Co. It concluded that with such a position conversion, the department would be sufficiently covered in comparative and international areas and would generally not need leave replacements.

With due deliberation CAP has decided to recommend that three positions in Political Science be authorized under the following conditions. Two searches will be conducted next year, with specializations in comparative politics. One of these positions will be for someone with the ability to teach comparative courses as well as some courses in international politics/political economy. We ask that one of the positions be in Middle-East studies and we encourage the department to try to hire the other position in Asian studies; of particular interest to the College would be someone focusing on China. We also ask that one of the persons hired be able to teach a course in quantitative methods. While we do not expect the position advertisement to contain language surrounding the use of quantitative methods, we do expect the search committee to ask candidates if they would be willing and able to supply such a course and that one of the candidates who is hired be able to do so. We also authorize a search for a third position to be conducted in academic year 2013-14 in ancient political theory with a secondary specialization in either modern or contemporary political thought. We expect extensive consultation with the departments of Philosophy and Classics, with the Graduate Group, and with any other departments or programs that might have a vested interest in this search.

We want to conclude by noting that we cannot authorize any of these three positions at a mid- or advanced career level, though we understand the department’s rationale for making such a request. We also cannot authorize that all three searches be conducted simultaneously. For the health of the department and the College, we believe it more useful to bring in younger colleagues and to stagger the searches. For that reason, the first two searches are to occur next year and the last search in academic year 2013-2014. This will create a gap between hires and allow the new hires that occur next year to participate fully in the subsequent search.

Graduate School of Social Work and Social Research

The Graduate School of Social Work and Social Research requested permission to fill the tenure-track position left vacant in February 2010 by the death of Kevin J. Robinson. The
requested position would be filled by someone who can teach the Policy Practice and Advocacy concentration sequence of two courses, the Social Policy Foundation and Analysis foundation course, and the Community Strategies and Assessment: Advocacy and Action policy concentration-bridging course. In addition, the ideal candidate would be capable of teaching an elective in public health, community-based participatory research, global social work, or social welfare practice. While teaching in the doctoral program, the successful candidate would also contribute as an educator and scholar to the work of the Center on Child and Family Well-being. Any successful candidate would hold a master’s degree in social work and a doctorate, either in social work or a related discipline; ideally, the candidate would also have at least two years of post-master’s experience in the field.

According to the GSSWSR, a tenure-track appointment is essential for the following reasons: First, the person who fills the requested position will assume leadership for the Policy Practice and Advocacy concentration at the School in which approximately 17% of GSSWSR students enroll. Second, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) has long taken the position that teaching at a school of social work should be done by a core of full-time faculty. The CSWE position is that a solid and stable core of full-time faculty is the preferable model, and significant departures from that model diminish the quality of the program. Third, the School relies on faculty for significant service and student advising in all degree programs. Fourth, if we are to maintain a strong and viable PhD program (required to remain a successful social work program), we will need tenure-track faculty to teach the necessary courses, provide research opportunities, and direct dissertations.

While CAP understands the importance of this position and of the Policy Practice and Advocacy concentration within the GSSWSR, any consideration of a position request has to take place within the parameters of the requirement that the GSSWSR reduce its full-time tenure-track staffing to 10 positions plus the dean of the program (Darlyne Bailey). In the initial request submitted, it was not clear to CAP that the work of reimagining the program with this reduced staffing had been done. Accomplishing this task meant not only designing a curriculum permanently staffed with 10 faculty members (that is, 8.5 FTE at any given time, to account for leaves), but also naming which areas of specialization would remain essential to the effective continuation of the program and which faculty upon retirement would not be replaced.

The initial response to CAP’s request further refined the rationale for the position request, describing the role of the position in relation to institutional engagements beyond Bryn Mawr College and community-based work (including the exploration of a joint degree with Thomas Jefferson University and work in the Philadelphia community). Nevertheless, despite its detailed explanation, the proposal did not re-imagine the curriculum in the ways that CAP requested. Such a plan for the future was provided to CAP on April 12. In these documents, GSSWSR took on the difficult task of spelling out precisely which faculty would teach which courses and how the entire program would run within the Phase III parameters set forth by the Task Force on Balancing Mission and Resources. Once this had been accomplished the reason for this new hire became clear.
This need is all the more evident in that there is a significant imbalance between the number of senior members in the department and the number of beginning and mid-career faculty. Accordingly, CAP has approved a search for a position in GSSWSR for someone who can teach the Policy Practice and Advocacy concentration sequence, the Social Policy Foundation and Analysis foundation course, and the Community Strategies and Assessment: Advocacy and Action policy concentration-bridging course. As noted in the initial request, the ideal candidate would be capable of teaching an elective in public health, community-based participatory research, global social work, or social welfare practice. While teaching in the doctoral program, the successful candidate would also contribute as an educator and scholar to the work of the Center on Child and Family Well-being. Finally, any successful candidate would hold a master’s degree in social work, at least two years of post-master’s experience, as well as a doctorate in social work or a related discipline.

**East Asian Studies, CNTT Chinese Instructor Positions**

Speaking for the Bi-College Department in East Asian Studies, Robert Dostal (acting Chair and Member of the Department of Philosophy) submitted a proposal to convert two interim positions in Chinese language to CNTTs. According to the request, these two positions are necessary to continue teaching four years of Chinese, with the first two as intensive language courses. The argument for these positions is that enrollments have been increasing, and the request is further justified by the fact that these hires would not involve increasing the current staffing but would, rather, constitute a regularization to CNTT of two important interim language teaching positions. East Asian Studies at Bryn Mawr has long had two adjunct/interim positions in Chinese language instruction. According to this request, the current instructors (T’zu Chiang and Changchun Zhang) have occupied temporary positions for several years under one-year or limited multi-year contracts, and it would be appropriate to convert these positions to CNTT status. The College should not be relying on adjuncts to staff the language instruction in an important foreign language to which the College is committed in the long term. Having these positions be filled by CNTT faculty provides stability and ensures faculty commitment to the College and its students.

In its background documentation, the request noted that Chinese is taught within the Bi-College Department of East Asian Studies, which links rigorous language training to the study of East Asian, and particularly Chinese and Japanese, cultures and societies. In addition, the Bi-College faculty in East Asian anthropology, cities, economics, philosophy and sociology connect with East Asian culture and society courses offered by faculty at Swarthmore. Bryn Mawr has two tenure-track positions (Yonglin Jiang and Pauline Lin) dedicated to the field in addition to the two language instruction positions and additional drill instruction support (Jingyu Zhao). Haverford contributes the whole of or parts of three tenure track positions and three non-tenure track positions in Japanese language.

The request likewise stated that, between the two positions, at least one should be filled by someone capable of teaching through the third year. It also noted that if the College
wishes to hire individuals in these positions who are actively conducting research in language pedagogy, linguistics, or Chinese literature, the position should be tenure track. It suggested that the focus here should instead be on active language instruction rather than research. It also noted that the impact on College resources would be minimal as we already have these positions staffed on a full-time basis and the salaries for the current holders of these positions are not significantly less than they would be were these to be CNTT positions. This being noted, CNTT positions do offer some limited support for travel to professional meetings and for a semester leave after six years as a senior lecturer. Nevertheless, a position as a CNTT will require only marginally more support than an interim position. Finally, though the current instructors have not always been employed fulltime, the department feels strongly that these two positions need to be fulltime and that enrollments justify this level of staffing.

The request concludes that Bryn Mawr College has a small but excellent East Asian Studies department in cooperation with Haverford College. This department is particularly important for Bryn Mawr's mission as an institution with an international or global perspective. The core of the department is language — Chinese and Japanese — and Bryn Mawr is responsible for most of the Chinese language offerings. The program has an excellent reputation, which is largely based on the language skills of our graduates, who are more advanced than those of peer programs. To assure its continued success, the College needs to support excellent language faculty by requiring that language instructor positions within the program be designated as CNTT.

In considering this request, CAP examined the data on enrollments and the workload of the faculty involved. It was clear to us that the claims made in the documentation provided to CAP justify serious consideration of the request. Accordingly, CAP has authorized one search at the level of CNTT to occur next year. With respect to the second search (which, in any case, was to occur after the retirement of T’zu Chiang) CAP feels that the institution must maintain the highest possible degree of flexibility with respect to staffing while recognizing current needs. As this is not a present need so much as an anticipated future need, we ask that the department come forth with its request for a (second) CNTT when this hire has become necessary.