

Committee on Academic Priorities

Toba Kerson, *GSSWSR, 2010-11 – 2013-14, Chair 2013-2014*

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

Grace Armstrong, *French and Francophone Studies, 2011-12 – 2014-15*

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

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

David Karen, *Sociology, 2013-14 – 2016-17*

BRYN MAWR

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Annual Report to the Faculty 2013-2014

The Committee on Academic Priorities (CAP) membership for 2013-14 included Toba Kerson (Social Work and Social Research, CAP Chair), Arlo Weil (Geology), Penny Armstrong (French and Francophone Studies), Tamara Davis (Biology), Jane Hedley (English), and David Karen (Sociology). The Provost attended most CAP meetings by invitation. CAP is grateful for the support provided by the Provost's Office and especially thanks Linda Butler Livesay.

CAP meets once a week in the Fall semester and twice a week in Spring. This year, in addition to meeting with departments and programs requesting positions, we welcomed members of the faculty of the Graduate School of Social Work and Social Research, the Museum Studies Working Group, Environmental Studies faculty, and members of the Latin American, Latino and Iberian Peoples and Cultures advisory committee to discuss their staffing concerns. We also plan to meet with Haverford's Educational Policy Committee (EPC). As Chair of CAP, Toba Kerson served on the Chair's Advisory Group while Tamara Davis and Arlo Weil represented CAP on the Strategic Advisory Group, and Arlo Weil served as the representative to the Board of Trustees.

CAP received 8 position requests this year. We worked with the Curriculum Committee in reviewing requests and meeting with departments/programs. In this report we present each position request along with recommendations regarding the requests and for timing of the searches.

Responses to Position Requests

This year CAP reviewed requests for the following: one conversion from an interim to a tenure track position, one conversion of an interim to a continuing non-tenure track (CNTT) and six tenure track (TT) positions. In developing their requests, we expected all departments and programs to consult and collaborate with allied fields here and at Haverford College. The completed "request for position" template that must accompany each request requires that departments and programs demonstrate consultation and collaboration.

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, and in the case of CNTT requests, the established guidelines on the nature of CNTT appointments. Three of the positions we recommend are in areas that have depended heavily upon interim faculty; the small increase in resources necessary to support continuing ranked faculty is justified by the resulting stabilization of staffing and the curriculum. In this way we have responded to our charge from the Board to balance mission and resources.

Two position requests that CAP received this year came from a department that also had a member serving on CAP. To avoid a conflict of interest, CAP followed its usual policy of excusing that member from considerations of this department's proposals.

CAP is scheduled to meet with the Committee on Appointments (CA) in early May, 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 to be of critical importance to 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 each search pool.

In response to CAP's recommendations, President 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 Report at a later date. CAP will also provide an addendum to this report that includes issues addressed subsequent to its distribution.

Arts – Creative Writing

The Creative Writing Program (CWP) requested approval to convert an interim position to a Tenure-Track position in the area of fiction/non-fiction writing. This second tenure-track position in Creative Writing, specifically for an established fiction and/or nonfiction writer, will stabilize staffing in the CWP, consolidate and extend course offerings, provide continuity during leaves, and ensure continued and robust participation by the CWP in the Balch Seminar program. A prose writer would also be in a position to contribute occasional courses in Contemporary Fiction or Nonfiction to the English Department.

The Creative Writing Program is distinctive among such programs available at small colleges in the United States, both for the quality of the writers it routinely involves as teachers and for the close integration of its course offerings with campus visits by writers of national and international importance as part of its Reading Series.

Over the past 13 years, the nature and the number of courses offered by the Creative Writing Program has increased from 8 courses in 2000-2001 to 14 courses in 2013-2014. Student demand for the CWP courses remains high with more students pre-registering for courses than can be accommodated. CWP courses also provide an important and writing-intensive supplement to the English Department curriculum.

Despite the temporary nature of most of its faculty, the CWP continues to offer a range of courses competitive with those offered by much larger university-based programs. The challenge is in maintaining a critical core in the CWP.

The CWP worked with several other departments and programs to conceptualize this position: the BMC Arts Program, the Balch Seminar Program, and the English Department, as well as the Haverford Arts Program and English Department and the Swarthmore English Department. All wrote letters of support.

CAP recommends approval of the Creative Writing Program's request to search for a tenure-track position at the level of advanced Assistant Professor or Associate Professor. We expect the new faculty member to have administrative as well as teaching responsibilities.

CAP is impressed with the growth of the Creative Writing Program. The numbers of students who take courses in the program have increased dramatically, and the Program has worked out a complex but fair system for accommodating the needs of most of the students who are interested in taking creative writing courses. With this new hire the CWP will offer 12 courses rather than the 14 that are currently offered and thus will cut back significantly on its need for adjuncts. The CWP will continue to contribute regularly to the Balch seminars. The Program has presented a sound five-year plan for course offerings that adequately addresses leave coverage. It is important to note that this conversion does not increase the cost of faculty for the CWP because it will convert the full-time interim hire, and it will stabilize staffing, and the CWP's contributions to other programs at the College.

Chemistry

The Chemistry Department submitted a request for a continuing non-tenure track (CNTT) position to teach the Post-Baccalaureate General Chemistry laboratory sections during summer school and to contribute to the Organic Chemistry laboratory sections during the academic year. In previous years, summer school instruction for both General Chemistry and Organic Chemistry was secured by hiring interim faculty and paying additional salary to existing Chemistry CNTT's. In the summer of 2013, the curriculum for the Post-Baccalaureate Pre-Medical Program was changed with the result that all of the Post-Baccalaureate students must enroll in General Chemistry in the summer. The Post-Baccalaureate Pre-Medical Program enrolls approximately 75-80 students each year, and two instructors are hired for each summer session. The former Provost and former Assistant Provost for Administration determined that the teaching load for both the lecturer and the lab instructor is equivalent to 1.75 course equivalents for each summer session, for a total of 7 course equivalents over the summer (3.5/lecturer, 3.5/lab instructor). Funding for this position has historically been partially paid for by the Post-Baccalaureate Program, with the remainder of the funding (30%) coming from the Provost's office.

The primary reason for this request is to provide stability in the staffing of the General Chemistry laboratory during the summer, as the long-time CNTT instructor for this course is no longer teaching summer school. As the laboratory instructor is responsible for hiring and training teaching assistants to help with the laboratory sections and is also responsible for preparing materials for the lab, the Chemistry Department would like to have a permanent member of its faculty holding this position. Without a continuing member of the department in this position, Chemistry faculty would be responsible for training and supervising a new hire in this position on a regular basis, familiarizing the laboratory instructor with the space, available equipment and reagents, ordering system, etc.; a continuing colleague in this position would eliminate this annual burden. As the teaching load for summer school laboratory instruction is deemed to be 3.5 course equivalents, the CNTT would teach an additional 1.5 course equivalents during the academic year. The proposed CNTT would be a regular member of the College's faculty, attending Chemistry Department meetings and serving on College committees.

CAP, the CC representative, and members of the Chemistry Department discussed the need to stabilize the staffing of General Chemistry in the summer. The proposed CNTT hire would be anomalous in that s/he would have the majority of her/his teaching responsibilities during the summer months. As a result, we discussed how best to integrate the proposed CNTT into the culture of the Department and the College and whether this type of position would be attractive to a large applicant pool. Alternate staffing configurations that would achieve stability in the summer school program were also considered.

CAP recommends that the requested CNTT position be approved for a three-year term, and that the position itself be reviewed during the third year, for the following reasons:

CAP recognizes the need for the Chemistry Department to regularize and stabilize General Chemistry laboratory instruction during the summer. The need for this position is dependent on the size and vitality of the post bac program. Indeed, the majority of the teaching serves a non-undergraduate population. The position will therefore be reviewed in three years. This review would be an opportunity for the Department, in consultation with CAP, to reconsider its staffing structure and that of the post bac program.

History of Art

The Department of the History of Art has requested approval to search for a scholar of the visual and material culture of Early Modern Europe. In its position proposal the Department argues that "deep and ranging expertise in the early modern period is essential to any respected program in the history of art, whether at the undergraduate or at the graduate level." The immediate impetus for this request is the sudden death last semester of the department's specialist in the art of the Spanish Baroque and the unexpected retirement of the faculty member whose scholarly expertise was in northern Europe in the Early Modern period. Successful candidates for this position would be able to teach courses in the art and architecture of the northern and/or southern Renaissance and Baroque that would also reference and include sites and situations of cross-cultural exchange in Africa, Asia and/or the Americas.

The Graduate Program in History of Art has a distinctive and distinguished niche vis-à-vis the undergraduate institutions whose departments of Art History have recently steered their alumnae/i toward our PhD program. The Department's excellence as a place to study the history of European art is significantly enhanced by its close ties with other departments in the Graduate Group; it is facilitated by the availability of strong language training in French, German, Italian, and Spanish; and it is supported by library holdings that are rich and deep. From the perspective of the Department's traditional specialization in the history of European art, the unexpected loss of two colleagues impairs its capacity to offer a viable graduate curriculum.

As the Department emphasized in its position request, the best graduate programs are currently inviting their PhD students to study European art through a post-colonial lens, with an eye to global markets, sites of exhibition and routes of exchange. Thus, for example, candidates for this position who specialize in the art of the Spanish Baroque are almost bound to reach into Morocco and/or the Americas. In Bryn Mawr's department the shift toward "a more holistic and global approach" has been in the making for some time: its approach to modern and contemporary art is transnational, emphasizing the global circulation of both artists and the art objects themselves; the medievalist teaches courses in the Global Middle Ages that include a substantial component of Islamic art; and the film studies scholar's work and courses have a global reach as well.

Departments of Art History in undergraduate institutions of our size typically also include at least one teacher/scholar whose primary focus is non-European. Bryn Mawr's programs in Africana and East Asian Studies could support such a scholarly and teaching focus, were the Department to move in this direction in the near term. The Department may never be in a position to support PhD work in these areas, but they are critical for a robust undergraduate major. History of Art is well aware of this, and had intended to respond to their next retirement with a request for such a position. They have used recent opportunities to host post-doctoral fellows and manage interim leave replacement with scholars first of African and more recently of Chinese art, with an eye to, as their proposal puts it, testing out "how a new field might fulfill the complex and at times competing demands of various constituencies--undergraduate majors and minors, undergraduate populations throughout the two colleges, MA and PhD students and potential applicants, students and faculty of the Graduate Group." CAP welcomes these initiatives to discover which part of the non-European world would create the richest synergy both within the department and with other departments and programs across the College.

CAP recommends that the History of Art Department's request for a tenure-track position be approved at the level of beginning Assistant Professor in the visual and material culture of Early Modern Europe.

CAP understands that the Department needs a specialist in Early Modern Europe, in light of the distinctiveness of its graduate program and its crucial importance to the Graduate Group. At the same time, we recognize the importance of continuing to extend the undergraduate curriculum beyond Western Europe. CAP therefore considers a secondary focus on the visual and material culture of Africa, Asia and/or the Americas to be desirable.

In addition, the need for a faculty member whose teaching and scholarship would be centered outside of Europe has a certain urgency of its own. CAP therefore affirms the department's plan to request, in the near term, a position for a scholar whose primary focus is non-European—a specialist, that is to say, in Latin American, South Asian, East Asian, or African art.

Philosophy

The Philosophy Department requested approval to conduct searches for two tenure-track positions. Given a recent retirement and one projected for 2015, the Department has proposed to search in successive years, first, for a mid-career appointment (associate or full professor with tenure) followed by a search for an assistant professor. The request for a mid-career hire is rooted in concern about a senior leadership vacuum in the department in the near future. As the proposal states, without a mid-career hire, “the department could have just three assistant professors for a number of years.” The initial search would be for a philosopher specializing in ethics, feminism, and global/development ethics. The focus of the second position, according to the Department’s request, “is not entirely obvious,” because “to choose one area is to fail to have the ability to offer courses in other substantial and important areas of thought.” The Department’s proposal suggested epistemology and philosophy of science as potential targets. Philosophy’s request is based on its attempt to cover its current major requirements, to offer as many fields as possible within the constraints of current staffing levels, and to balance the subfields covered by BMC and HC. With these two positions, the Department can maintain its commitments to the Balch seminar, from which it often recruits majors, and continue to be leave-proof.

CAP, the Curriculum Committee representative, and the Philosophy Department discussed the specifics of the Ethics position and how the Department might attract the largest pool of candidates. The Department is confident that the pool for a feminist ethicist would be robust and that most feminist philosophers, in fact, focus on ethics. The philosopher in this position would likely be a strong contributor to the Gender and Sexuality program, as was affirmed by the Coordinator of that program. The focus on global/development ethics would enable the Department to continue its contribution to the core requirements of International Studies; the courses in global ethics are indeed the distinguishing feature of International Studies at Bryn Mawr and set this program apart from those at peer institutions. We discussed the possibility that the initial search might be for a junior or senior colleague, adjusting the second search accordingly. Although the interim Provost stressed that any person hired would have to go through a tenure process at BMC, the leadership vacuum in the near future argues strongly for an advanced appointment.

CAP recommends that the Philosophy Department’s request for a tenure-track position in Feminism, Ethics, and Global/Development Ethics be approved at the advanced Assistant Professor or Associate Professor level, for the following reasons:

Since these fields have attracted the largest enrollments among both majors and non-majors and have produced many of the senior theses in the department, CAP sees this request as meeting critical departmental and institutional needs. CAP particularly sees the position’s focus on global and developmental ethics as crucial to the distinctiveness of International Studies and as contributing to Gender and Sexuality Studies and, potentially, Environmental Studies. Further, having a feminist philosopher on campus simply seems *de rigueur* for an institution such as ours. Finally, while the Department seemed sanguine about the prospects of finding an excellent mid-career person for this position, it was willing to accept CAP’s recommendation that the position be advertised at the advanced Assistant Professor or Associate Professor level.

CAP recommends that the Philosophy Department's request for a second tenure-track position be revised and resubmitted.

CAP appreciates the Department's willingness to refine its second position request in light of the results of the recommended search. The Department has indicated that this first search might take more than one year. It is CAP's opinion at this time that the new hire should participate in discussions about a second request as well as in the hiring process should that request be recommended. In our view, therefore, the second request is premature and should be resubmitted at a later date.

Psychology

The Psychology Department requested approval to conduct a search for a tenure-track faculty position in Developmental Psychology. This position request was motivated by the challenges attendant on substantial enrollment increases (90+ junior and senior majors now compared to about 50 a decade ago) and the need to accommodate anticipated departmental turnover over the next ten years. With Kim Cassidy's recent appointment as President of the College, the Department has already lost 1 FTE. The Department argued that, based on curricular needs and the representation of fields across the Bi-Co, their next hire should be an entry-level or advanced Assistant Professor Developmental Psychologist with either a social/cultural focus or a biological/neuroscience focus. Their goal moving forward is to maintain the success of their newly re-structured major, which was developed according to recommendations from their External Review committee. By gradually welcoming new faculty, they can avoid a logjam of tenure and promotion assessments, cover the field in a reasonable manner, and continue their contributions to many other Departments, Programs, and the College.

The Psychology Department, the Curriculum Committee representative, and CAP discussed how this position and future requests would fulfill curricular needs. The Department expects that, as each position is filled, subsequent position request(s) will be more narrowly defined. The Psychology Department presented a number of different scenarios for how they might stagger future requests. They agreed that they would likely submit requests for more than one position at a time but that they would want to do the searches serially. Under a number of scenarios, they might ask for a 3-year interim position so as to lessen the pressure on hiring as well as to distribute the tenure/promotion process for future hires.

Psychology approached a number of departments and programs to get feedback on their request. The Haverford Psychology Department, GSSWSR, Education, and Sociology all strongly endorsed the Psych Department request. Education, in particular, cited its dependence on the Psychology Department for state certification needs.

CAP recommends that the Psychology Department's position request for a Developmental Psychologist be approved at the beginning or advanced Assistant Professor level for the following reasons:

CAP recommends the approval of a search for a tenure-track Developmental Psychologist, with either a social/cultural or biological/neuroscience focus. Given the many openings that Psychology will have over the next few years, we agree that this search may be a relatively broad one, with

subsequent searches targeting narrower areas, as needs become more clearly defined and degrees of freedom are reduced. This position has the potential to contribute to Sociology, GSSWSR, Education and Biology as well as the neuroscience minor, and will enable the Psychology Department to continue its contributions to larger College needs. This position request will pave the path towards Psychology's reconstitution over the next several years.

Sociology

The Sociology Department requested approval to conduct searches for two tenure-track positions in an attempt to fill a number of needs in the Department and across the College. One of the positions would be filled by a Gender scholar, who provides curricular coverage at the intersection of sociology of gender and feminist theory. The other position would be filled by an Immigration scholar, who provides curricular coverage on the sociology of immigration and immigrant communities. Both Gender and Immigration studies are currently underrepresented in the Bi-Co. The request takes into account student interest, the current faculty's ability to cover the core areas of sociology, the direction in which sociology is moving as a discipline, as well as conversations with other departments across the campus that intersect with Sociology.

The foundation of a modern Sociology department is coverage of race, class, and gender. Currently, the Sociology Department's coverage of these areas is considered inadequate based on comparisons with our peer institutions. The Sociology Department considers gender and immigration as critical to its ability to offer a comprehensive sociology curriculum. Additionally, these two hires will allow the current faculty of the Sociology Department to expand their offerings, open their curriculum to more students in foundational areas and teach courses in their areas of scholarship.

There is no one in the Department who specializes in immigration, one of the most important processes affecting the world. The Department contends that as we are becoming a more global society, there is an increasing need to better understand not only the movement of goods and money, with which economists have been grappling, but also the movement of peoples. In the US, understanding the patterns of immigrant adaptation and integration is a key component of this area. Historically, there has been a strong interest by BMC students in the area of immigration and immigrant peoples.

The current faculty does not include a specialist in gender. Such a person would allow the Department to cover one of the foundational areas of sociology. This colleague would potentially have qualitative and/or quantitative skills, an international area focus (the global South would be especially attractive), and a substantive disciplinary focus (e.g. medical/health; immigration; public policy; comparative/historical; law; politics; organizations; social psychology; urban ethnography; sexualities; family; and/or criminology). The Sociology Department feels that the addition of a colleague with an expertise in gender issues comes at an important moment, when societally the very notion of a binary conception of gender is being challenged. BMC students are very interested in gender questions and, when given the opportunity to choose research topics, they often choose a gender focus.

Currently the sociology department relies heavily on interim faculty to fulfill the required curriculum for the major. This is in part due to high demand from the number of undergraduates taking Sociology courses, but also to the administrative commitments of some of the Sociology faculty.

The Sociology Department, the Curriculum Committee representative, and CAP discussed how these positions would fulfill curricular needs. Sociology also approached a number of departments and programs to request feedback on their request, including: International Studies, Gender and Sexuality Studies, LALIPC, GSSWSR, Political Science, Economics, Cities, and Anthropology.

CAP recommends that the Sociology Department's position requests for two Sociologists, one with expertise in Gender and one with expertise in Immigration be approved at the beginning Assistant Professor level. The Immigration position must have a specific focus on Latina/o studies. The searches for these two positions should be staggered, with the search for an Immigration scholar coming first.

CAP is particularly impressed with the efforts the Sociology Department put into its collaborative discussions with other BMC departments so that these positions would have the greatest impact on both the Department and the institution. This position will help address the lack of curricular coverage in Latino/Latina studies in the Tri-co community.

Given the College's current resources, the recently mandated cuts in departments and programs as well as the continuing needs of other departments, CAP decided to treat one of the Sociology Department's requests as an opportunity to transform existing interim staffing into a tenure-track position. Thus, this position is recommended as a replacement for all interim staffing in the Sociology Department and carries with it the commitment to serve wider departmental and programmatic needs. Trading interims for a tenure line comes at a cost that this department has also weighed carefully. CAP expects the Department to be 'leave proof' under most circumstances, while at the same time maintaining its leadership and service commitments to the College and continuing to contribute substantially to college-wide curricular needs.

The first position, with a focus on Immigration, will contribute to the increasingly global orientation of the Sociology department's curriculum. The second position, with a focus on Gender will interface productively with Philosophy, Gender and Sexuality Studies, and many other departments and programs at Bryn Mawr and Haverford. Filling these positions will allow the department to participate more fully in the Balch Seminars and 360's, to better support Environmental Studies and to offer more half-semester courses that will introduce more students to substantive areas in Sociology. The pool for these positions promises to be diverse because these are areas to which many Ph.D. candidates from underrepresented groups are drawn.